2023 Annual Report

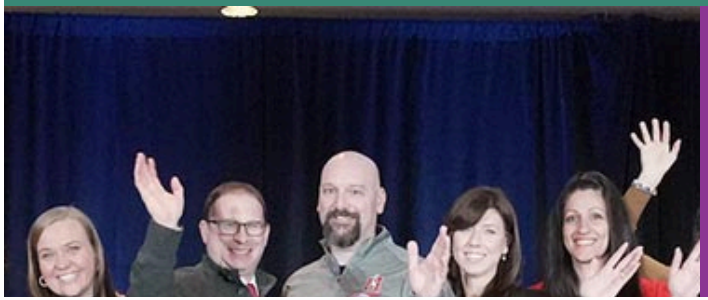
LETTER FROM THE CEO

RESEARCHERS

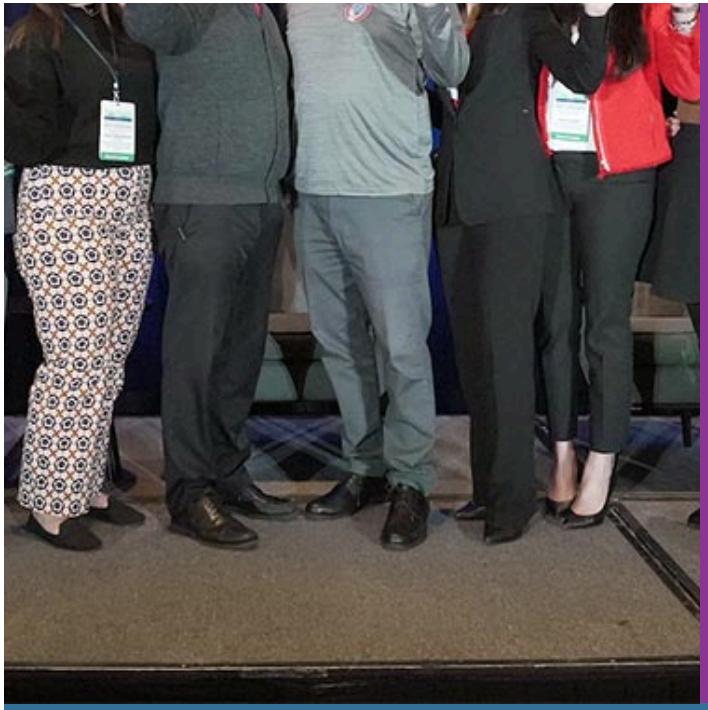
Digital Promise aims to embed quality research across all of our activities and partnerships. We connect the strengths of our researchers with the experience and expertise of our broader organization and networks of external researchers, educators, and innovators.

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DISTRICT LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS



No leader can solve education challenges alone. Digital Promise connects networks of education leaders with researchers, technology experts, practitioners, and community members to collectively advance opportunities for learners. Together, we are at the forefront of designing and scaling solutions that can improve outcomes for each learner, especially those who have been historically and systematically excluded.

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EDUCATORS

Digital Promise is committed to helping educators design equitable learning experiences that meet the needs of each learner, and use technology in meaningful ways that benefit everyone. A better future for our teachers is only possible when we intentionally support and uplift those who have been historically and systematically excluded in the profession.

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LEARNERS

As an organization, Digital Promise is working to ensure historically and systematically excluded (HSE) learners are: learning in education systems that have the resources and conditions to help them thrive; engaging in sustained and meaningful experiences of powerful learning that prepare them for the future; and equipped to achieve postsecondary credentials that lead to well-being, agency and economic security.

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DEVELOPERS

Fostering relationships with the edtech development community is a pivotal part of Digital Promise's work. By collaborating with districts, relying on learning sciences research, and incorporating broader community input through co-design opportunities, developers can



create more effective and equitable educational solutions.

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear friends, supporters, and partners,

Since we introduced our Impact Goals two years ago, we have worked across research, technology, and education practice to shape a more equitable and innovative future of learning. At the heart of every effort—in any version of the kind of future we want to see—we prioritize the people involved at every step toward expanding opportunity for all learners.

Central to these efforts are our networks, including the League of Innovative Schools and the Global Cities Education Network (GCEN). Through GCEN and our work with partners in Haiti,

among other projects, we're increasingly expanding our focus and work to extend beyond the United States to impact global learners. The forward-thinking, innovation-focused leaders in our key networks aim to influence more than 13,000 system leaders across the U.S. and in school systems around the world. Our research leadership, collaboration on national education policies, Inclusive Innovation work, and our initiatives in digital equity and emerging technologies are all developed in close partnership with school leaders, communities, and learners themselves.

