THE WHITE HOUSE
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ConnectED: Realizing the Promise of Digital Learning

"Imagine what it means for educators to spend less time grading tests and papers, more time helping young people learn. Imagine more businesses starting here and hiring here, because they know for a fact that the young people here are going to be equipped with the skills that are better than anybody else on Earth."
                    --President Barack Obama, Remarks at Buck Lodge Middle School, February 2014

To prepare America's students with the skills they need to get good jobs and compete with workers in other countries, we must create increasingly interactive, personalized learning experiences driven by new technology. That's why in 2013, President Obama announced the [ConnectED Initiative](), outlining a vision to ensure students have access to broadband in schools and libraries, make devices and high quality digital education content affordable and available to students, and support educators to harness the power of a digitally-enabled learning environment.

Today, the White House is hosting the *Symposium for Innovative PreK-12 Ed Tech: Sustaining the Momentum*, a national convening of educators, technologists, Federal officials, and private and philanthropic leaders to share best practices and next steps to continue the work of transforming learning through the effective use of technology.

The Administration is also highlighting a list of accomplishments and milestones achieved thus far through ConnectED.

➢ As of June 2015, the percentage of school districts **with high-speed broadband in their classrooms has increased from 30 percent to 77 percent—benefitting over 20 million students and cutting the connectivity divide in half**. We've continued to make tremendous progress connecting America's students to high-speed broadband with millions more connected in 2016.
➢ **More than three thousand superintendents have signed the Future Ready pledge**, demonstrating their commitment to set a collaborative vision for digital learning and empower educators through personalized professional development; and
➢ Through commitments from the private sector, **over 5 million students now have the hardware, software, and digital content to make the most of these connectivity gains**.

UPGRADING CONNECTIVITY

The ConnectED Initiative is on track to reach its goal of connecting 99 percent of America's students to next-generation broadband and high-speed wireless in their schools and libraries by

2018. According to a report released in June 2015 by EducationSuperHighway (ESH), **ConnectED has already cut the connectivity divide in schools in half since 2013**, and 77 percent of school districts now meet minimum standards for high-speed broadband, compared to 30 percent in 2013. EducationSuperHighway plans to release a new report in January demonstrating even greater progress in bridging the digital divide.

➢ The FCC and the E-rate program have been integral to the growth and success of ConnectED by providing the infrastructure investment necessary to upgrade schools and libraries' basic connectivity to high-speed, wireless broadband essential to personalized learning. FCC modernization orders in July 2014 and December 2014 **together represented the largest overhaul of the E-rate program in its 18-year history**, delivering billions of dollars annually to dramatically expand high-speed Internet connectivity for America's schools and libraries.

➢ To ensure that schools can make the most of connectivity gains, the Office of Educational Technology at the U.S. Department of Education has released guidance documents to support districts in their transition to effective digital learning, including:
o The 2016 National Education Technology Plan, which calls for new efforts in providing home Internet access to make everywhere, all-the-time learning possible, and has been downloaded over 20,000 times since its release.
o Future Ready Schools: Building Technology Infrastructure for Learning, which provides practical, actionable information intended to help district leaders navigate the many decisions required to deliver cutting-edge connectivity to students, and has been downloaded over 2,700 times.
o The Federal Funding for Technology Dear Colleague Letter, which outlines how federal grant funds may be used to support innovative technology-based strategies to personalize learning.

ENHANCING DIGITAL CONTENT

In addition, as part of the ConnectED effort we've seen real progress to get more students access to high-quality digital content to help them learn. Efforts include:

Open eBooks:

➢ **Open Road** is joining Open eBooks by contributing hundreds of popular titles to the app's collection, which already has thousands of popular and award-winning titles and is availableto kids in need at no cost. In addition, current Open eBooks publishers **Bloomsbury, Candlewick, Hachette, Lee and Low, and Macmillan** are expanding the collection of titles they make available through the app. They join publishers Cricket, HarperCollins, National Geographic, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster.
➢ Open eBooks partners include the Digital Public Library of America, The New York Public Library, and First Book; educational technology company Clever; and digital books distributor Baker & Taylor. Funding support has been provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and foundations.
➢ **Everyone** will soon have access to a web-enabled "Instant Classics" library that includes free, openly licensed books for all readers to download. This open collection features classic titles from authors such as Louisa May Alcott and Mark Twain with crowd-sourced cover art

from professional designers provided by Recovering the Classics.

➢ In its first year, there has been strong uptake, with usage in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and U.S. military bases. Readership continues to accelerate thanks in part to a new streamlined authentication process from Clever.

