

2024 Annual Report

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

To our friends, supporters, and partners:

The past year has been a pivotal one. In 2024, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies dominated global attention, and the education community in particular found itself at a crossroads of new challenges and possibilities. Yet, at Digital Promise, this wasn't a new conversation. Since our original founding in 2008 as the National Center for Research in Advanced Information and Digital Technologies, we have been at the forefront of this work. We're proud to have continued to lead the charge, connecting the dots between what we know teachers and learners need to succeed and the innovations that technology developers are creating.

Our commitment to human-centered AI and education, grounded in a strong foundation of learning sciences research, continues to set Digital Promise apart. We informed major national policies, guided the work of other organizations, and created the foundational principles for AI literacy. Our focus remains on what this emerging technology means for curriculum, instruction, and the future of assessment. Through national research hubs like the EngageAI Institute and the U-GAIN

Reading Center, we're leveraging the expertise of researchers, technologists, universities, and education leaders to shape the future of education and build more equitable systems. As a multilingual learner myself, I am particularly excited about U-GAIN because it will shape how we can use generative AI to create new understanding and facilitate better teaching and learning for multilingual learners.



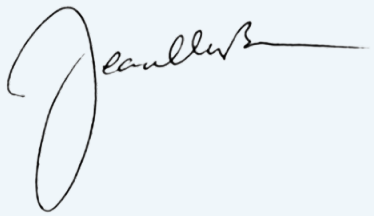
To further ensure these powerful technologies are used responsibly, we are also working to better organize the edtech marketplace. Our Responsibly Designed AI product certification, launched at the 2025 ASU+GSV Summit, provides a simple filter for school systems and educators to find products that are designed with learners in mind. In addition, our work with the Gates Foundation on math tech products will help create more effective tools and better support the vital work of teachers and school leaders. We also created a coalition with other leading edtech organizations—including 1EdTech, CAST, CoSN, ISTE, and SETDA—to ease the burden for schools of determining if an edtech product is of sufficient quality to be used by teachers and students.

Of course, Digital Promise's work and impact extends far beyond AI and emerging technologies. In summer 2024, we launched Chronic Absenteeism: Insights and Innovations, a six-month program that engaged 17 school districts (15 of which were members of our League of Innovative Schools) in tackling this complex issue. Serving more than 210,000 students nationwide, this cohort uncovered root causes of chronic absenteeism and developed real solutions through a blend of research, district-community collaboration, and multi-tiered approaches.

Our Learner Variability Navigator (LVN) also continues to inform how technology and learning sciences can finally create truly personalized learning experiences for all children. We also launched a Portrait of a Graduate initiative that aims to identify key points for curriculum integration and recognize skills in ways that increase learners' access to postsecondary learning and employment opportunities.

As we continue to push critical conversations and advancements in education, it's an exciting time to be at Digital Promise. I am grateful for our amazing staff, our partners, and our generous funders who allow us to do the important work of shaping the future of education.

In partnership,



Jean-Claude Brizard
President and CEO, Digital Promise

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH RESEARCH

AI and Emerging Technologies

In 2024, Digital Promise was at the forefront of conversations about AI's impact on education thanks to our work at the intersection of learning sciences research, practice, and technology, which helps us connect the dots between what we know teachers and learners need, and the innovations that technology developers are creating.

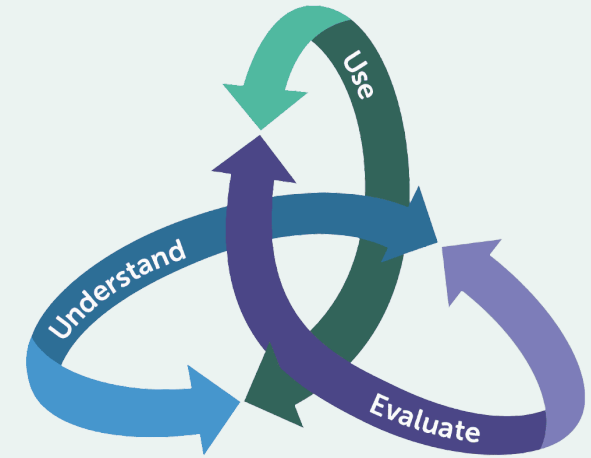


In addition to contributing to the U.S. Department of Education's 2024 guidance on AI to schools nationwide, Digital Promise published multiple reports on AI; organized and participated in numerous in-person events and online webinars to provide guidance to educators, researchers, developers, and policymakers; and appeared in dozens of leading news outlets and publications —reinforcing our vision for safe, equitable, and meaningful AI in education that puts people first.In September 2024, Digital Promise was awarded a grant by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to launch and lead the Using Generative Artificial Intelligence for Reading R&D Center (U-GAIN

Reading), a national research and development institute to investigate how to use generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) to improve elementary school reading instruction. U-GAIN Reading will partner with school districts from across the U.S. to understand how GenAI and the Science of Reading can be used to individualize reading supports to meet the needs of each individual student in U.S. elementary schools.

