



Digital Promise Welcomes Two New Members to its Board of Directors

Sarah EchoHawk, Gus Schmedlen Join to Support Organization in Shaping the Future of Learning

AUGUST 15, 2023 | Washington, D.C. - Digital Promise has approved two new members to its Board of Directors following a rigorous review process. The now 14-member Board of Directors is committed to supporting Digital Promise as it shapes the future of learning and advances equitable education systems.

The two new members are Sarah EchoHawk, President of AISES (Advancing Indigenous People in STEM), and Gus Schmedlen, Chief Revenue Officer at Texthelp Group.

“Sarah and Gus are phenomenal additions to our Board of Directors,” said Digital Promise President and CEO Jean-Claude Brizard. “We look forward to working closely with them as we consider the needs of historically and systematically excluded learners around the globe.”

“Digital Promise’s board is strengthened by the additions of Sarah and Gus, and we welcome the unique perspectives and deep knowledge they bring to the table,” said Dr. Linda Roberts, chair of Digital Promise’s Board of Directors.

About the New Members

Sarah EchoHawk, a citizen of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, has been working on behalf of Indigenous people for over 20 years. She has led AISES, an organization dedicated to Advancing Indigenous People in STEM, since 2013, and currently serves as its President. Prior to joining AISES, Ms. EchoHawk was the Executive Vice President at First Nations Development Institute, a national nonprofit organization with a focus on economic development for Indigenous peoples and their communities. She also served as the interim CEO for the organization’s subsidiary, First Nations Oweesta Corporation, a community development financial institution (CDFI), during its management transition in 2010.

Before joining First Nations Development Institute, Ms. EchoHawk spent several years working for the American Indian College Fund, an organization focused on raising support for tribal colleges and universities. During her tenure there, she served in a variety of areas including operations, program management, communications, foundation relations, and individual giving. She was an adjunct professor of Native American Studies at Metro State University of Denver for nine years where in addition to teaching introductory Native American studies courses, she also taught Native American Politics and co-taught Native Americans and Law with her father, John Echohawk, who co-founded the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) in 1970.

Ms. EchoHawk has a Master of Nonprofit Management (MNM) degree from Regis University and an undergraduate degree in Political Science and Native American Studies from Metro State University of Denver. She attended law school at the University of Colorado and completed additional graduate coursework in applied communications at the University of Denver.

"I'm excited to join Digital Promise's Board of Directors and support the organization on its mission to shape the future of learning," said Ms. EchoHawk.

Gus Schmedlen, EdD, serves as Chief Revenue Officer at Texthelp Group, the global leader in assistive technology. Previously, Gus was President and Chief Revenue Officer at AI technology startup, Merlyn Mind. He formerly served as Vice President and Head of Worldwide Education at HP, where he oversaw a period of rapid expansion, leading to the creation of a multi-billion-dollar global education technology business. During his tenure at HP, Schmedlen also led international efforts to improve access to quality education for students in marginalized contexts, contributing innovation, support, and scale to help realize UN SDG4. Earlier in his career, Schmedlen led education and public sector industry solutions units for both IBM and Lenovo.

Schmedlen currently serves on the Board of Governors of JA Worldwide, the Leadership Council of the Brookings Institution Center for Universal Education, the advisory board of the mEducation Alliance, and the Board of Directors of the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts. He previously served in leadership and consulting positions at a range of non-profit efforts, including the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Education project, the UN Education Data Roundtable, and the Public School Forum of North Carolina. Gus was awarded an Eisenhower Fellowship by former U.S. Secretary of State, Gen. Colin Powell, to study human capital development systems in the European Union, focused on the democratizing force of pervasive mobile technology. He earned a BA in Classics from

Colgate University, an MBA from Duke University, and an EdD from the University of Pennsylvania.

"The contributions of Digital Promise across educational research, practice, and technology are outstanding," said Schmedlen. "Further, the holistic commitment to equity and inclusion means that their work can impact every student, everywhere. Having worked with Digital Promise for many years on innovative and inclusive education projects around the world, I am honored and delighted to serve the organization in an official capacity."

[More information on Digital Promise's Board of Directors can be found here.](#)

Press Contact:

My Nguyen

Digital Promise

mnguyen@digitalpromise.org

202.455.6230

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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](#) and follow [@digitalpromise](#) for updates.