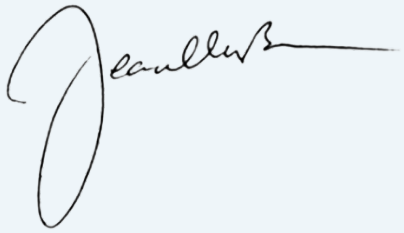


As evidenced throughout this annual report, we are leading efforts alongside researchers, education practitioners from P-12 and higher education, and education technologists to connect what we know teachers and learners need with the innovations being created by developers. We have seen the power of combining the expertise of practitioners and researchers—two traditionally separate communities—to create useful and meaningful education resources.

As we collaborate to build resources and imagine the learning experiences of tomorrow, Digital Promise prioritizes a human-centered approach to emerging technologies like generative AI. We envision safe, equitable, and meaningful AI in education using emerging technologies to improve education by enhancing how we teach and learn.

Our Impact Goals are ambitious. However, through connecting, convening, and working together on shared goals, we can move this bold vision to reality. By centering people in education innovation, we can achieve the direct and ripple effects necessary to reach all learners, especially those historically and systematically excluded from full participation in our democracy.

I am grateful for your support and partnership.



Jean-Claude Brizard
President and CEO, Digital Promise

RESEARCHERS

Digital Promise aims to embed quality research across all of our activities and partnerships. We connect the strengths of our researchers with the experience and expertise of our broader organization and networks of external researchers, educators, and innovators.

How We're Supporting Emerging Scholars Through Meaningful and Engaging Mentoring:

The Center for Integrative Research in Learning and Computing Sciences (CIRCLS), in partnership with Digital Promise, launched a mentoring series for participants of our Emerging Scholar program to create a support system that addresses the unique professional needs of early-career scholars.

CIRCLS
Center for Integrative Research in Computing and Learning Sciences

"[I value] the space to share our experiences, the thoughtful advice of the mentor about the current snapshot of the research field, and interaction with other participants about their own past and current experiences."

– Dr. Aditi Mallavarapu, Postdoctoral Researcher

"It is quite informative to hear about the different research areas that each participant is working on, their enthusiasm in their research work, their successes, and the roadblocks they are facing in advancing their careers…It also makes me think about how I can be a better mentor to my own students."

– Dr. Gautam Biswas, Professor

CIRCLS Convening 2023

At the CIRCLS'23 Convening, the Emerging Scholar community had opportunities to connect and learn from the broader education research community.

The convening addressed topics such as:

- Emerging technologies such as machine learning, generative AI, augmented reality, assistive technologies, and more
- Advances in learning sciences methods and theories
- Equity, ethics, and related design concepts (responsible or human-centered design)
- Insights on improving learning in specific STEM and broader subjects
- Research in educational settings for learning in formal educational institutions and informal settings like museums





Bridging the Gap Between Researchers and Educators

At Digital Promise, we believe in combining the expertise of practitioners and researchers—two traditionally separate communities—to create useful and meaningful education resources.

Educators actively collaborate with our researchers to co-lead, co-research, and co-design research from its earliest stages. To foster collective ownership, these collaborations center educators' voices throughout all phases of a project, including the development of research plans, professional learning resources, classroom materials, and more.

By working as partners, researchers and practitioners can co-design relevant, meaningful, high-quality, and sustainable innovations for teaching and learning.

Capturing the Lasting Impact of Inclusive Innovation

In 2024, the Center for Inclusive Innovation published two papers that continue to explore the emerging impacts of its groundbreaking education research and development (R&D) process. One paper explores the empowerment and ownership experienced by district-community teams when they co-create solutions using the Inclusive Innovation process. The second paper identifies factors that support the sustainability of work, such as lasting shifts in mindsets and practices.

Leveraging Research as a Powerful Tool for Equity and Improvement

Throughout 2023, Center for Inclusive Innovation researchers supported the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools Cohorts 9 and 10 and Verizon STEM Achievers projects through evaluation partnerships to generate lessons learned directly from the schools and college campuses implementing the programs. Our approach intentionally amplifies student and practitioner voices to understand and improve the programs' efforts to increase exposure, learning, and belonging in STEM for students from historically and systematically excluded communities.