AI Literacy Framework

AI literacy is the knowledge and skills that enable humans to critically understand, evaluate, and use AI systems and tools to safely and ethically participate in an increasingly digital world. In June 2024, Digital Promise published **AI Literacy: A Framework to Understand, Evaluate, and Use Emerging Technology**, which describes a framework to leverage AI systems and tools for powerful learning and strategies for educational leaders to design and implement a clear approach to AI literacy for their specific communities.



AI Literacy Framework

Digital Promise

Digital Promise's AI Literacy Framework emphasizes that understanding and evaluating AI are critical to making informed decisions about if and how to use AI in learning environments, and connects AI literacy skills to initiatives that educators implemented with

emerging technologies for decades, such as computational thinking, data literacy, digital citizenship, and media literacy.



AI-powered edtech must be designed responsibly to benefit all learners. Digital Promise's Responsibly Designed AI product certification recognizes products that reduce algorithmic bias, label generative AI content, protect data privacy, and support educator agency.Certified products demonstrate transparency and ethical AI use in education. Developers from the first four certified products shared key strategies and lessons learned in a blog series, offering insights into building AI that centers trust, equity, and learning.

National Research Leadership

Digital Promise is working to extend the reach of our research through hubs that connect researchers, practitioners, developers, and other key education players. By combining the expertise and perspectives required to connect research to meaningful improvement of teaching and learning at scale, hubs are one way we're working to ensure research rises to the level of the challenges we want to address.



EngageAI Institute

As one of five NSF-funded institutes that connect AI and education, the AI Institute for Engaged Learning (EngageAI)—a coalition of four universities and Digital Promise—is working across disciplines and with practitioners to create more engaging experiences for students through AI-powered, story-driven learning environments, while also strengthening the opportunities for students to learn science more deeply.

Acting as the nexus for the EngageAI Institute, Digital Promise facilitates activities and communication to tackle the challenges associated with narrative-based learning using AI. From leveraging large language models to help teachers bring lessons to life to creating a pipeline to support data analysis, the institute is partnering with both an ethics team and practitioner advisory board to ensure the uses of AI are safe, responsible, and aligned with the goals of science education.

In April 2024, Digital Promise announced our collaboration on SafeInsights, a large-scale education research hub that enables researchers to deeply understand how students learn. SafeInsights will partner with schools and districts to leverage learning platform data without compromising student privacy, paving the way for the development of effective, data-driven educational tools and practices. Funded through the National Science Foundation, SafeInsights will foster collaborative efforts between institutions and partners—including researchers, engineers, educators, and students—to transform STEM education.

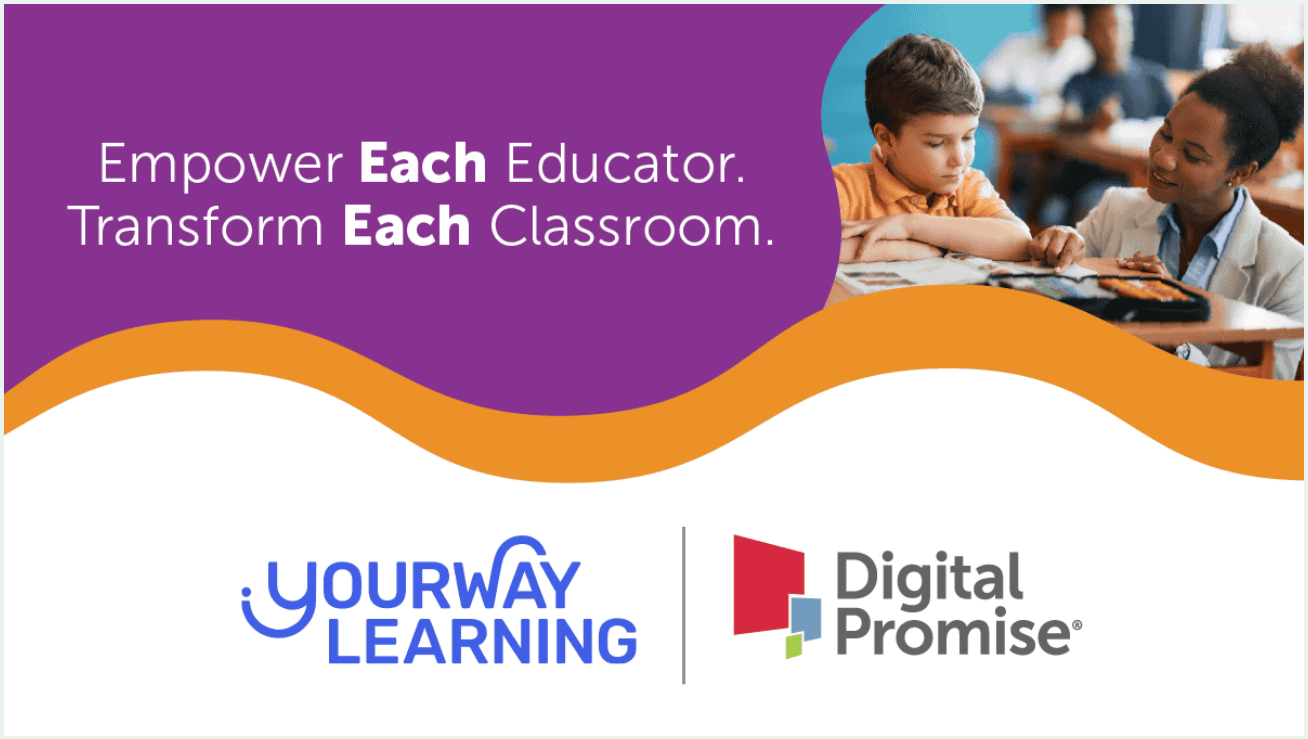
Similarly, SEERNet brings together five large-scale digital learning platforms, each of which serves more than 100,000 students per year. With funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, this program aims to open up digital learning platforms (DLPs) so that researchers can accelerate the pace of improvement within them. In October 2024, six research teams were welcomed to the network, reflecting a diversity of research agendas and practical relevance focused on enhancing student learning through DLPs.

