

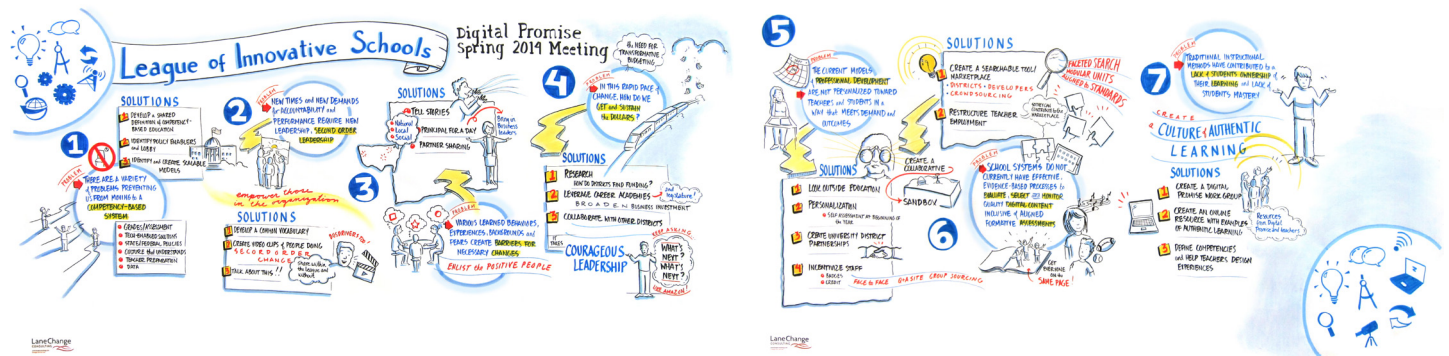
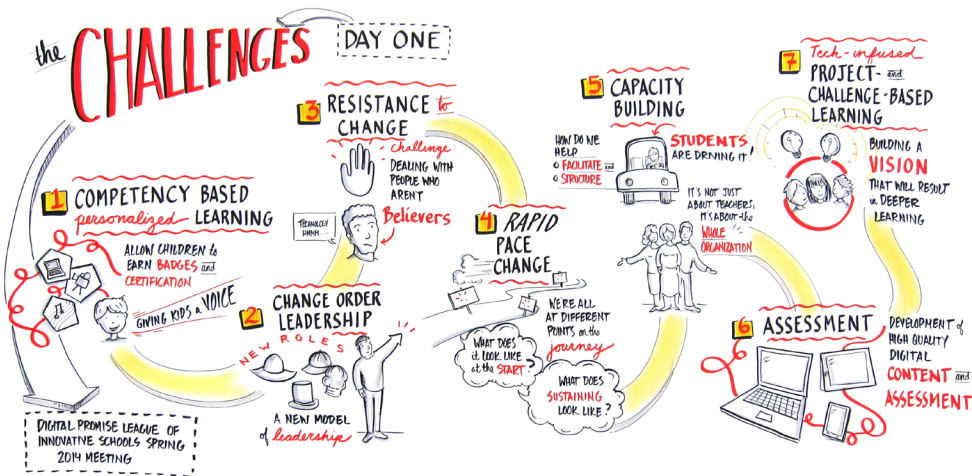
# LEAGUE OF INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS SPRING 2014 MEETING SUMMARY

The League of Innovative Schools Spring meeting featured an interactive workshop that explored relevant, compelling, and pressing challenges League superintendents encounter in leading innovative districts.

All meeting participants— including League superintendents and educators, corporate partners, researchers, funders, and other League thought partners— worked in teams to define challenges, ideate solutions, and devise plans for continued, collaborative work on the challenges.

At the conclusion of the workshop, teams shared the progress they made and their ideas for addressing the challenges going forward. Digital Promise is excited to facilitate and support ongoing League-wide projects based on the promising ideas generated from the workshop.

Please see below for a summary of each team’s work.



# TEAM 1 COMPETENCY/MASTERY-BASED PERSONALIZED LEARNING

THE CHALLENGE

There are a variety of problems that prevent us from moving toward a competency-based system:

- Teacher preparation programs
- Grades/assessment practices
- Technology-enabled solutions and tools
- Student data management and analytics
- State and federal policies
- Culture and language used

THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How might we overcome the problems that are preventing us from transforming the entire pre-K-J (meaning pre-K-jobs) system to focus on mastery of competencies and personalization of learning?