For the Educators Leading the Profession project, the Center for Inclusive Innovation leveraged its evaluation findings to facilitate the co-design of professional development by instructional coaches for instructional coaches to develop and retain new teachers, and in doing so, built the leadership of the current teachers serving as coaches. Deeper Discussions in World History—an Institute of Education Sciences (IES)-funded collaboration between Digital Promise's Learning Sciences Research and Center for Inclusive Innovation teams—has engaged a dynamic teacher co-design team in creating teacher-facing, standards-based open education resources (OERs) to foster powerful discussions in world history classes, and is piloting the resources to assess their promise.

DISTRICT LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

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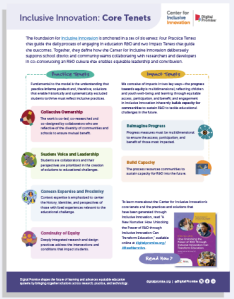
Elevating the Ingenuity of School Districts and Communities

The Center for Inclusive Innovation's report, "A New Narrative: How Unlocking the Power of R&D Through Inclusive Innovation Can Transform Education," demonstrates how the Inclusive Innovation model provides a new path for school district and community teams to address educational challenges such as the recruitment and retention of teachers of color; student mental health; disproportionate disciplinary action; and building student confidence and expression through writing.

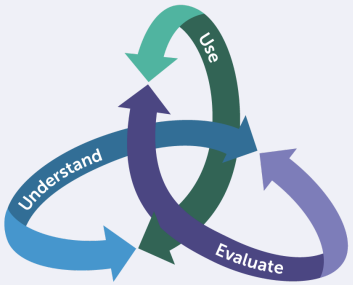
Inclusive Innovation is anchored in six tenets: four practice tenets that guide the daily process of engaging in education research and development (R&D) and two impact tenets that anchor the outcomes. Together, they inform how the Center for Inclusive Innovation engages school district and community teams in deep collaboration with researchers and developers to enable equitable leadership and contribution.