Led by Digital Promise, the Center for Integrative Research in Computing and Learning Sciences (CIRCLS) was a community-based hub of researchers exploring and investigating technologies that will be available to learners in five to 10 years—specificaly examining the connected issues of emerging technologies, learning sciences, and designing for students from low-income and rural backgrounds, and other students needing specific supports. In October 2024, CIRCLS published a report investigating how interdisciplinary, exploratory projects contribute to NSF's mission of building scientific knowledge and translating research into practice.



Research-Based Partnership and Impact: Learner Variability Navigator

In July 2024, Digital Promise partnered with Edthena, a leading provider of innovative technologies to support educator professional learning, to help train and support teachers on Science of Reading-based instruction by incorporating Digital Promise's **Learner Variability Project** resources into Edthena offerings. Now, as teachers complete coaching cycles, they will be able to select a Science of Reading pathway within the AI Coach by Edthena platform and access Digital Promise's research-based content, strategies, and best practices.



Digital Promise also partnered with Yourway Learning to launch LVN Yourway, a co-developed solution that transforms deep learning science into actionable, AI-supported strategies for the

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

Chronic Absenteeism Cohort

Chronic absenteeism—defined as missing 10% or more of school days—surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly doubling during the 2021-22 school year. In 2023, about 1 in 4 students was chronically absent. Digital Promise announced in June 2024 the launch of **Chronic Absenteeism: Insights and Innovations**, a six-month program engaging 17 school districts nationwide, 15 of which are members of the League of Innovative Schools, in tackling the complex issue of chronic absenteeism and collectively serving 210,000 students. Together, the cohort uncovered root causes of chronic absenteeism in their districts and developed solutions through a blend of research, district-community collaboration, and multi-tiered approaches.



What set this effort apart wasn't just the diversity of districts or the size of the cohort; it was the process. Each district developed a chronic absenteeism blueprint by conducting data analysis; identifying the systems, conditions and processes needed to improve attendance; and engaging students in the design and development of solutions. Through the cohort, we saw how the most powerful interventions were rooted in belonging—attendance improved when students felt seen and families were engaged as partners.

In an interview with the Springfield News-Sun, Digital Promise Senior Advisor and co-lead of the cohort Baron R. Davis said the six-month program was a success not just because of improved attendance rates, but because districts left with a new posture:

> *"One that sees chronic absenteeism not as defiance but as data. Not as a problem to be fixed, but as a message to be decoded… Districts emerged with an understanding of ways to shift their perspectives, gather new insights, and*

> *form deeper connections to their students and families who are navigating barriers."*

In New York, Hudson City School District has made notable progress in reducing chronic absenteeism by 12 percentage points this past year. Through intentional outreach and deep listening, they uncovered gaps in transportation, access, and family understanding of district logistics, which were preventing students from showing up to school. In response, they created a dedicated attendance hotline for families to communicate about absences or ask for help, and even purchased a van to help students get to school. As elementary principal Mark Brenneman shared, none of these insights would have come to light without intentional outreach to families in the Hudson community.