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Create and disseminate educational resources on competency-based learning to help build a community of support that includes a variety of stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers, business leaders, etc.). Educational resources could include:

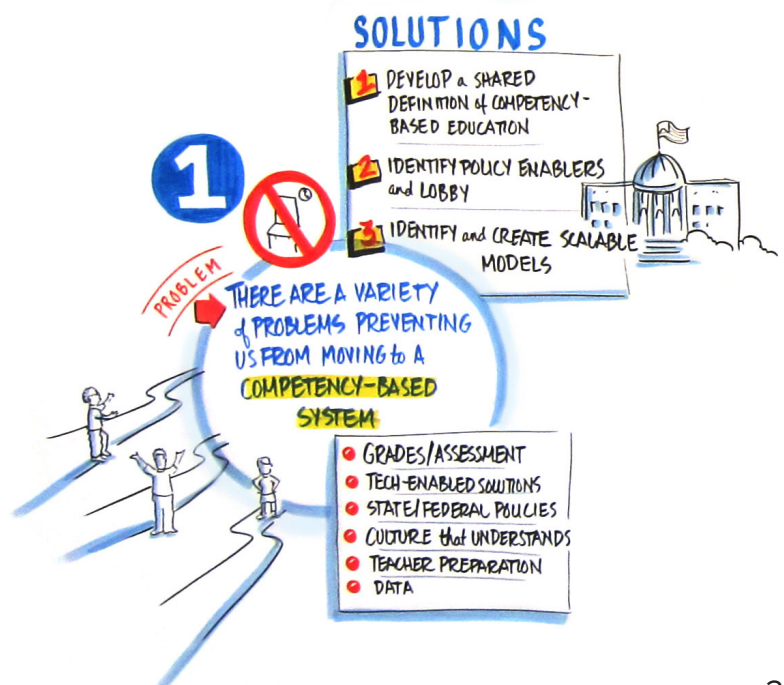
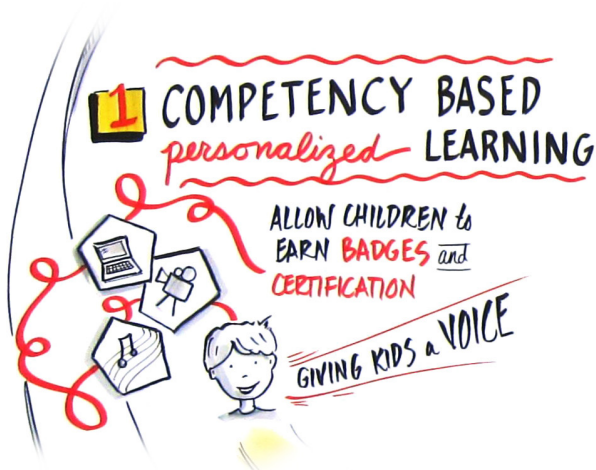
- Policies that have successfully moved states or districts to ease seat time requirements;
- Tools that accurately identify progress toward competencies; and
- Research on the efficacy of competency-based learning.

Convene a coalition of districts within the League working to advance competency-based learning models. This coalition would work together to:

- Identify and create promising models that are replicable and scalable;
- Develop a shared definition of competency-based education and define the skills teachers need to have to teach in that environment; and
- Collectively lobby for policy changes that enable implementation of competency-based, personalized learning.

Create a technical solution that allows for flexible tracking of competencies and credits.

- This could be in the form of micro-credentials/badges that are rigorous, specific, and defined.
- Micro-credentials/badges or a similar technical solution could eventually replace traditional transcripts and grades.



# TEAM 2 CHANGE-ORDER LEADERSHIP/LEADERSHIP THAT SUPPORTS SECOND-ORDER CHANGE

THE CHALLENGE

A different type of leadership is required to achieve second-order change in education's digital age. Teachers, librarians, and others not traditionally in leadership roles must be empowered to help lead the change.

THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do we model and cultivate ubiquitous leadership to support innovation that accelerates and enriches student learning?

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Openly market the League as a place to learn more about second-order change leadership.

