



## **Editorial: Strong Leaders Mean Strong Students**

*by Nicole Adrian*

Throughout the course of its lifetime, *Primary and Secondary Education Brief* has contained many articles about how specific quality tools and methods can help improve processes, efficiency, effectiveness and even student performance. One subject that hasn't really been covered in the newsletter is developing good, high-quality teachers who are constantly working and learning how to improve. Nothing within a school—particularly within classroom walls—can be improved, however, if these teachers aren't in place.

One school district familiar to *Education Brief* readers has a program in place to create teacher leaders. North Carolina's Iredell-Statesville Schools (ISS) has demonstration-classroom teachers who help teach colleagues best practices to implement in their classrooms. Those demonstration teachers encourage other teachers to visit their classrooms so they can model quality tools and methods and hold small group discussions to answer questions and provide support and feedback.

The results from these demonstration classrooms has been outstanding: ISS raised student achievement, closed learning gaps, increased the depth of teacher collaboration and empowered teachers to become leaders.

A different kind of teacher leader development program is taking place in California. SoluNet—an educational consulting company that presented at last year's National Quality Education Conference—is helping create and organize after-school programs.

These programs, which help students meet and exceed state academic standards, also help create first-rate leaders and future teachers. These after-school program staff members—who are often college students—complete thousands of hours of classroom time before completing their teaching degrees, and the opportunity gives them a sense of service and professionalism.

These articles show that strong, high-quality youth programs and classrooms cannot be successful without a good staff in place.