



CURRY SCHOOL  
of EDUCATION



## **First-of-Its-Kind Symposium Pairs Venture Capitalists with Teachers to Explore the Impact of EdTech**

*Yearlong initiative will culminate with two-day event designed to bring efficacy research to the center of national edtech debate*

WASHINGTON, DC, October 13, 2016—The University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education, Digital Promise, and Jefferson Education Accelerator today announced the selection of more than [150](#) education entrepreneurs, investors, philanthropists, researchers, and educators to participate in a series of working groups in advance of its spring 2017 symposium. The two-day, invitation-only event, which will be held May 3-4 at the Gallup Building in Washington, DC, will focus on the role of efficacy research in the development, adoption, and implementation of educational technology.

“When it comes to edtech decision-making, educators have very little evidence to understand whether the products they’re purchasing are effective. As a result, decisions are often based on marketing, rather than merit,” said Curry School Dean Robert C. Pianta, Ph.D. “Our goal is to convene stakeholders that often don’t come together to figure out why there is so little research being done and tackle some critical questions: Who can benefit the most from efficacy research? Who should pay?”

Working group members represent a “who’s who” of edtech entrepreneurs, practitioners, and policymakers, including four former directors of the U.S. Office of Educational Technology: Linda Roberts, John Bailey, Karen Cator, and Richard Culatta. Nearly 20 K-12 teachers and higher education faculty will participate, along with former Governor Bob Wise; Valerie Truesdale, Chief Technology Officer of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; USA Funds CEO and Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education, Bill Hansen; Dreambox Learning CEO Jessie Woolley-Wilson; and former Clark County School Superintendent Dwight Jones.

Designed to bring together diverse perspectives on the challenges and opportunities associated with efficacy research on educational technology, each working group includes a cross section of stakeholders who are exploring crowdsourced topics, including entrepreneurs’ views on efficacy research, the level of preparedness among district and higher ed leaders to evaluate edtech, as well as the role and goal of the federal government and state agencies in edtech research, among others.

“The working groups are tackling some of the most complex questions in education, conducting original research, and – we hope – laying the foundation for solutions,” said Bart Epstein, Founding CEO of Jefferson Education Accelerator and Research Associate Professor at the University of Virginia. “Stakeholders aren’t always going to see eye to eye – but we can’t possibly address these issues without the divergent perspectives of teachers, investors, and other players in the debate.”

"Schools and universities are increasingly relying on data to inform administrative and instructional decision-making," said Karen Cator, President and Chief Executive Officer at Digital Promise. "The working groups are sparking a discussion that will inform our work for years to come."

For more information about the symposium and working groups, visit the website at <http://curry.virginia.edu/symposium/>. The agenda is now nearing completion and will be posted in the coming weeks.

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### **About the Curry School of Education**

The University of Virginia's Curry School of Education located in Charlottesville, Va., is ranked among the nation's top 25 graduate schools of education. To its 2,300 undergraduate, graduate and professional students the school offers nationally-ranked degree programs in education and health centered around human development. Through 3 research centers, nearly 20 labs and dozens of individual projects, faculty and students conduct rigorous, practical research that supports both the quality of teaching, learning and clinical practices and the decision making of district, state and national leaders.

### **About Jefferson Education Accelerator**

Jefferson Education Accelerator (JEA) brings together the know-how, capital, and resources to address the unique needs of educators, entrepreneurs and organizations. Combining the unabashedly innovative spirit of education technology with the academic rigor and excellence of one of the nation's top-ranked education programs, JEA identifies the most promising growth-stage education companies, and helps them learn how to optimize their implementation models, set up new pilot programs at schools, colleges, and universities across the U.S., and raise capital that will put them on track to achieving scale and making impact. For more information, visit [www.jeauva.com](http://www.jeauva.com).

### **About Digital Promise**

Digital Promise is a nonprofit organization authorized by Congress to spur innovation in education to improve the opportunity to learn for all Americans. Through its work with educators, entrepreneurs, researchers, and leading thinkers, Digital Promise supports a comprehensive agenda to benefit lifelong learning and provide Americans with the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the global economy. For more information, visit the Digital Promise website and follow @digitalpromise for updates.

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