Learn more about the unique strategies districts enacted to improve chronic absenteeism through the cohort.

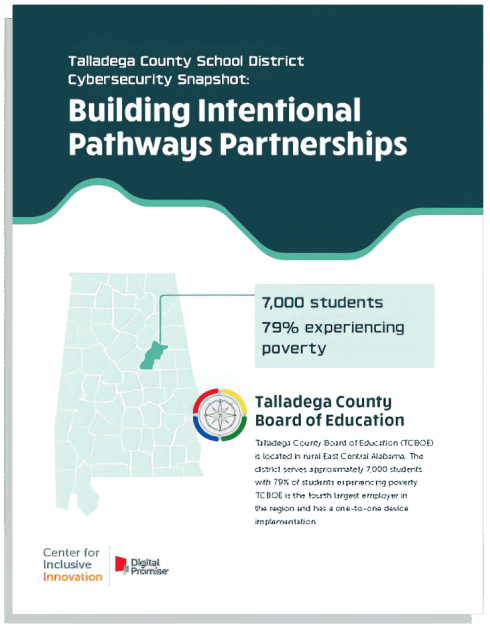
Cybersecurity Cohort



In 2024, the Center for Inclusive Innovation continued supporting 11 districts across the nation—nine of which are members of the League of Innovative Schools—in launching year two of their three-year **Cybersecurity Pathways programs**. This rapidly growing initiative not only provides students with cybersecurity skills and certifications, it also has a strong emphasis on providing access for students to see diverse representation across race, gender, and socioeconomic status in the field.

Read how Suffern Central School District's cybersecurity program is nurturing new paths for both students and educators.

Located in rural East Central Alabama, Talladega County Board of Education (TCBOE) has seen tremendous success with their Cybersecurity Pathways program. In their first two years, TCBOE's program has served over 200 high schoolers and showcased the skills students have built at national competitions—including winning third place in the National Cyber Summit's Cyber Cup, outperforming several university and professional teams, and placing first in state and sixth in the U.S. for CyberPatriot 17. TCBOE's success and leadership in the region has paved the way for a cybersecurity talent pipeline to take root, powered by bold collaboration between K–12 schools, postsecondary institutions, and local industry.



League of Innovative Students 2024 Cohort


Maya
Member, League of Innovative Students

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH NETWORKS

League of Innovative Schools

Digital Promise welcomed 30 new school districts to the League of Innovative Schools for the 2024-25 school year. League members are selected based on their educational leadership, demonstrated commitment to equity and excellence, innovative vision for learning, key achievements, and collaborative spirit. Every League member gathered at our biannual convening, hosted in October 2024 by Lindsay Unified School District in California, where new members were officially welcomed into the network by fellow members and participated in school visits in Lindsay, gained hands-on learning experiences around timely topics in education, and forged connections with fellow district leaders. The new cohort contributes toward the network's reach of more than 150 districts across 34 states, and continues its cumulative impact to 4.4 million students served over time.



In 2024, the Digital Promise team launched three League Learning Collaboratives. Led by superintendents and guided by Digital Promise, learning collaboratives bring together members across role types and focus areas to tackle shared challenges and priorities. In the 2024-25 school year, leaders explore nuanced, timely challenges including student voice and engagement, high school redesign, and digital equity. This learning model underscores the power of peer-driven learning, which plays a vital role in how the League takes local innovations and scales those practices in schools nationally.

