STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT on Digital Convergence 2019

2018–2019 School Year
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Message from the Chair

As the chair of National Council on Digital Convergence (NCDC), I am pleased to share “The State of the Industry Report on Digital Convergence” for the 2018–2019 school year. I am incredibly proud of this report, which analyzes the remarkable journeys of school districts in their pursuit of personalized, modern learning environments. Each year, NCDC strives to celebrate the important accomplishments of leading organizations in K–12 while recognizing some of our industry’s greatest shared challenges.

NCDC continues its commitment to providing guidance, insight, and a framework to support school districts and organizations on their journey toward Digital Convergence. Digital Convergence is not the goal, rather the means to truly transform and optimize teaching and learning across our U.S. public school system.

Members of NCDC chose to highlight several organizations in this year’s report, all of which share a deep commitment to personalized learning, and each demonstrates a unique approach to the Digital Convergence Framework. These districts include Cajon Union Valley School District in El Cajon, CA; J.O. Combs Unified School District in San Tan Valley, AZ; Falcon Zone of El Paso County Colorado District 49 in Colorado Springs, CO; and Hamilton Community Schools in Hamilton, MI.

We are excited to share this year’s report and hope you find it informative and beneficial in your journey toward personalized learning.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lori Duerr
Chair
National Council on Digital Convergence
The AASA Awards for Digital Convergence 2019

The National Council on Digital Convergence would like to recognize the School Superintendents Association (AASA) and several school districts for their significant contributions in K-12 education and modern learning.

About AASA
The School Superintendents Association is the premier association for school system leaders and serves as the national voice for public education and district leadership on Capitol Hill. AASA represents the dreams, educational expertise and concerns of more than 13,000 local school system leaders throughout the United States. AASA provides a variety of benefits designed to support both you and your district. Our products and services keep you informed, so you move your career and your district forward.

Rewards and Recognition Program
During this year’s National Conference on Digital Convergence, AASA will present the Rewards and Recognition Program that recognizes school districts for their significant progress leading personalized learning. The Program recognizes districts that advance to new stages in the Digital Convergence Framework. This year, AASA will recognize the achievements of the following districts in 2018:
Announcing the National Conference on Digital Convergence

Personalize Learning at Scale

February 3 – 4, 2020
Phoenix, AZ
Visit www.NCDC20.com to register.

Together, our collective voice can create traction, build momentum, and craft a path forward for personalized learning at scale. Whether you are a member of the National Network currently engaged in the work of Digital Convergence, or you are an honored guest organization, this unique conference experience is designed to be an innovative yet practical way to advance K–12 education and improve student outcomes both collectively as a country and individually within your organizations.

J.O. Combs Unified School District - NCDC20 National Showcase District

Please join us for an optional pre-conference visit to J.O. Combs Unified School District in San Tan Valley, AZ on February 3, 2020. Experience the district’s innovative approach to Professional Learning and creating a workforce proficient in the modern learning environment.
Digital Convergence: An Overview
Across the United States, the K–12 school system is undergoing fundamental change in the shift toward the modern learning environment. School leaders are now collaborating with entrepreneurs and researchers to redesign existing school structures. Meanwhile, teachers are connecting locally and nationally with other educators to share resources, strategies, and advice on how to use technology effectively in the classroom. Students are collaborating with classmates and other learners to create knowledge in ways never before possible. Using technology, these stakeholders are removing traditional boundaries in time and space, allowing learners greater control over when, where, and how they learn.

Technology has a long history of disrupting industries to create a greater focus on the consumer. Consider the example of Uber, which has fundamentally changed how consumers think about transportation by removing traditional constraints to information exchange. Through its digital platform, Uber has connected consumers to a vast network of producers that can deliver services unique to them, when and where they need it. Before Uber, transportation was controlled by taxi services, which determined the flow of information and services. The advent of new technology caused this balance to shift, offering consumers greater awareness, resources, and power in the consumer-producer dynamic. Like consumers, students of K–12 schools are discovering similar benefits of digital tools as they gain unprecedented access to resources and information constrained by traditional learning models. Technology’s disruptive impact is creating the need to redefine existing roles and structures in the shift toward student-centered learning.