- Post short videos of examples of second-order change leadership in League districts.
- Promote libraries/media centers as the focal points of second-order change leadership and create a working group of media specialists from across the League.
- Make the League a training ground for second-order change leadership through planned site visits and resources made available on the Digital Promise website.

Create a framework, with vocabulary and a rubric, that may be used for professional learning and clarifying discussion about second-order change leadership.

- Districts are in different stages of development around second-order change leadership, and there needs to be a central location for policies, organizing documents, resources etc. (potentially the Digital Promise website).

At the next League meeting, host a panel on second-order change leadership that includes League district teachers, students, administrators, etc.

- The League could also bring in someone like Michael Fullan to share new, provocative ideas on the topic and then allow time for discussion and ideation.



# TEAM 3 COMMUNITY/CULTURE RESISTANT TO CHANGE

## THE CHALLENGE

Various learned behaviors, experiences, backgrounds, and fears create barriers for necessary change.

## THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do we make a compelling case for the value proposition that technology and devices improve student-learning outcomes? How do we show that digital tools are not only productive, but also productive in a very meaningful, relevant way?

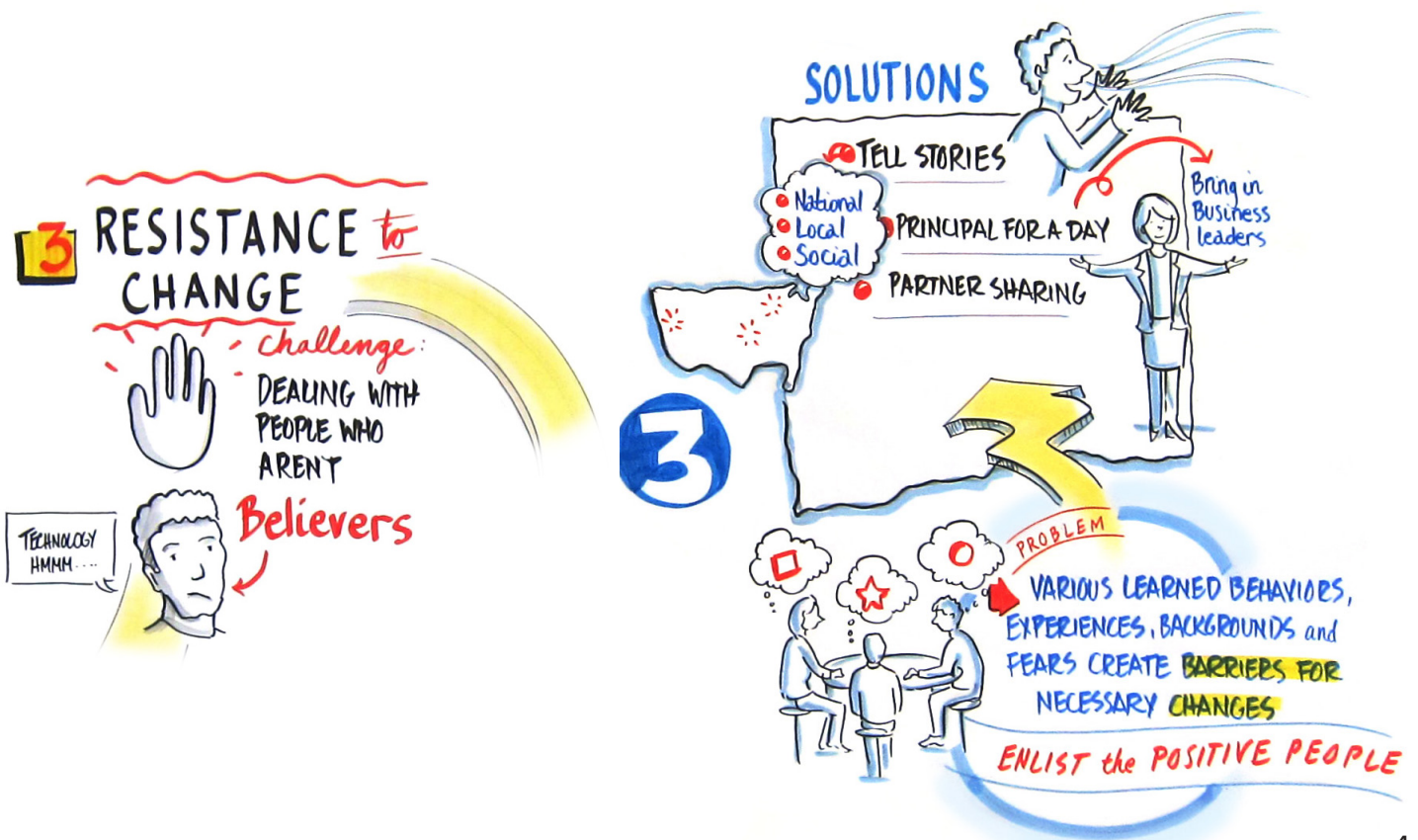
## IDEAS FOR ACTION

Find new and creative ways to tell your district's story.