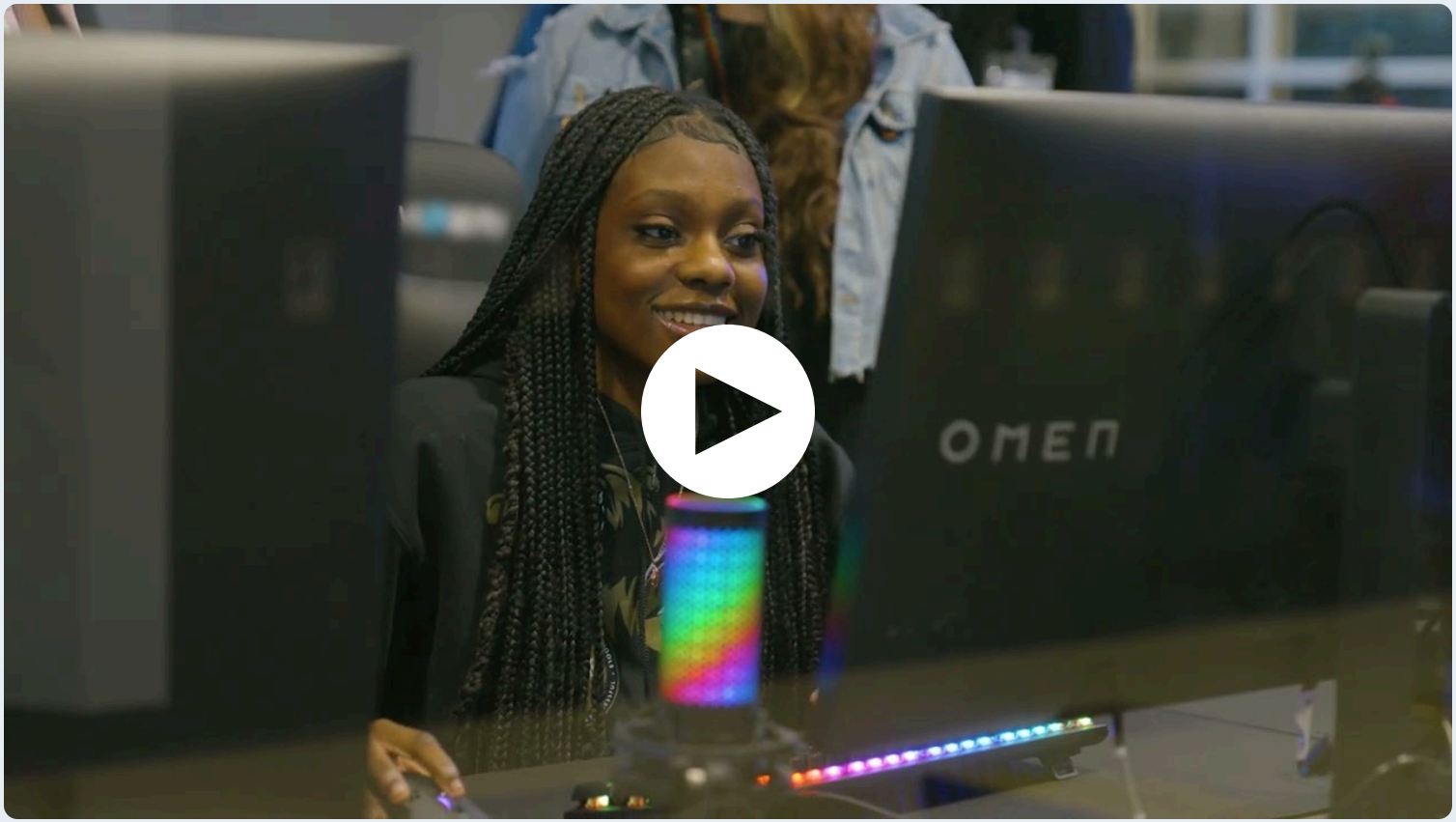
Global Cities Education Network



In November 2024, the Global Cities Education Network (GCEN) hosted its annual symposium, as well as an international study tour connected to the Whole Child Development Implementation Cohort, in Helsinki, Finland. This event brought together members of the GCEN and League of

Innovative Schools networks to explore Finland's innovative approach to addressing education challenges such as meeting the needs of learners struggling with a sense of belonging; tailoring education to address learner variability; and addressing the lasting academic and mental health effects of the pandemic. Leaders took practical applications back to their school systems, speaking to the power of traveling outside of their home countries to experience approaches from around the world.