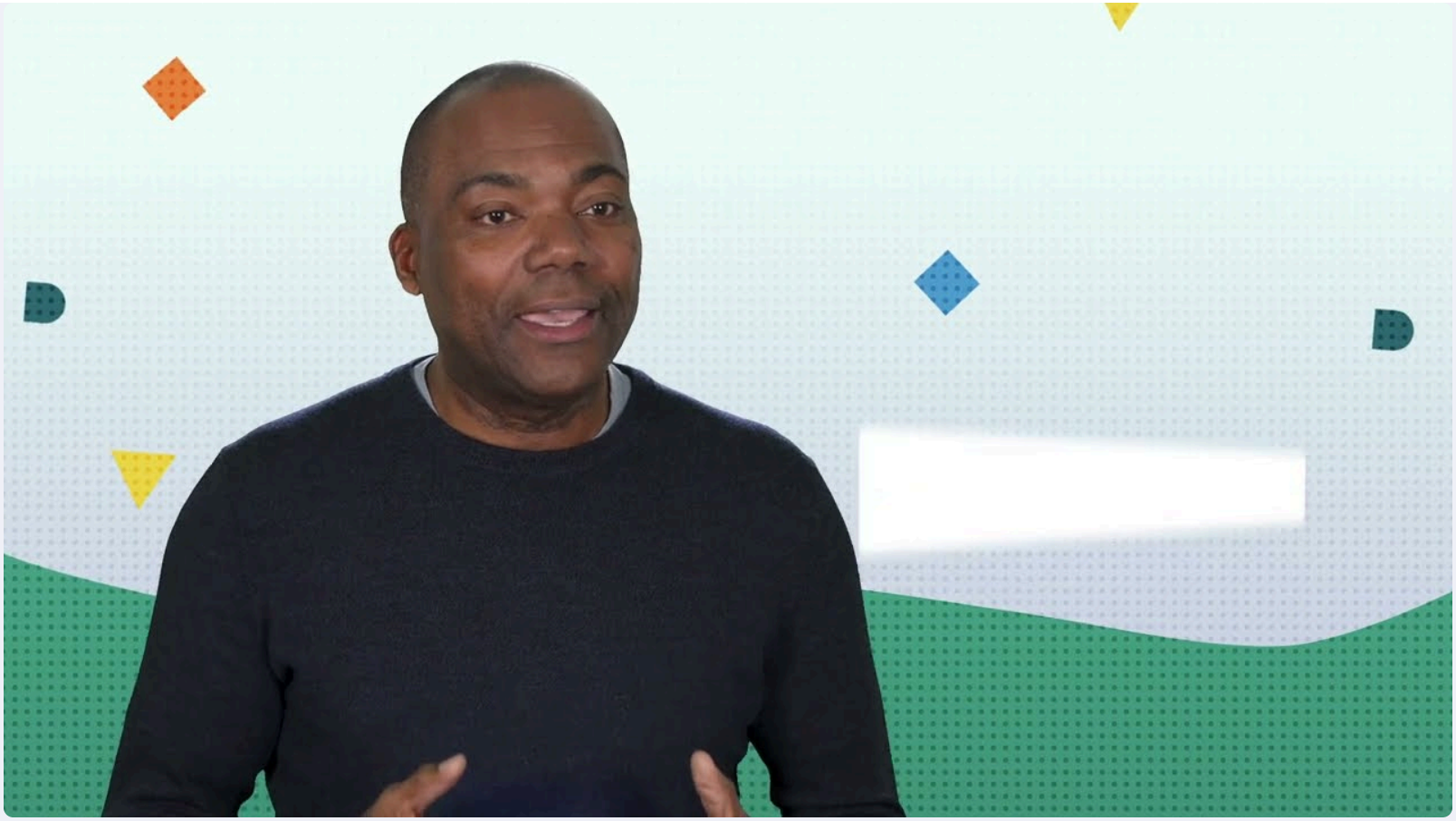


AI Literacy: A Framework to Understand, Evaluate, and Use Emerging Technology



In our position paper, AI Literacy: A Framework to Understand, Evaluate, and Use Emerging Technology, Digital Promise shares a framework to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) tools for powerful learning and strategies for educational leaders to implement a clear approach to AI literacy.

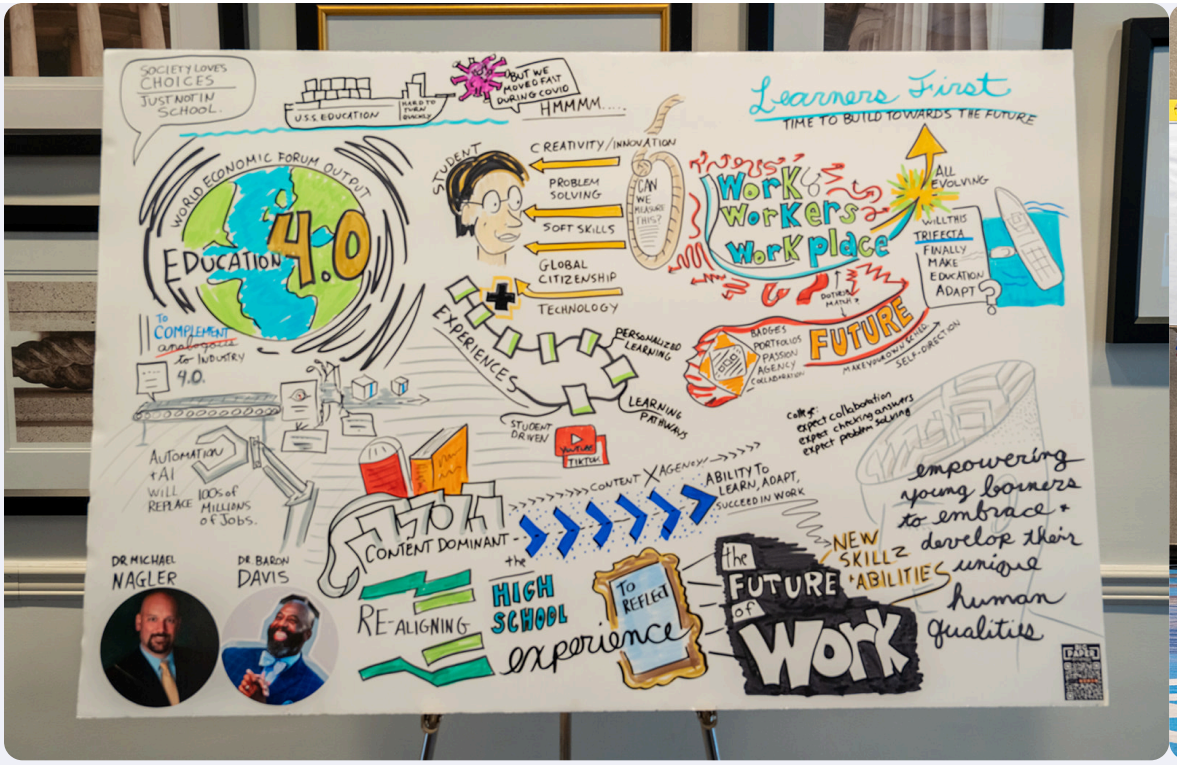
As AI becomes increasingly prevalent in our daily lives and educational settings, it is imperative to equip learners, educators, and leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate this technology responsibly.