- Ask community partners to help. The district tells the story first and then others repeat it. That is an effective way to spread positive messaging.
- Have students tell the story at the local level by creating videos and other multimedia content to show how they're using technology in the classroom. Host a student film festival in your district on how students are using technology to learn.
- Find comparable districts that will help you tell your district's story. Identify "doppelganger districts" - districts that look like your district - and share stories of their success until you have your own stories to tell.

Bring in business leaders from the local community to be "principals for a day" in technology rich schools. This would cultivate partnerships, create a culture of understanding and collaboration, and enable business and education leaders to learn from each other. Invite the local media to cover the event.

Digital Promise can lead/support a national public relations campaign on the value of technology in schools and create a PR blueprint for League districts.



# TEAM 4 NEED FOR TRANSFORMATIVE BUDGETING IN THE CONTEXT OF RAPID-PACE CHANGE

## THE CHALLENGE

Current budgets do not have the flexibility necessary to support the cost, sustainability, or scalability of innovations.

## THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

In this age of rapid change, how do districts find and appropriate budget dollars to implement and sustain initiatives?

## IDEAS FOR ACTION

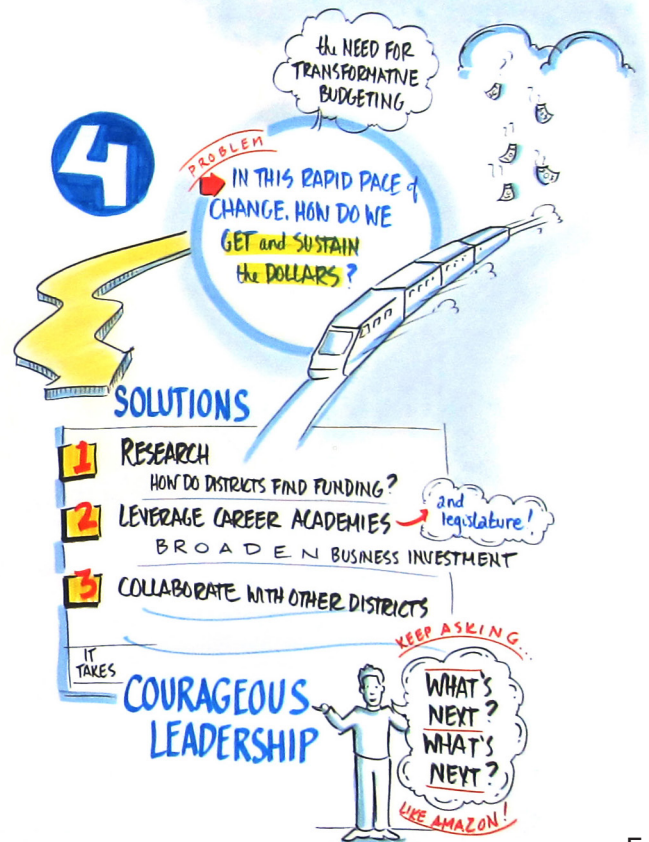
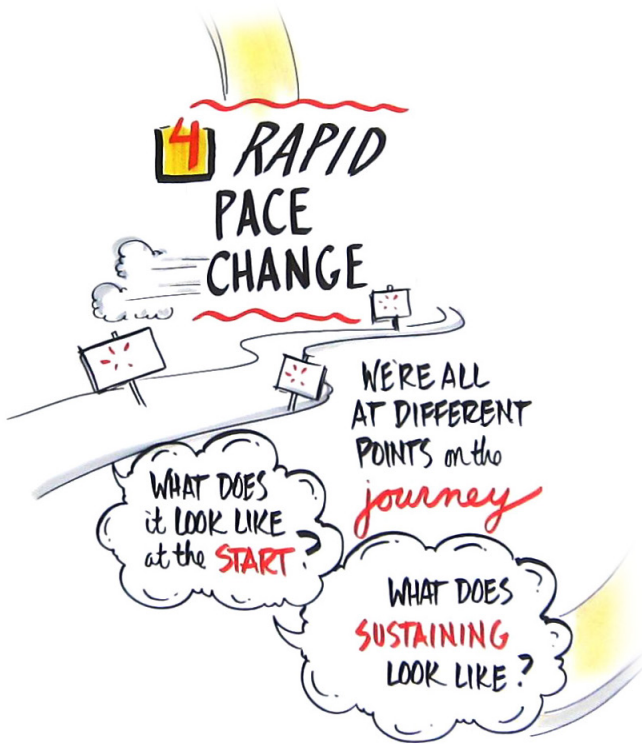
Leverage career academies and the skill sets of students to broaden business investments.

