Digital Promise Awarded New National Science Foundation Grant to Support Scaling Inclusive K-12 Computational Pathways

Eight school districts will partner with the nonprofit to increase computational thinking and computer science participation by learners from underrepresented backgrounds

OCTOBER 20, 2022 | **Los Angeles, CA -** Digital Promise is proud to partner with eight school districts nationally for **Districts Helping Districts: Scaling Inclusive Computational Thinking (CT) Pathways**, a four-year, approximately $2 million Research Practitioner Partnership (RPP) project that will support districts from eight different states (from geographies as varied as Alaska to Mississippi) in developing and refining K-12 computing pathways that attract and retain a broader and more diverse range of youth in computer science.

"In our increasingly technological society, computational thinking skills and practices are relevant to nearly every career path, as well as generally in civic life. Students need improved, intentionally designed pathways and supports to increase and maintain their participation in computational thinking and computer science," said Jean-Claude Brizard, president and CEO of Digital Promise. "This new Research Practitioner Partnership furthers Digital Promise's commitment to expand opportunities for learners who have been historically and systematically excluded from such spaces, and to create more equitable and inclusive K-12 computing pathways."

Led by Dr. Quinn Burke, co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs) Dr. Pati Ruiz and Dr. Kelly Mills, and Senior Staff Dr. Merijke Coenraad, the Districts Helping Districts project builds upon the team's successful RPP, "Developing Inclusive K-12 Computing Pathways for the League of Innovative Schools" (NSF #1837386). Scaling this work up, the team will work intensively with partnering districts to refine and expand Digital Promise's emerging CT Pathways Toolkit, which guides district leadership teams through the process of articulating and implementing inclusive K-12 computing pathways.

The vision of the project is for districts to help fellow districts by:
- Offering guidance and support to peer districts on their own K-12 pathways design
- Providing classroom-based examples of their own implemented pathways

- Collaborating on persistent challenges around how to measure progress at both the classroom and district levels
- Improving the shared toolkit for wider scale and adoption by additional districts

"At this point, all 50 state departments of education have implemented computer science (CS) standards in some form," said Quinn Burke, the project PI. "At this point in K-12 computing education, it's really up to the districts to interpret and adopt these standards accordingly. This is where the current challenge lies in computing education—and district buy-in and ownership are key to greater inclusion in a field long known for its persistent lack of it."

For more information on computational thinking and its importance in K-12 education, please visit: https://digitalpromise.org/initiative/computational-thinking.

Press Contact:
My Nguyen
Digital Promise
mnguyen@digitalpromise.org

                                    ***

About Digital Promise
Digital Promise is a global nonprofit working to expand opportunity for every learner. We work with educators, researchers, technology leaders, and communities to design, investigate, and scale innovations that support learners, especially those who've been historically and systematically excluded. Our vision is that every person engages in powerful learning experiences that lead to a life of well-being, fulfillment, and economic mobility. For more information, visit the Digital Promise website and follow @digitalpromise for updates.