Championing Powerful Learning Opportunities Through Inclusive Innovation

In October 2023, education leaders, researchers, edtech developers, community leaders, and students gathered in the greater Washington, D.C., metro area for "Elevating the Ingenuity of Schools and Communities" to explore ways to transform teaching and learning through Inclusive Innovation.

League of Innovative Schools leaders presented multiple sessions throughout the event to showcase how they are partnering with the Center for Inclusive Innovation to pilot and implement inclusive, novel solutions to the challenges their districts face.





Collective Leadership in Action: Reflections from the League Convening

In March 2024, more than 300 education leaders, researchers, edtech developers, came together in New York, for the biannual League of Innovative Schools convening.





Through interactive breakout sessions led by more than 30 League leaders, hands-on site visits across host district Mineola Public Schools, and ample networking opportunities, League members shared challenges, generated potential solutions, and deepened relationships.



Forging Cybersecurity Pathways with Districts

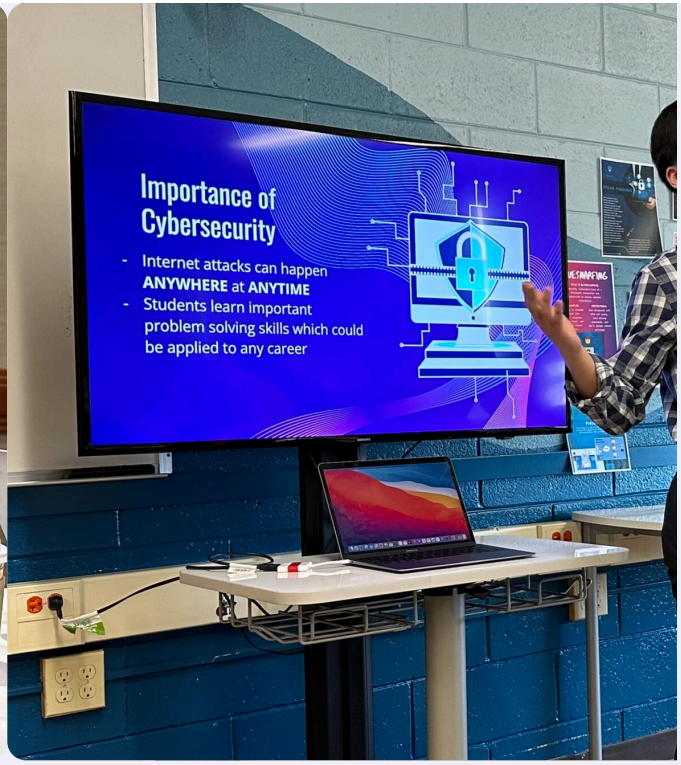
Launched in 2023, Digital Promise's Cybersecurity Pathways initiative addresses the cybersecurity labor shortage by building pathways to employment for learners historically furthest from STEM opportunities.

Inclusive Cybersecurity COHORT 2023

This cybersecurity initiative, which enrolled more than 800 students in the first year, is being offered by 10 districts from the League of Innovative Schools across eight states. The program was launched by the Center for Inclusive Innovation in partnership with Paradigm Cyber Ventures, with philanthropic support from IBM, which also contributed their digital training platform SkillsBuild, to be integrated in the program.

At the 2024 Spring League Convening, students and educators from the Cybersecurity Pathways initiative presented how their programs were designed to meet the unique needs of their communities, providing pathways to training, certifications, and opportunities for both students and teachers.


ThinkPad

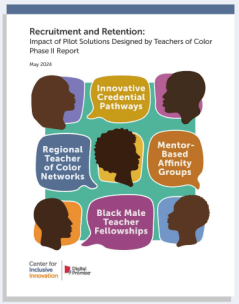

Importance of Cybersecurity
- Internet attacks can happen ANYWHERE at ANYTIME
- Students learn important problem solving skills which could be applied to any career

EDUCATORS

Digital Promise is committed to helping educators design equitable learning experiences that meet the needs of each learner and use technology in meaningful ways that benefit everyone. A better future for our teachers is only possible when we intentionally support and uplift those who have been historically and systematically excluded from the profession.

Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

Since 2019, we have collaborated with school districts to design and implement opportunities to co-create solutions to teacher of color workforce disparities. Our report details how teachers of color from five school districts engaged in the Inclusive Innovation process to improve recruitment and retention in their profession.