- We don't talk about our students being productive. Can we create incentives for local companies to hire students and make that into a revenue stream for a school community? Companies want to partner and collaborate. Districts must be willing to let businesses get involved more deeply in the schools – i.e., more than a transactional relationship. Can we make companies a part of the community and generate revenues from those partnerships?

League districts collaborate on piloting, testing, and purchasing for competitive pricing.

Courageous leadership is needed to make the cultural shifts required to implement transformative budgeting.

- Refer to Team 2: Change-Order Leadership/Leadership That Supports Second-Order Change, for ideas on how to cultivate and support courageous leadership.



# TEAM 5 CAPACITY BUILDING/PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

THE CHALLENGE

The professional development model of district administrators training teachers how to teach and then asking them to apply that training is obsolete. We need to reimagine professional learning and training for teachers so that it leverages their capacity to be leaders and equips educators with the skills they need to teach in new digitally rich classrooms.

THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How might we (teachers, school districts, the private sector, and universities) develop a scalable culture of professional learning that is personalized, effective, and tied to student outcomes?

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Look outside education for best practices.

- Look to principles of adult learning and apply those to K-12. Can we find successful models within the private sector – i.e., Google, Zappos, etc.?
- If you're a coder and you run into a problem you can go to stackoverflow.com, ask your question, and immediately find someone that's solved the challenge you're facing. Can we create a similar community for teachers where they could go when they encounter technical issues on educational platforms, pedagogical design issues etc.?

Design professional development around strengths and weaknesses and personalize PD.