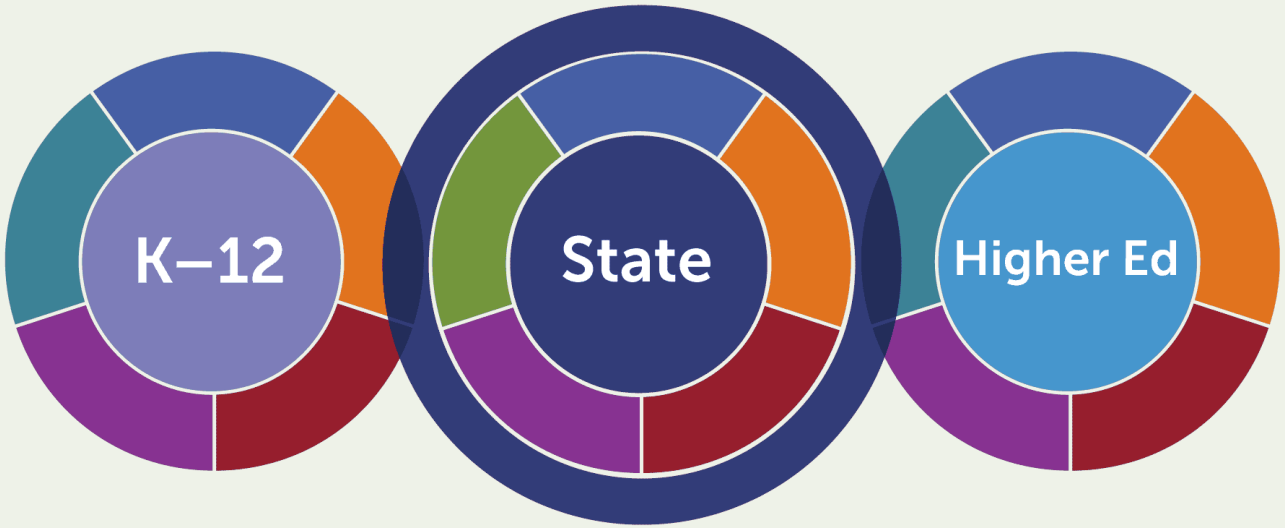
HP AI Spotlight School



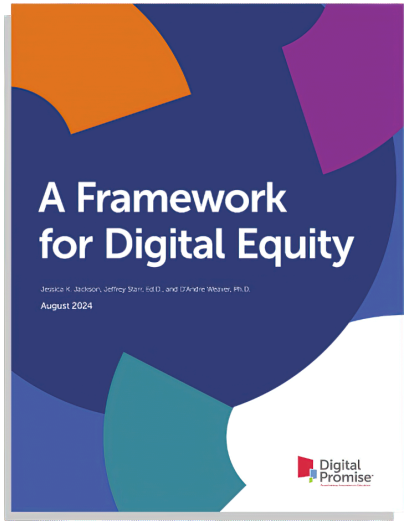
In December 2024, Digital Promise announced Ypsilanti Community High School (Michigan) as the newest HP AI Spotlight School, joining three other HP Spotlight Schools that connect powerful teaching and learning with cutting edge technology through HP Learning Studios. Ypsilanti Community Schools is a member of the League of Innovative Schools and was selected to be the first HP AI Spotlight School based on its educational leadership, commitment to innovation, and thoughtful approach to the adoption of safe and collaborative AI.

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH DIGITAL EQUITY

Digital Equity Framework



Digital Promise's Digital Equity Framework is a set of principles, guidelines, and policy recommendations designed to bridge the digital divides at the state level, for K-12 systems, and for higher education. Applied together, it will ensure that all people living, learning, and working in the United States are able to thrive in today's digital world. By using the Digital Equity Framework, leaders of school systems and higher education institutions can establish a strong foundation to transform current teaching practices and learning experiences, while also future-proofing their schools for the evolving technological landscape.



Dive deeper into the context behind the Digital Equity Framework in our August 2024 white paper, ***A Framework for Digital Equity****.*

Verizon Innovative Learning Schools



Digital Promise and Verizon welcomed 34 Title 1 middle and high schools from 13 districts across the country into the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program in fall 2024. Through the continued partnership between Digital Promise and Verizon, the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program works side-by-side with schools and districts to get internet-connected devices into the hands of students and to enhance how teachers use technology in the classroom with dedicated coaches, professional development, and community building with an ultimate goal of achieving sustainable digital equity throughout the school district. The 11th cohort expanded the program's reach to 626 schools in 115 school districts across 39 states and Washington, D.C.



Chloe, a sixth-grader at Jasper County Middle School in rural Georgia and a student tech team member, became the first student in the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools network to earn CTL Certification, allowing her to repair school devices under warranty—significantly reducing the need to outsource repairs and navigate loaner devices due to processing times. In New Brunswick and Jersey City, New Jersey, student tech teams operate like in-house repair hubs, tackling Tier 1 issues and transforming turnaround times.

Student tech teams, which are staples in Verizon Innovative Learning Schools across the country, go far beyond troubleshooting devices—they support the development of student leaders, innovators, and problem-solvers. Said Angie Beneciuk, the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools coach at New Brunswick Middle School: “When students are empowered to take ownership, they don’t just complete tasks; they build real-world skills and mindsets that fuel long-term growth.”

Computational Thinking Pathways



While all 50 states in the U.S. have created computer science and computational thinking (CT) standards and policies, not all districts are implementing them uniformly or effectively across their schools. Three school districts across Pennsylvania are partnering in Digital Promise's first-ever regional cohort for CT pathways, working collaboratively to map where CT is embedded in their schools and classrooms to identify gaps and ensure all students have access to modern essential skills. Digital Promise's CT Pathways Toolkit helps school and district leaders establish CT pathways aligned with their internal initiatives and vision to create inclusive opportunities for all students.

