2019 Annual Report



Letter from the CEO

Typically, annual reports represent a moment of reflection and celebration. They allow us to look back on what was accomplished in the last year, and to set the stage for critical work ahead.



This annual report, however, finds us at an extraordinary moment. Around the world, educational institutions have temporarily closed to try to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, millions of students are attempting to continue their learning outside of the physical classroom.

For years, Digital Promise has worked to close the Digital Learning Gap to ensure all students have equitable access to the internet and technology for powerful learning opportunities, both in and out of school. The need to close this gap has never been more urgent.

This 2019 Annual Report reflects our long-standing commitment to equity and the strong foundation we have laid to respond to what's happening in education today. Below, we highlight ways in which we advance equity through our networks, research, and powerful learning practices. While the focus of each project differs, the overarching goal is centered on improving opportunities for all learners.

Today, our commitment to equity is firmer than ever. As always, we're grateful for the philanthropic supporters and corporate partners who help make our work possible, as well as our talented team.

It is difficult to imagine where we'll be this time next year. But reflecting on our work and the scope of what our society must achieve makes moving forward that much more meaningful.



Karen Cator
President and CEO

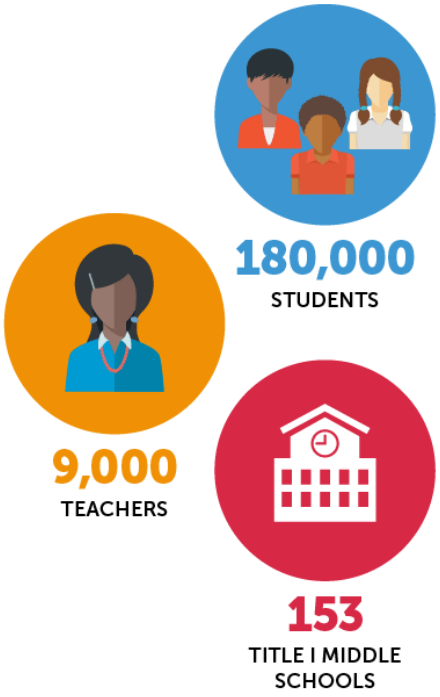
Advancing Equity through Our Networks

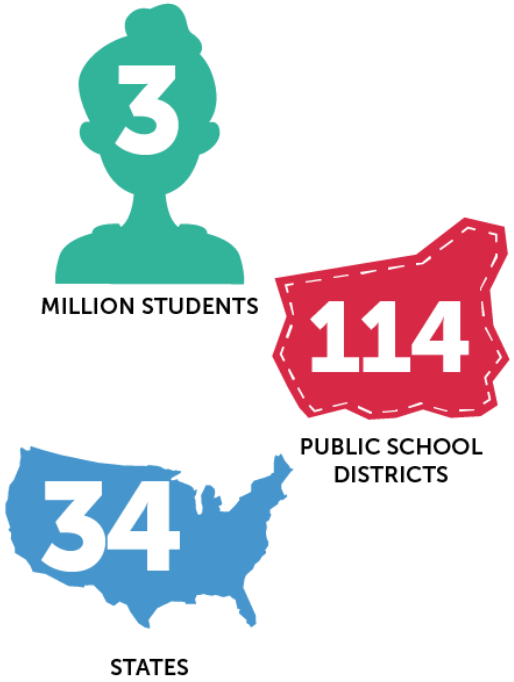


League of Innovative Schools

With 14 new members in the 2019-2020 cohort, the League of Innovative Schools supports more than three million students in 114 public school districts across 34 states by advancing excellence and equity for all learners. In fall 2019, we hosted a public showcase, “Equity and Excellence: Innovation in American Public Education,” at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., featuring Teacher of the Year Rodney Robinson as keynote speaker and more than 100 League districts, to explore how public school districts are addressing the equity gap. Additionally in 2019, we launched Innovation Portfolios, a storytelling platform that offers models, strategies, and lessons learned that can inspire further advancements in education.

Verizon Innovative Learning Schools





Since 2014, the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools initiative has impacted more than 180,000 students and nearly 9,000 teachers in 153 Title I middle schools in 48 districts across 23 states and Washington, D.C. In 2019, we welcomed 52 new schools as part of Cohort 6—the largest cohort to date. In addition to extensive teacher development, technical support, and a dedicated digital learning coach in each school, the technology and internet access provided to each student helps close the homework gap, ensuring all students have equitable access for powerful learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom.

Center for Innovative Research in Cyberlearning

Fairness and equity in emerging learning technologies such as artificial intelligence rose to the top of researchers' priorities in the last year. In response, our National Science Foundation-funded Center for Innovative Research in Cyberlearning (CIRCL), a network of more than 400 of the world's leading learning sciences researchers, led a two-day convening of researchers, educators, and industry experts.