#GoOpen

➢ 100 #GoOpen Districts from 29 states have committed to replace at least one textbook with openly licensed educational resources within a year. #GoOpen Ambassador Districts mentor #GoOpen Launch Districts as they design and implement their strategy for transitioning to openly licensed educational resources.

➢ 19 states have launched statewide #GoOpen initiatives to support districts as they expand their use of high-quality openly licensed educational resources. These states include: Arizona, California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

➢ The Office of Educational Technology has released the #GoOpen District Launch Packet, a resource designed for districts that are implementing a systematic approach to incorporating openly licensed educational resources into their curriculum, and the #GoOpen Regional Summit in a Box for #GoOpen Districts to host and organize regional summits and facilitate sharing best practices for using openly licensed educational resources.

EMPOWERING EDUCATORS

ConnectED has invested in enhancing the skills of teachers, ensuring that every educator in America receives support and training in using education technology tools that can improve student learning.

➢ Since the launch of Future Ready in 2014, **over 3,100 district superintendents, representing more than 19 million students across the country, have signed the Future Ready District Pledge** and committed to foster and lead a culture of digital learning in their district. To date, 25 states and Washington, D.C., have launched Future Ready statewide initiatives.

➢ Over 60 national and regional partner organizations have committed to helping states, districts and schools become Future Ready, and over 2,000 district leaders, representing over 500 districts, have participated in one of 19 Future Ready summits or workshops.

➢ The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology has released Personalized Professional Learning for Future Ready Leaders, a web portal featuring 50 videos of school leaders from around the country sharing innovative approaches to integrating technology to support learning.

➢ The Office of Educational Technology, in partnership with the American Institutes for Research, has developed a research-based synthesis defining a set of policies and practices implemented by successful Future Ready district leaders. Characteristics of Future Ready Leadership: A Research Synthesis provides a basis for personalized professional learning to expand the capacity of district superintendents to effectively transition to digital learning.

➢ Future Ready Schools will host eight new 2017 regional institutes focused on supporting leadership, creating cultures of innovation, developing emphasis on the effective use of data, and

supporting personalized learning implementation by target audiences, such as school administrators, principals, technology directors, teachers, and students.

➢ The School Superintendents Association, the Alliance for Excellent Education and Bellwether Partners are working together to develop the Rural District Future Ready Guidebook that will provide guidance tailored to rural district leaders on how to plan for the effective use of technology to personalize instruction for all students.

➢ The Office of Educational Technology and Alliance for Excellent Education have launched Future Ready Librarians, an expansion of the Future Ready initiative aimed at raising awareness among district and school leaders about the valuable role librarians can play in leading, teaching, and supporting districts as they transition to personalized digital learning in schools.

UNLEASHING PRIVATE SECTOR INNOVATION

The President called upon the private sector to work with governments and non-profits to ensure that all kids can leverage the latest technological tools and products. They responded in a big way by committing over **$2 billion worth** of hardware, software, professional development, and digital content to students across the nation. Over **five million students** are using these resources, which were provided by Apple, Adobe, Autodesk, AT&T, Coursera, edX, Esri, Microsoft, O'Reilly Media, Prezi, Sprint, and Verizon. Today, Non-profit Digital Promise is publishing stories on their website of some of the students and schools that have benefited from these resources. And examples of overall impact include the following:

➢ **Adobe** has delivered creativity and e-learning software to over 950,000 students and teachers at more than 1,450 schools and launched more than 20 district-wide Adobe & ConnectED programs. Adobe plans to keep the program open while continuing to seek new ways to help educators

➢ **Apple's** ConnectED program has helped 114 low-income schools in 29 states teach and learn with iPads and other Apple hardware. The program, which includes teacher professional development and support, has already impacted over 4,000 teachers and more than 50,000 students.

➢ Through **Autodesk's** commitment, more than 335,00 students and educators from secondary schools in the US have taken advantage of the company's professional software and services for use in classrooms, labs, and at home.

➢ Through **Esri's** participation in ConnectED, over 200,000 students in over 4000 schools have access to professional online GIS for doing projects, and tens of thousands of teachers and students each month are exploring classroom content with introductory GIS activities. Esri will continue and expand its ConnectED offerings over the next three years, with more tools, and learning materials.

➢ **Microsoft** has provided well over 3 million students with free access to Office 365 in K-12 schools across the U.S. Also, Microsoft deeply discounted the price of its Windows operating system for new school-purchased devices, and they have deployed over 2.9 million of these devices. In addition, students and teachers have access to industry-recognized certifications through their IT Academy program, which has enrolled over 700 additional schools, reaching an estimated 60,000 students.