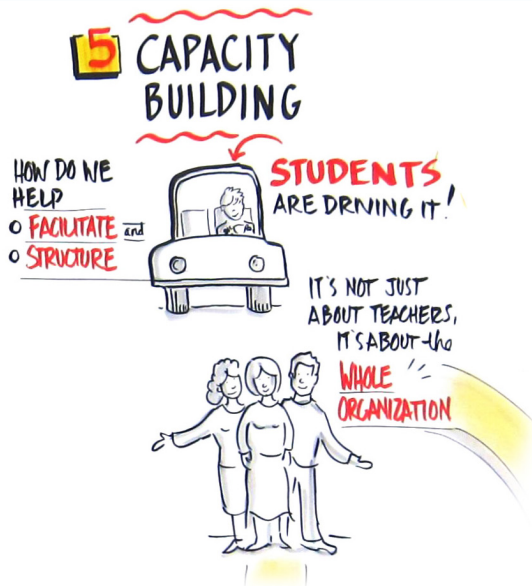
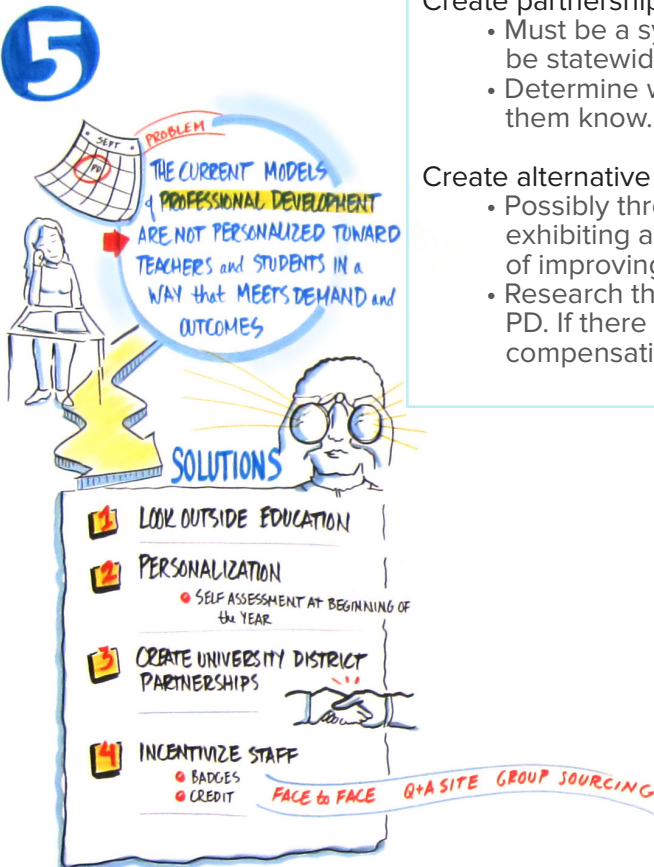
- Evaluate teachers at the beginning of the year to find out where they need development. Group teachers into mentoring relationships based on matching strengths and weakness.
- Allow for self-selection of learning paths and acknowledgement of professional goals – teachers teaching teachers.

Create partnerships between K-12 and higher education.

- Must be a systemic approach that includes all the necessary players. Must be statewide so that all institutions can be supportive.
- Determine what teachers need so we can go back to the universities and let them know.

Create alternative modes of certification.

- Possibly through micro-credentials or badging. Reward teachers for exhibiting a culture of change, evidence of good instructional practice, proof of improving student outcomes.
- Research the outcomes of graduate level courses and meaningful, intensive PD. If there is evidence of improved practices, tie this evidence to compensation.



# TEAM 6 FORMATIVE AND STANDARDS-ALIGNED ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL CONTENT

## THE CHALLENGE

School systems do not currently have effective evidence-based processes to evaluate, select, and monitor quality digital content inclusive of aligned formative assessments.

## THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do we ensure that students are using digital content that is research-based, standards-aligned, and the most effective?