Participants shared and synthesized research, prioritized major challenges, and planned new collaborations to accelerate progress. With nonprofit partners, we continue to lead this prestigious network that focuses on the future of learning with technology. We communicate research broadly, seeking to drive next-generation, equitable, research-based innovations.

Advancing Equity through Research



Learner Variability Project



In 2019, the Learner Variability Project (LVP) released the first of a four-part series of national surveys. “Learning in the 21st Century: How the American Public, Parents, and Teachers View Students’ Potential and Their Learning Experience” found that while at least 75 percent of public school parents, teachers, and the American public believe most students are capable of reaching high levels of educational achievement, only 19 to 29 percent believe most students are actually reaching those high levels. Findings from the survey established that a wider understanding of learner variability —that students vary across cognitive, social-emotional, and background factors—is key to providing the tailored opportunities that all students need to reach their full

potential. LVP continues to curate the latest research to help product developers and practitioners with supporting all learners.

Let's think about community members, researchers, and developers as co-experts. Top-down doesn't work, and bottom-up doesn't scale, but meeting each other in the middle as co-experts is promising.

Charles McDonald

Inclusive Innovation

Our Inclusive Innovation model catalyzes equitable opportunities for individuals, groups, and regions that are underrepresented in the education ecosystem to successfully lead, participate in, and benefit from innovation. In 2019, we published "Designing a Process for Inclusive Innovation: A Radical Commitment to Equity" to define the essential elements of equity-first research and development for education and create a model for engaging diverse community stakeholders as leaders and designers. In 2019, we also laid the foundation for the Teachers of Color Pipeline and Retention project, which aims to share challenges and co-design promising concepts for solutions to increase the recruitment and retention of teachers of color.

Executive Director of Community Engagement Partners, at Digital Promise's July 2019 community engagement workshop

Challenge Map

In 2019, 350 public school and district staff members—including teachers, principals, and superintendents—from across the U.S. responded to a survey sharing their highest-priority challenges in education. We analyzed and transformed the results into an interactive visualization to identify commonly shared challenges, including mental health and trauma, social-emotional learning, literacy, and culturally responsive practices. Within each challenge area, we published resources that can help educators as they work to address and solve each challenge within their own contexts. The Digital Promise Research team will reconduct the survey in 2020 to assess educators' priorities in the context of COVID-19.





Computing Pathways

By early 2019, most school districts had experimented with some computer science or computational thinking (CT) activities. Districts now want systematic, sustained efforts to enable diverse students to participate in the future of work, learning, and society. Through our Computing Pathways project, we partnered with three districts to design and study cumulative, competency-based pathways across K-12. We analyzed qualitative and quantitative data from teachers and students to improve learning and address equity. With nine additional districts, we are refining a toolkit to help districts nationwide build systematic approaches to developing all K-12 students' computing competencies.

Early STEM Learning

Our early learning research develops and evaluates activities for classrooms and homes, as well as developmentally appropriate apps and professional development resources. We seek to integrate multiple STEM disciplines to promote young children's learning at a key transition point—just before or when they start elementary school. To ensure resources are useful, equitable, and adoptable, our team brings together learning scientists, public preschool educators, families from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, curriculum developers, and media designers to engage in co-design. In 2019, we partnered with more than 10 preschool classrooms, including approximately 20 educators, 400 children, and 50 families of young children.

Advancing Equity through Powerful Learning



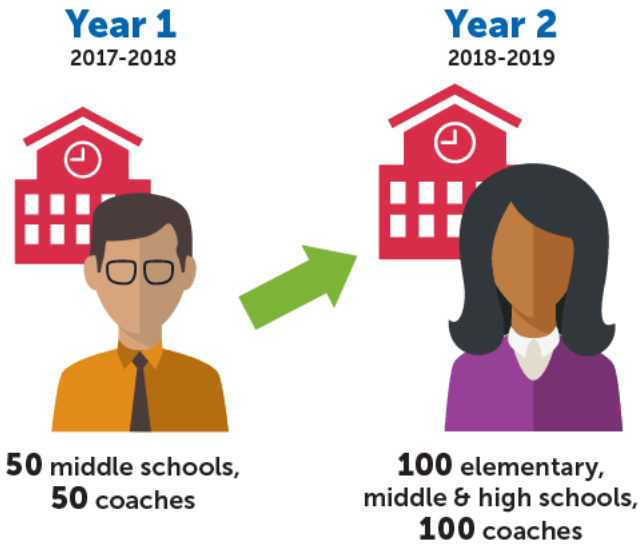
Dynamic Learning Project

In its second year the Dynamic Learning Project reached 100 schools nationwide, of which 88 were Title 1 schools, with the goal of increasing educational equity and powerful use of technology through digital learning coaching. At the end of the 2018-2019 school year, more than 70 percent of teachers reported feeling more confident in their ability to use technology to engage students in developing key skills, and nearly 60 percent of teachers saw a positive impact on student engagement and learning.

