



Digital Promise’s Center for Inclusive Innovation Hosts Inaugural Convening to Advance Equity-Centered Research and Development (R&D) in Education

Event demonstrated how schools, students, and communities are collaborating to create solutions to address education challenges

OCTOBER 28, 2022 | Washington, D.C. – Digital Promise’s [Center for Inclusive Innovation](#), a leader in transformational equitable education, hosted its first-ever annual convening on October 17-18, 2022 in Los Angeles, California.

The event, themed **Elevating the Ingenuity of Communities to Transform Education**, aimed to connect learning across sectors, organizations, and efforts around equity-centered research and development (R&D) in education. More than 200 attendees included district leaders, educators, community and business leaders, entrepreneurs and solution providers, researchers, education intermediaries and national nonprofits, policymakers, and funders.

“This convening was a valuable opportunity to deepen R&D efforts through relationships by discussing shared problems of practice, outlining field-building needs, and creating opportunities for ongoing collaboration by building solutions through community-driven, student-driven partnerships,” said Kimberly Smith, chief Inclusive Innovation officer at Digital Promise. “This is in line with the Center’s mission to resource the ingenuity of communities to create liberatory education innovations designed to enable self-determination for students furthest from opportunity.”

The in-person event offered attendees the opportunity to learn about groundbreaking collaborations between schools and communities that advance equitable teaching and learning and engage with new equity-centered models for education R&D. The dynamic program showcased and shared promising practices and stories from across the field, amplifying the voices of students, communities, and stakeholders across sectors and geographies, including:

- Student interns from Sunnyside Unified School District in Tucson, Arizona, who shared how they are using their voices and ideas to design and redesign curriculum resources to support student engagement in writing

- Students from Lynwood Unified and Rowland Unified School Districts, who explained how adults can ensure students' needs are prioritized and at the table in designing solutions
- Lakisha Young, founder of The Oakland Reach, who discussed their Parent Power model focused on parents of color as “liberators” in supporting student achievement
- Two community-based partnerships in Los Angeles—STEM to the Future and the Lynwood Unified School District Health Collaborative—that exemplify the Inclusive Innovation approach of elevating the ingenuity of communities to transform education
- Presenters from field-leading organizations such as: 228 Accelerator, AERDF, Community Engagement Partners, LeanLab Education, The Reinvention Lab (powered by TFA), and Transcend Education
- And over 20 organizations—from equity-centered R&D nonprofits to BIPOC-led solution providers—who shared about their programs, tools, models, and solutions

Guided by the [Inclusive Innovation model](#) and anchored by a set of core tenets that embody an equity-centered approach to research and development, the Center has worked with 40 school districts across seven R&D projects over the past two years to co-design new and differentiated models, tools, programs, and products that were created by and supportive of the needs, interests, and dreams of students furthest from opportunity—especially students who are Black, Brown, and Indigenous; students experiencing poverty; multilingual learners; and students with learning differences.

For the first time on a national scale, the Center for Inclusive Innovation collectively presented their learnings across 20 emerging solutions related to adolescent writing, teacher of color recruitment and retention, open educational resources (OER) for racial equity and social justice, mental health and racial trauma, learning salons with BIPOC organizations, and equitable systems change with eight school districts. [Findings from these Inclusive Innovation projects](#) are captured in five papers—focusing on the roles of context expertise and student voice, capacities participants built through engaging in Inclusive Innovation, racial equity surfaced in the work, and outcomes determined by participants—which were also released at the convening.

“The emerging findings help us begin to understand the breadth and depth of Inclusive Innovation in terms of providing equitable access and participation to opportunities for students furthest from opportunity and the capacities to sustain an inclusive R&D process within the local communities we work with,” said Viki Young, chief Inclusive Innovation researcher at Digital Promise. “Importantly, the emerging findings point to ways for us to continue refining the model. As our partners fully implement the solutions they have designed, we will also begin to see the promise of impact for students, their families, and communities.”

The convening culminated with participants sharing commitments and intentions for building a broader equity-centered R&D agenda that will be published and a glimpse of how the Center for Inclusive Innovation will continue to develop their contributions in this space.

For more information on the Center for Inclusive Innovation, visit:

digitalpromise.org/inclusive-innovation.

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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](https://digitalpromise.org) and follow [@digitalpromise](https://twitter.com/digitalpromise) for updates.