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## White House to Launch "Digital Promise" Initiative

*Responding to President's Call to Action, Key Effort by Leaders in Industry and Universities to Transform Learning Technology*

Today, the White House and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the launch of "Digital Promise," a new national center created by Congress with bipartisan support to advance technologies to transform teaching and learning. Digital Promise will receive startup funds from the Department of Education as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. It will be overseen by board made up of prominent leaders in education and technology appointed by Secretary Duncan based on recommendations from the House of Representatives and United States Senate.

Digital Promise will work with leading researchers, entrepreneurs, and schools to identify and spur breakthrough learning technologies, determine quickly what's working and what's not, and transform today's fragmented learning technology market, paving the way for the widespread use of learning technologies that deliver the best results for students, parents, and teachers. These efforts build upon the President's call to create jobs by out-innovating, out-educating, and out-building the rest of the world, including the Administration's efforts to bring all of America's schools into the 21st century.

"Digital Promise is a unique partnership that will bring everyone together – educators, entrepreneurs, and researchers – to use technology to help students learn and teachers teach. There's no silver bullet when it comes to education, but technology can be a powerful tool, and Digital Promise will help us make the most of it." President Obama said.

"Created by Republicans and Democrats and championed by a coalition of educators and business leaders, Digital Promise is an independent nonprofit that will help spur breakthrough learning technologies. And it will help make sure Americans of all ages and races, regions and backgrounds can benefit from them. By harnessing the extraordinary work being done by educators, innovators, and citizens across this country, Digital Promise can help prepare Americans – and

America – to succeed in the 21st Century," said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

**To realize the potential of learning technology, Digital Promise will work with educators and leading researchers, technology firms, and entrepreneurs on three key challenges:**

• **Identifying Breakthrough Technologies.** For years, researchers have been working on developing educational software that is as effective as a personal tutor. Preliminary results from a DARPA/Navy "digital tutor" project suggest that we can reduce the time required to become an expert in IT from years to months. Achieving similar results in subjects such as math would transform K-12 education. Digital Promise will begin its work by partnering with technology firms and researchers to map the R&D landscape, identifying opportunities for similar breakthroughs in learning from cradle through a career.

• **Learning faster what's working and what's not.** Internet startups do rapid evaluations of their sites, running test after test to continually improve their services. When it comes to education, R&D cycles can take years, producing results that are out of date the minute they're released. Digital Promise will work with researchers and entrepreneurs to develop new approaches for rapidly evaluating new products.

• **Transforming the market for learning technologies.** With more than 14,000 school districts, and an outdated procurement system, it's difficult for entrepreneurs to break into the market, and it's also tough to prove that their products can deliver meaningful results. Meanwhile, the amount we invest in R&D in K-12 education is estimated at just 0.2% of total spending on K-12 education, compared to 10-20% of revenues spent on R&D in many knowledge-intensive industries such as software development and biotech. Digital Promise will work with school districts to create "smart demand" that drives private sector investment in innovation.

Today, Secretary Duncan announced the inaugural board members of Digital Promise and the Administration made several additional announcements, including $15M in new awards from the National Science Foundation to support research that is developing next-generation learning environments. In addition, a number of private-sector partners announced an array of related efforts, including an initiative by schools and school districts to improve educational outcomes through the wider use of effective teaching and learning technologies; the launch of a new national alliance of top education-policy researchers focused on improving outcomes among the Nation's disadvantaged children; and a number of new challenges and prizes for the development of video games and other forms of digital entertainment that spur learning and interest in science, math, and engineering.

Today's event will be livestreamed at www.whitehouse.gov/live. For further details about Digital Promise and related initiatives please visit www.digitalpromise.org and http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/15/fact-sheet-digital-promise-initiative.