Micro-credentials

I'm not just a math teacher; I'm a teacher of the whole child.

Bethany Orr



More than 100 new micro-credentials were launched on the Digital Promise Micro-credential Platform in 2019, and more than 2,100 micro-credentials were earned across the country. Micro-credentials provide equitable access and opportunity for educators and adult learners to learn new skills to support their practice and to demonstrate critical skills necessary for career advancement. For example, Bethany Orr, a fourth grade teacher in North Carolina, dug into research on learner variability to better support her students' unique needs. After earning her learner variability micro-credential on self-regulation, Orr reflected, "I'm not just a math teacher; I'm a teacher of the whole child."

My World 360°

Digital Promise, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Action Campaign, and Oculus invited emerging creators worldwide to join the MY World 360° campaign to inspire positive action toward the SDGs. Young 360° film creators from 24 countries submitted 76 media projects for consideration for the third MY World 360˚ playlist. Their immersive stories were screened at the 2019 UN General Assembly in

New York, with stories focusing on issues of inequality and environmental sustainability. Additionally, seven creators were invited to share their media and join panels at the Assembly to discuss their work and perspectives.





Tapping Data for Frontline Talent Development

"Tapping Data for Frontline Talent Development," an interactive report released in 2019, maps the landscape of the adult learning ecosystem that serves frontline workers. We explored how institutions use worker data to streamline services, improve training, and advance opportunities in industries like healthcare, retail, and manufacturing. We learned that the ecosystem is complex and siloed, and it removes agency from the worker by taking data without returning any value. Recommendations included increasing demand for cross-sector partnerships and data-sharing practices to drive opportunities for frontline workers.

About Digital Promise



Digital Promise is an independent nonprofit that builds powerful networks and takes on grand challenges by working at the intersection of researchers, entrepreneurs, and educators. Our vision is that all people, at every stage of their lives, have equitable access to learning experiences that help them acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in an ever-changing world. Digital Promise was originally authorized by Congress in 2008 through the Higher Education Opportunity Act, signed into law by President George W. Bush, and formally launched by President Barack Obama in September 2011.

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We are grateful for these leading foundations and organizations and our corporate partners that have made a commitment to supporting our mission of improving the opportunity to learn:

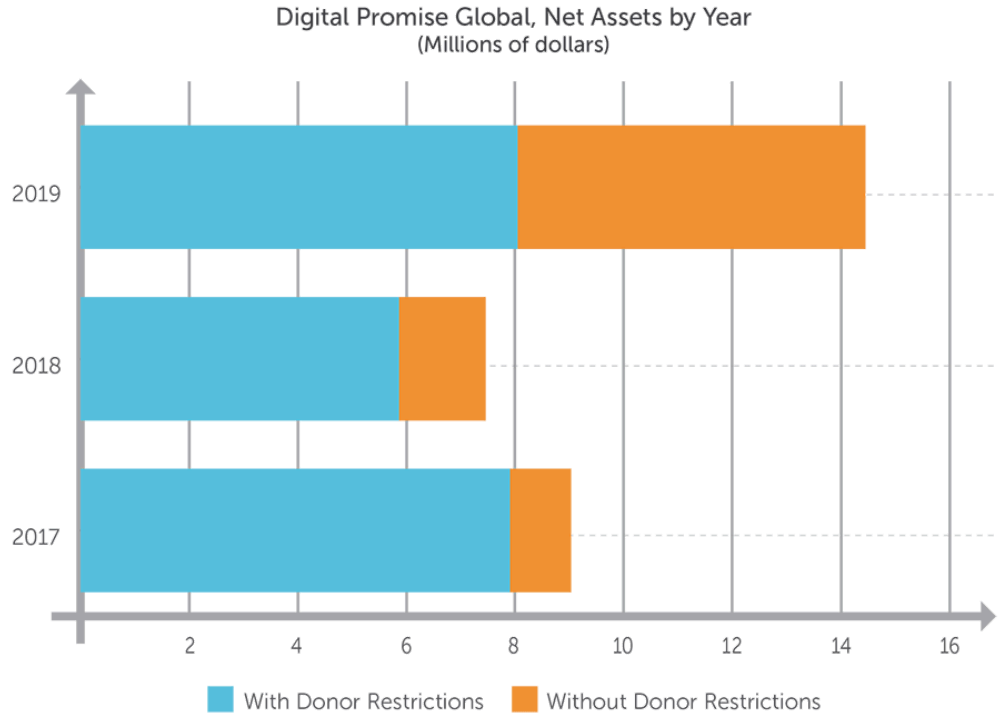
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Digital Promise Financials

On October 31, 2019, Digital Promise and Digital Promise Global merged. Each organization underwent an audit and the results of their respective audits can be found here on our website.



Digital Promise 2019 revenue, by source
Total Revenue of $72.6 million including
$50.3 million of revenue from contributed goods & services