"Recruitment and Retention: Impact of Pilot Solutions Designed by Teachers of Color" explores how these solutions were implemented, their impact, and the potential to scale these efforts to create sustainable change for teachers of color in the present and future.

Verizon Innovative Learning Schools Cohort 10 Rollout

Verizon Innovative Learning Schools works side-by-side with schools and districts to get internet-connected devices into the hands of students and enhance how teachers use technology in the classroom. By combining our strengths in educator development and research, Digital Promise and Verizon aim to increase digital equity and support students, teachers, and schools in unlocking the potential of technology to transform teaching and learning.

For the 31 Cohort 10 schools just beginning their Verizon Innovative Learning journey in 2023, rollout marks the beginning of new learning opportunities. Check out some of the great coverage of rollouts across the country. Digital Promise celebrated the 10th anniversary of its

partnership with Verizon for the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program. What started as eight schools in four districts grew to nearly 600 schools and more than 100 districts in 2023.





Continued Powerful Learning

Through community, the HP Teaching Fellows have continued engaging in powerful learning by discussing best practices with powerful technology. By sharing insights and professional experiences, Fellows have led conversations and various regional and national conference presentations ranging from "Using Generative AI for Teacher & Student Content Creation" to "Fostering Creativity and Inclusion Through Content Creation and Real-World Relevance."

"Access to Powerful Technology as a Catalyst for Career Pathway Engagement" highlights the most recent HP Learning Studio and opportunities presented when historically and systemically excluded youth gain access to high-powered technology and tools in their school environment.

Digital Promise's new EdTech and Emerging Technologies initiative is helping to shape the future of technology in education, including artificial intelligence (AI). Led by Senior Director of Edtech and Emerging Technologies Pati Ruiz, the newly created team will lead our strategy to guide and support educators on all aspects of educational technologies, drawing upon the strong base of research, development, and programmatic activities across Digital Promise.

"The education sector needs a forward-looking vision for what the integration of educational technology and emerging technologies should look like. Aligning with Digital Promise's own mission and Impact Goals, we are excited to collaborate with educators, developers, leaders, policymakers, and learners themselves to help shape the future of learning with technology."

Jean-Claude Brizard, President and CEO, Digital Promise



"I look forward to continuing collaborations with Digital Promise colleagues and external partner organizations as we advance our mission of increasing opportunities for every learner and advancing equity in education."

Pati Ruiz, Senior Director of Edtech and Emerging Technologies, Digital Promise

LEARNERS

As an organization, Digital Promise is working to ensure historically and systematically excluded learners are:

- Learning in education systems that have the resources and conditions to help them thrive.
- Engaging in sustained and meaningful experiences of powerful learning that prepare them for the future.
- Equipped to achieve postsecondary credentials that lead to well-being, agency, and economic security.

These goals, coupled with our strategic measurement framework and underpinning organization goals, enable Digital Promise to accelerate our impact—bringing us closer to a future where education closes opportunity gaps, diminishes differences in outcomes, and prepares learners to be global citizens who will shape the world for the better.

Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders Today

The League of Innovative Students (LOIS) supports high school students in becoming catalysts for education change. The Spring 2024 cohort—made up of 43 brilliant student leaders hailing from districts in the League of Innovative Schools— concentrated on transforming edtech products, creating culturally responsive classrooms, and designing a student-centered Challenge Map.



At the heart of LOIS is a belief in and commitment to the power of student voice and leadership. We recognize that students should not merely be recipients of education but active contributors to the ongoing dialogue, research, and design of the future of the education landscape.

Learning Disabilities and Learner Variability

Using the Learner Variability Navigator (LVN), the Learner Variability Project (LVP) is piloting a strength-based whole child approach to writing individualized education programs (IEPs) in

several schools nationwide to encourage mindset shifts and create a sense of belonging for students with learning disabilities and ADHD. To that end, the LVN has been updated to include more research-based resources and strategies to better understand and address the needs of students with learning disabilities.

LVP is also represented on the International Forums of Inclusion Practitioners (IFIP) and their Parent Advocate for Inclusion working group designed to increase parent and community engagement in creating a more collaborative and connected education system, and on the Jacobs Foundation's working group on learner variability. The goal is to develop a global understanding and use of learner variability in classrooms worldwide.

Celebrating the 2024 YouthMADE Festival Amplify Grants and Community Awards



The YouthMADE Festival Amplify Grants are $500 stipends for students participating in the YouthMADE Festival to expand or amplify a student-led project. Ten grantees were selected from Brazil, India, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Nigeria, and the United States.