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH PATHWAYS

Badge Engine

Since 2013, Digital Promise has been at the forefront of the micro-credential and digital credential space, awarding more than 30,000 micro-credentials in partnership with numerous organizations. In October 2024, Digital Promise proudly launched Badge Engine, a free, open-source badging technology that empowers organizations to issue digital credentials. Badge Engine reflects our commitment to equity through providing an open, accessible technology for institutions to support all learners with meaningful recognition of their skills.



San Diego STEM Pathways launch

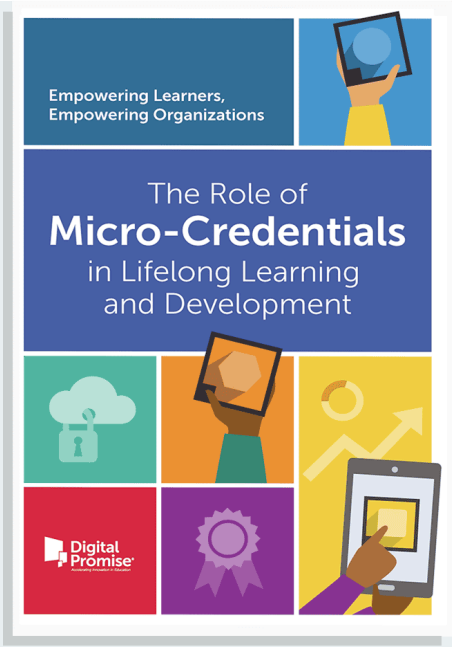
Digital Promise has worked with San Diego school districts through the League of Innovative Schools for over a decade and connected with many local education and STEM champions. In partnership with these champions, Digital Promise collaboratively developed the San Diego STEM Pathways initiative, a regional effort that aims to advance community-driven and flexible approaches to STEM pathways that position 100,000 more historically and systematically excluded

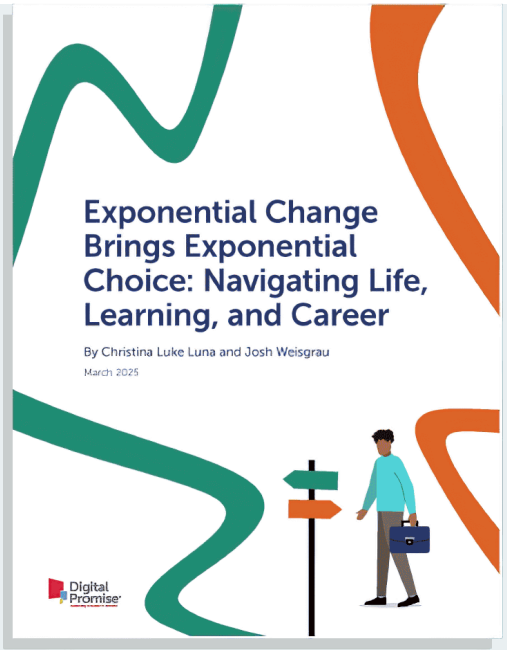
learners on the trajectory towards high-impact STEM careers. To design sustainable pathways for learners, Digital Promise created the San Diego STEM Community Advisory Committee, a diverse 14-member committee representing early childhood education, K-12, postsecondary institutions, workforce development, community-based organizations, and philanthropy across the region.



Advancing Learner Pathways

Digital Promise produced multiple publications in 2024 that highlight actionable ways in which learners can gain recognition for academic and technical skills, as well as the ability to adapt and interpret those skills to current and future contexts. The reports include:





- **The Role of Micro-Credentials in Lifelong Learning and Development: Empowering Learners, Empowering Organizations** (e-book available in English and Spanish)
- **Exponential Change Brings Exponential Choice: Navigating Life, Learning, and Career**
- **Lift Every Voice in Tech: Co-Designed Recommendations to Support Black Workers and Learners Seeking to Enter and Advance in Technology Industry Career Pathways**
- **Shifting Education with Learning Pathways: Becoming Your Portrait of a Graduate**

In November 2024, PBS released Roadtrip Nation: Built on Skills, a two-episode documentary series about frontline workers scaling up their careers. With the help of Digital Promise, frontline workers embarked on a road trip to sit down with professionals who carved out

fulfilling career pathways. Rita Fennelly-Atkinson, senior director of credentials, shared her journey and experience with micro-credentials with the Roadtrippers.

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH GLOBAL OUTREACH

UNESCO Global Education Coalition

In 2024, Digital Promise joined UNESCO's Global Education Coalition to help advance educational transformation around the world. As part of our membership in this international effort, Digital Promise will support the GEC's Digital Transformation Collaborative, a multi-stakeholder group committed to driving meaningful, holistic digital transformation across education systems. Digital Promise has identified initial areas of alignment between our own global work and the collaborative's digital transformation framework and plans to leverage these initiatives to advance the framework globally.