➢ **Prezi** has provided over 286,000 Prezi Pro licenses to students and staff. The majority of the company's commitment has been deployed and will offer its presentation platform to schools

that otherwise would not have access until the company meets its goal.

➢ **Sprint** has approved 53,432 lines of free wireless service for schools, of which 21,747 lines in 17 states are deployed thus far. In October 2016, Sprint announced its 1 Million Project as part of a My Brother's Keeper event with the President and will be providing up to 1 million lines of free broadband service and a free device, for 4 years, to low income high school students who lack internet access at home. Sprint is currently accepting applications for this project.

➢ **Verizon** has reached nearly 300,000 students across all 50 states and the District of Columbia with ConnectED-inspired programs that provide technology and STEM education. Today, Verizon is **announcing the expansion of the Verizon Innovative Learning schools program**, providing up to 100 Title I middle schools with technology, internet access, ongoing teacher professional development, and STEM courses and enrichment, to provide students with equal access to technology and increase student interest and achievement in STEM.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS

Today's event at the White House builds on progress led by schools and districts across the country. Examples of innovative models of digital learning yielding results for students and teachers include:

● **Kettle Moraine School District, WI** - As Future Ready districts have begun to transform teaching and learning through the use of technology, they recognize the critical need for professional development. Kettle Moraine School District in Wisconsin used micro-credentials to provide opportunities for teachers to engage in rigorous, self-paced, job-embedded professional learning that is aligned to district goals and connected to the daily skills they need in their classrooms. Teachers submit learning plans with measurable benchmarks, accomplish that learning in a manner that best fits their learning needs, apply the learning in their classrooms, submit artifacts, and then receive compensation based on the learning they demonstrated, as well as a micro-credential. After the initial successful pilot with 49 teachers, an additional 151 faculty members elected to earn a micro-credential on personalized learning.

● **Highline Public Schools, WA** - Highline Public Schools, located outside of Seattle with over 20,000 students, recognized the need for teacher professional development when they implemented personalized learning with the goal of creating more equitable opportunities for all of their students. Federal funds were used to support a district task force and school-based personalized learning leadership teams that worked together to create personalized, standards-based goals based on learner strengths, needs, language, culture and aspirations. Students and teachers select tools purposefully for learners to explore ideas, develop skills and knowledge, design solutions to problems, and create artifacts that demonstrate learning. Through personalized learning pathways, learners use self-assessment and formative feedback to monitor growth, reflect on their learning and challenge themselves to reach more rigorous goals. Several indicators improved at the school, which could possibly be attributed to the personalized learning initiative. After implementing personalized learning, Highline students' science scores increased from 38% to 63% on the state science assessment (MSP).

● **St. Vrain Valley School District, CO** - Access to high speed broadband internet for all students in all schools is a central goal in St. Vrain Valley Schools. District funding through a

mill levy override and collaboration with the city of Longmont provides internet access at every district school and work site. The development of district high-speed public and private sites has provided equal access for all community members when working in or near all district facilities, so students without home access stay connected when schools are open and even when they are closed.

- **Williamsfield Community School District, IL** - Williamsfield Community School District, a small rural Illinois district with approximately 300 students was able to replace several textbooks by creating, curating and sharing openly licensed educational resources tailored for their community. Some textbook funds were redirected to provide personalized professional learning opportunities for teachers, librarians, and administrators to create and use openly licensed educational resources. Collectively, these activities supported the creation of a cutting edge STEM program with participating students winning multiple awards at state-level STEM competitions, that otherwise would have been impossible with traditional resources. Williamsfield also attributes its status of 21st most improved district in Illinois from 2014 to 2015 to its shift to using openly licensed educational resources.

- **Brooklyn Laboratory Charter School, NY** - Brooklyn Laboratory Charter School (LAB), has leveraged ConnectED resources to reinvent its approaches to learning and collaboration, shrink long-standing equity and accessibility gaps, and adapt learning experiences to meet the needs of all learners. With E-rate funds and ConnectED resources, the school was able to reconfigure the network and purchase additional equipment so that they now have Wi-Fi throughout the school. The school has also built and implemented online personalized learning platforms; provided graduated teacher pathways; leveraged community partnerships to support personalized learning; implemented Open eBooks to provide disadvantaged students with free access to thousands of quality electronic books, and used Adobe software to foster and catalyze student creativity. In addition, LAB embraced openly licensed educational resources to allow LAB teachers to employ innovative, high-quality learning resources and tools, and leverage designed experiences from a range of sources to deliver high-quality personalized learning at scale.

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