The YouthMADE Festival Community Awards are community-powered recognition for students who participated in the YouthMADE Festival. Teachers, mentors, family, friends, and members of the community nominate students and share what they appreciate about the students and their event or project shared at the YouthMADE Festival.

Sustaining and Scaling Student-Designed Solutions in the Ciena Solutions Challenge

The Ciena Solutions Challenge, a global design challenge by Digital Promise and Ciena, invites middle and high school students to design solutions addressing the Sustainable Development Goals. This year the Ciena Solutions Challenge awarded $2,500 Sustainability Awards to 20 student teams and $500 awards to an additional 18 teams to help students sustain and scale their projects.

Introducing Pathways Research and Design

The Adult Learning and Learning and Employment Innovations initiatives merged to form Pathways Research and Design. To guide the development of people-driven, research-enabled products, this merger bridges research on adult learning that elevates the experiences and perspectives of learners and workers with inclusive design practices that inform solution development.

Digital Promise is dedicated to elevating the voices of learners and workers who have been historically and systemically excluded from education and employment opportunities. To ensure that programs, products, and promising practices are truly designed with learners in mind, we collaborate with workforce and technology leaders and practitioners.

> “With specific attention toward the pursuits and unique journeys of adult learners and workers, our focus has not changed. Our approach, however, is advancing.”



– Dr. Jhacole LeGrand-Dunn, Senior Director of Pathways



In Haiti, a Bold Project for Education is Delivering Results

Haiti's learners face a variety of challenges and obstacles to accessing the education that is their right.

Digital Promise's pilot program in Haiti is promising to change that. Facilitated in partnership with Model School Network, Anseye Pou Ayiti, Summits Education, and Blue Butterfly, this pilot employs blended learning, technology, and hyper-local community involvement.

In an article for the World Economic Forum, Jean-Claude Brizard reflected on successes and lessons learned from this project, and outlined ways in which this model might be employed to support learners in similar educational contexts around the world.



Advancing the Micro-credentials Platform to Empower Learners’ Journeys

Within the Pathways and Credentials team, the Credentials initiative has made significant strides in enhancing the Digital Promise Micro-credential Platform and program. We have expanded our ability to serve historically and systematically excluded learners through our suite of credentialing products, partnerships, and services. For the Micro-credential Platform, we have launched several features that support assessors in providing more efficient and timely feedback to learners while also engaging in deep user research to understand K-12 learners, postsecondary learners, and users who have earned 11 or more micro-credentials on our platform.

Shifting Education with Learning Pathways: Becoming Your Portrait of a Graduate

In "Shifting Education with Learning Pathways: Becoming Your Portrait of a Graduate," Digital Promise introduces the Portrait of a Graduate model, which provides a useful framework to inform the preparation of learners to thrive within an ever-changing world and build the essential skills they will need to succeed personally and professionally. A Portrait identifies the broad skill sets that students must develop and apply across subjects and throughout learning, work, and life to reach their full potential.

Learn how the integration of Portrait Mindsets, Skill Sets, and Practices through Integrated Learning Pathways presents an opportunity to make fundamental shifts to how school leaders and policy makers envision and leverage teaching and learning systems to better prepare students for a successful future.

DEVELOPERS

Fostering relationships with the edtech development community is a pivotal part of Digital Promise's work. By collaborating with districts, relying on learning sciences research, and incorporating broader community input through co-design opportunities, developers can create more effective and equitable educational solutions.

Shaping the Future of Learning with VITAL Prize Innovators

The VITAL Prize Challenge, a $6 million prize challenge launched by U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), provided funding, resources, and capacity-building support for small teams to bring new innovations to K-12 learning, with focus on rapid and continuous learning assessment, mathematical literacy to promote a future STEM workforce, or other novel concepts and technologies to support diverse communities of K-12 student learners and teachers.

Following three competitive rounds of programming, finalists presented their minimum viable prototypes (MVP) in live pitch sessions, resulting in a first, second, and third prize-winning team for each track, with grand prize winnings of up to $250,000 per team.

From hyper-personalized career discovery to multi-sensory learning systems for students who are blind or have low vision, the award-winning teams represent a new generation of emerging educational technology products designed to improve the experiences of students who have been historically and systematically excluded from learning and education systems.



The Impact of Product Certifications

Through our Product Certifications initiative, Digital Promise aims to foster an edtech industry that provides equitable learning opportunities for each learner to thrive, especially learners who are most often under-resourced.

