Digital Promise Launches the Center for Inclusive Innovation

Center Will Collaborate with and Support Communities and Schools in Equity-Centered Research and Development

October 13, 2020 | Washington, D.C. – Today, Digital Promise [launched the Center for Inclusive Innovation](#), an initiative focused on resourcing the creative ingenuity of communities, in partnership with schools, to design liberatory education innovations. Building on the impactful equity work already taking place in local regions throughout the country, the Center will collaborate with a range of community stakeholders (including community leaders, students, parents, educators, and entrepreneurs) to support their efforts to create opportunities for Black, Brown, and Indigenous students through equity-centered research and development (R&D).

"Communities of color have long been creative, brilliant, and entrepreneurial, but they are left out of the education innovation conversation," said Kim Smith, executive director of the League of Innovative Schools (League) and the Center for Inclusive Innovation. "We hope to recognize and resource historically underserved communities as leaders, designers, and beneficiaries of innovation."

Digital Promise's experience facilitating school- and community-oriented R&D partnerships, through networks including the League and Education Innovation Clusters, provides a strong foundation for the Center. For the past year, Digital Promise has been working with schools and communities on a number of such collaborative projects, including designing for the recruitment and retention of teachers of color and advancing innovation in secondary writing.

"Historically, our profession has heard a call for systemic change for the Brown and Black students across the country. Too often educators of color face critical challenges and inequities within the profession," said Marlon Styles, Jr., superintendent of Middletown City Schools (Ohio). "The call now, without hesitation, is to fully embrace the vision of the Center for Inclusive Innovation knowing on the other side our Brown and Black students will be the winners."

Digital Promise is collaborating with an advisory council of local community leaders who work every day to improve educational opportunities for students of color. The Center's inaugural Community Advisory Council are organizers, facilitators, developers, and social change leaders who will participate as co-creators of and collaborators with the Center. The Council will offer guidance on community-driven design and network building, and participate in local and national opportunities. The Center for Inclusive Innovation's Community Advisory Council includes:

- **Kevin Hinton**, CEO/Executive Director, Beacon House (Washington, DC)
- **William Jackson**, Founder/CEO, Village of Wisdom (Durham, NC)
- **Nakeyshia Kendall**, CEO/Founder, MindCatchers (San Francisco, CA)
- **Tiffany Majors**, President and CEO, Greater Baltimore Urban League (Baltimore, MD)
- **Kevin Nichols**, Co-Founder/CEO, The Social Engineering Project (Oakland, CA)
- **Chase Patterson**, CEO, The Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)
- **Marsha Boyd Pharr**, Retired Assistant Vice Chancellor at North Carolina State University and TRIO Programs Director (Raleigh, NC)
- **Jonathan Santos Silva**, Founder/CEO, The Liber Institute (Rapid City, SD)
- **Karla Vigil**, Chief Executive Officer, Equity Institute (Providence, RI)
- **Jamye Wooten**, Founder, CLLCTIVLY (Baltimore, MD)

"The creation of the Center for Inclusive Innovation has come at a time in our country where Black, Brown, and Indigenous students will need every possible resource available to negotiate power relationships as they develop. It is exciting that the mission is to not only move students forward in their development, but to include their families and communities in the process, because raising the next generation is a shared responsibility," said Marsha Boyd Pharr, a member of the Community Advisory Council.

"We're looking forward to building on the innovative co-design work taking place within local communities across our networks and deepening these community partnerships," said Digital Promise President and CEO Karen Cator. "Working at the intersection of communities, educators, researchers, and developers, we seek powerful solutions to provide students with culturally affirming, high-quality education."

To learn more, visit digitalpromise.org/inclusive-innovation.

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About Digital Promise
Digital Promise is a nonprofit organization that builds powerful networks and takes on grand challenges by working at the intersection of researchers, entrepreneurs, and educators. Our vision is that all people, at every stage of their lives, have access to learning experiences that help them acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive and continuously learn in an ever-changing world. For more information, visit the [Digital Promise website](#) and follow [@digitalpromise](#) for updates.