## IDEAS FOR ACTION

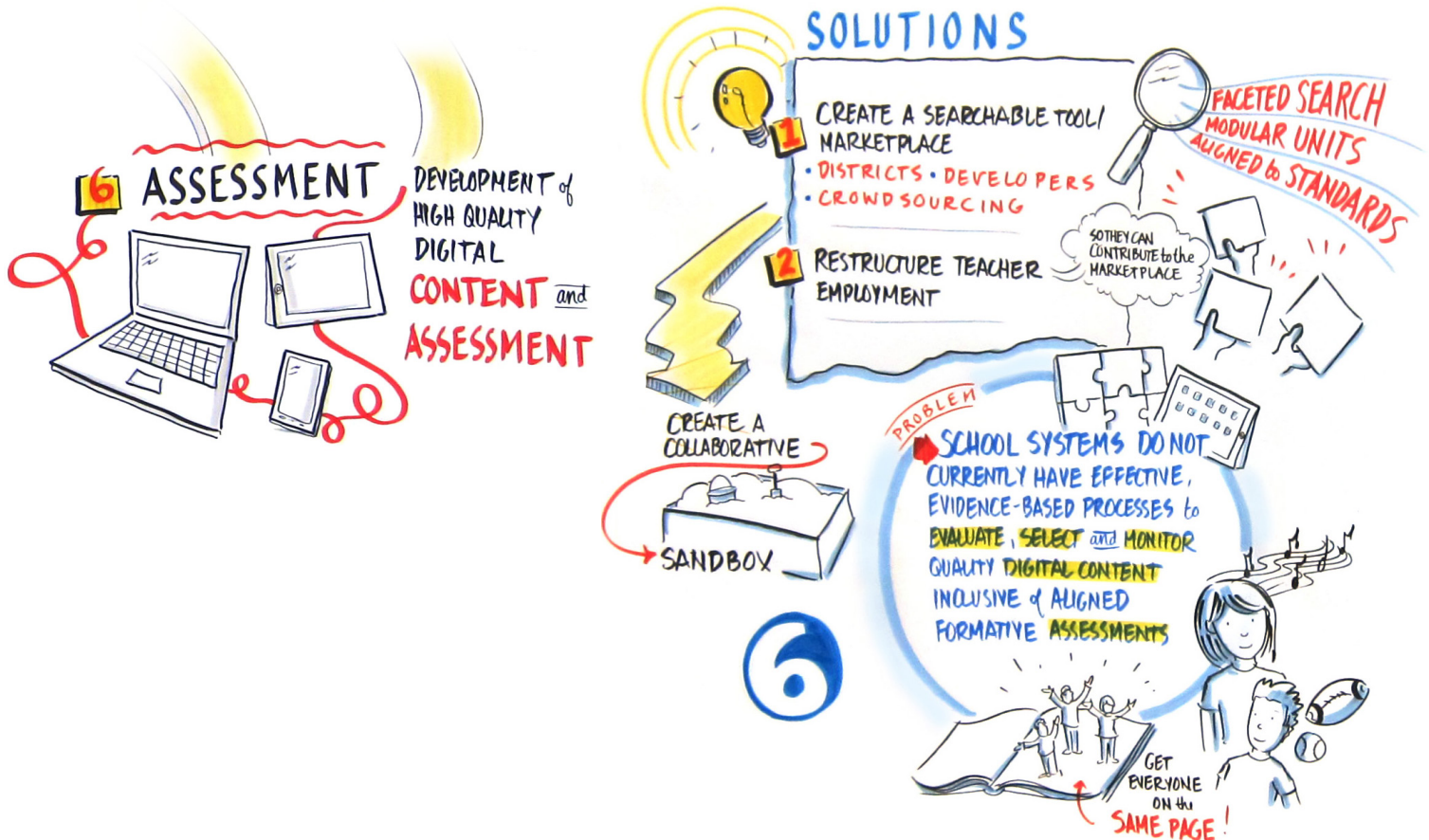
Create a marketplace (potentially in the form of a faceted search database) to identify high quality digital content. The marketplace could empower teachers, students, and parents to play bigger roles in evaluating and selecting digital content. It could also be a platform to facilitate conversations/interactions between end-users and developers so that product development is informed by real-time feedback.

Formally restructure the teacher role in assessment, selection, and development of digital content so teachers become the curators of digital content.

Host a virtual student content evaluation trial in which students rate digital content. It could be a simple rating process – did you enjoy the product and did you learn from it (and how can you demonstrate that learning)?

Foster district test beds/incubators.

- Districts should have the ability to experiment and test content and new ideas on a rotating, volunteer basis.



# TEAM 7 TECH-INFUSED PROJECT-BASED/CHALLENGE-BASED LEARNING

## THE CHALLENGE

Traditional instructional methods have contributed to a lack of students' ownership of their learning/work and a lack of students' mastery.

- In the absence of authentic and relevant learning opportunities students become disengaged and resist taking ownership of their learning and work.
- The percent of students graduating with the skills, content, and character aspects needed for success in school and life is too low.

## THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can we create a culture of authentic learning strategies in all schools that moves students to master important content and 21st century competencies?

## IDEAS FOR ACTION

Create a working group within the League that shares the goal of advancing authentic learning.

- Regular virtual components, plus an extra in-person component (i.e., at the League meetings).
- After the next in-person meeting, decide on some specific things to do: certain number of Google hangouts, share pieces of student work or curriculum etc.
- First focus on the content and the people, then turn attention to the tool (like online portal idea below).

Curate an online resource community/portal with existing tools, processes, frameworks, partner examples, research, storytelling, etc.

- Before moving forward with this idea, the team feels they need to do more thinking on the value proposition of this resource: How would it be different from other resource portals/communities? Would people use it? Who would make it?

Help teachers design authentic learning to support student mastery of standards.

- Clearly define the links between authentic learning and achievement of standards so students can say, "I meant to address the standard, and I did address it," and teachers can recognize and measure that success.