Since launching in 2020, our mission has been to build a uniform, consistent, and transparent system for recognizing the product qualities and features that educators and learners care about most.

Digital Promise's Product Certification Platform has issued seven new certifications and awarded more than 200 Open Badges. Through this work, we hope districts can make more well-informed decisions about their edtech purchases.

Badging Coalition Forms New Partnership to Promote Equity in Digital Credentialing

We launched the Badging Coalition to support the development of an Open Source Badging Solution, which has yielded cross-sector collaboration, input, and a prototype. In addition, we also announced partnerships with 1EdTech and the Velocity Network Foundation, which will support our long-term goal of impacting equitable practices across the digital credentialing ecosystem. Looking ahead, we are excited to continue building on this momentum and further enhance our ability to realize our Impact Goals.

AI K12 Deeper Learning Summit

Though AI's influence in education is widely viewed as inevitable, how can we ensure humans remain in the loop? At the AI K12 Deeper Learning Summit in Anaheim, California, co-hosted by Digital Promise, team members presented on topics including feedback loops, Research-Practice-Industry Partnerships, how AI may impact the future of teaching, and acceptable use policies involving AI. The importance of keeping people at the center was central to all of these discussions.

We look forward to continuing to support system leaders and developers as they navigate AI tools in education, and hope the conversations started at the summit lead to ongoing collaboration and advancement of the field.



Photo credit: AUHSD Communications

The Power of Feedback Loops

How do we get insights to the people that need them the most? This question has guided Digital Promise's research into the design of successful feedback loops, and we've explored ways that different communities can collaborate to improve education.

What is a feedback loop?

An interaction between two or more parties that is purposeful, bidirectional, and iterative, and transforms the knowledge, actions, or goals of the engaged parties.

Through research and pilots with communities of researchers, practitioners, and edtech product developers, we have identified four principles we believe will promote education innovation and transformation through the creation of better feedback loops.

1. Design for mutual benefit
2. Find a facilitator
3. Attend to continuity, consensus, and customization
4. Lean into the tension

Learn more about these four principles here.

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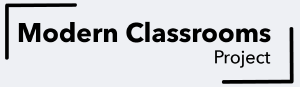

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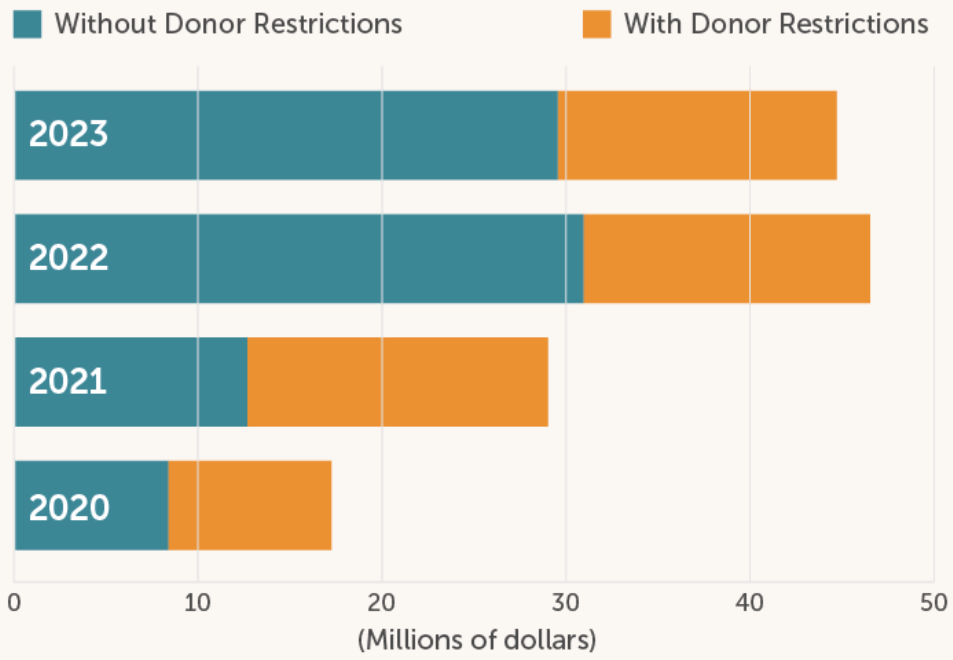
verizon innovative learning

- Zūm

Digital Promise Financials

FINANCIALS

Net Assets, by Year



Revenue by Source

Total 2023 Revenue = $145.1 million