Ciena Solutions Challenge

Since launching in 2021, more than 730 educators from schools and youth organizations across 77 countries have engaged with the Ciena Solutions Challenge, a global design challenge by Digital

Promise and Ciena that invites middle and high school students globally to use Challenge Based Learning to design solutions that address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals within their communities.





The 2024 Ciena Solutions Challenge Sustainability Award recipients included 20 project teams that received a $2,500 Sustainability Award and 18 teams that received $500 to sustain and scale their projects. We also recognized student teams from Ciena Solutions Challenge Model Schools in Atlanta, Georgia, and Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. From earthquake emergency backpacks in

Kazakhstan to green roofs in Peru, these projects showcase the talents of youth creators and changemakers from around the world.

Blended Learning in Haiti



In 2024, the McNulty Foundation and the Aspen Institute named Jean-Claude Brizard, president and CEO of Digital Promise and an Aspen Pahara Fellow, and Nedgine Paul Deroly, co-founder and CEO of Anseye Pou Ayiti (APA), as joint recipients of the McNulty Foundation's prestigious John P. McNulty Prize due to their work equipping the next generation of education leaders in Haiti. Since 2021, APA and Digital Promise, alongside other local and international organizations,

have partnered to implement a blended learning pilot program in rural Haiti. Alongside the other selected organizations, APA received $150,000 to continue its vital work.

2024 YouthMADE Festival



The YouthMADE Festival is a global celebration of youth creativity and innovation where students, educators, and advocates around the world showcase student-led projects in making, activism, art, and design. In May 2024, the YouthMADE Festival hosted 20 live events and 46 pieces of content from students and teachers worldwide, with more than 500 people registered to take part in celebrating creative and innovative student work. For the first time, 10 recipients from six countries received a YouthMADE Festival Amplify Grant to expand and amplify student-led work. We also celebrated 49 youth creators and changemakers who received nominations for the YouthMADE Festival Community Awards, which invites teachers, students, families and community members around the world to recognize students who presented at the YouthMADE Festival.

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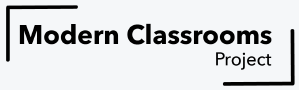

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Modern Classrooms
Project


My
WRITING COACH


NEXTGEN
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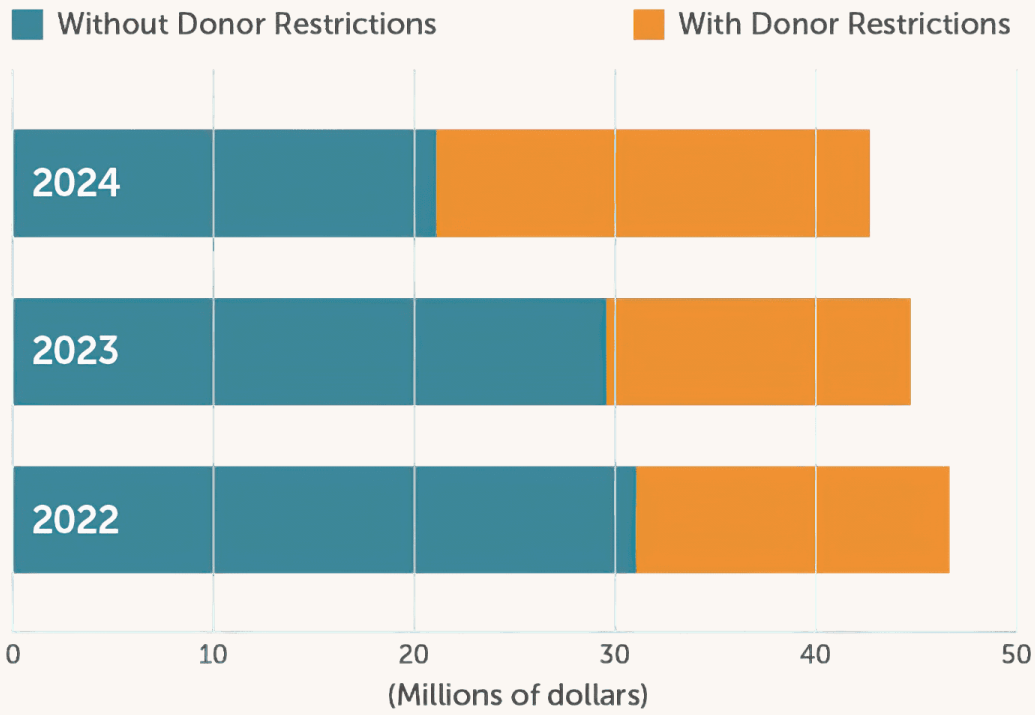


Tutored by Teachers



FINANCIALS

Net Assets, by Year



Revenue by Source