Digital Convergence is the fundamental change needed in the K–12 school system—both at the national and school-district levels. At the national level, Digital Convergence is the intersection of people and ideas as they seek a unified approach to integrate technology into classrooms and use it to transform the student learning experience. At the school-district level, Digital Convergence is the successful intersection of six major categories of work through which Digital Convergence can successfully occur—Leadership, Instructional Models, Modern Curriculum, Digital Ecosystem, Professional Learning and Community—to redesign existing infrastructure and resources to support modern learning.
Despite significant progress, barriers to Digital Convergence remain. These barriers are created by the implementation of single-point solutions, which attempt to address complicated problems (student achievement generally being the most common) by purchasing a product or service from a single vendor. Examples include the purchase of laptop computers, access to curriculum, professional learning from a local nonprofit, or a learning management system. Purchasing only one of these solutions, or purchasing them all and leaving it to the vendors to manage separately, results in significant barriers to Digital Convergence. These single-point solutions often target some but not all categories needed for Digital Convergence, fail to address the categories adequately, or disrupt the entire process of Digital Convergence.

The implementation of single-point solutions is a short-sighted response to common challenges school districts face. School leaders often implement technology initiatives and devices without establishing a shared vision for the initiative and without gaining buy-in from community members, teachers, and students, which may ultimately create resistance in using technology in the classroom. This response is facilitated by the structure of school districts, which primarily relies on top-down changes from administrators. Additionally, instructional models and curricula remain designed for the traditional learning model, which makes using technology difficult and fails to leverage the full capability of technology, such as the ability to make learning more personalized. Another response by school districts is to implement devices without considering interoperability, thereby creating a fragmented and frustrating learning experience. Additionally, professional learning often fails to educate teachers sufficiently and continuously to keep pace with technology, especially as the role of the teacher expands to embrace new strategies and pedagogies. Research shows that many pre-service training programs do not address how to incorporate technology effectively into teaching, and on-the-job training often focuses only on the features and functions of equipment. Last, school districts ignore how teaching and learning affect the communities in which they exist, and vice versa.

Single-point solutions are ultimately a result of the lack of coordinated foresight, participation, and resources among all stakeholders affected by technology integration. Nowhere is this more apparent than between school districts and their schools. As school districts continue to struggle with managing budgets, many schools must make their own purchasing decisions as they convert from analog to digital. These schools often purchase solutions that address school-specific needs but are not supported at the district level, ultimately resulting in a fragmented learning network. This issue is further enhanced by the arrival of new and innovative education technology, which has increased the need for informed choices when purchasing digital resources. The only answer to single-point solutions is a unified approach to the selection, implementation, and integration of modern learning solutions.
Digital Convergence follows a dynamic, iterative journey unlike the linear path of a single-point solution. As one driver of Digital Convergence changes, the remaining drivers must be addressed and revised to sustain a uniform solution. The interaction among the drivers of Digital Convergence is perhaps best described by Jay Forrester and Peter Senge, who developed a language in the form of archetypes to describe how systems interact as solutions are applied to them. Forrester and Senge’s findings illustrate the need for a solution that solves fundamental problems and provides foresight to the people implementing them. Because a complex system contains a myriad of interrelations among system components, the input on the system is dependent on numerous conditions. Comprehensive solutions that facilitate Digital Convergence allow coordination among components and address all conditions required to make the solution successful. These dynamic solutions encourage stakeholders to view their effect on the system as a whole rather than view their effect on an isolated part of the system.

Additionally, Digital Convergence ensures that digital assets provide sustainable value over time by making sure that the solution continues to adequately meet the needs of each part of the system. This prevents the solution from becoming obsolete for failing to integrate with one part of the education system.

Digital Convergence is not an end point. Rather, it is a state that continuously changes amid developments in technology and each of the six drivers. The highly dynamic nature of Digital Convergence necessitates that leaders establish an assessment process or framework to measure their progress. It also requires that leaders leverage technology to help track and anticipate barriers to Digital Convergence, such as using predictive analytics to understand trends and allocate resources to effectively integrate technology.

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Digital Convergence Framework: The Seven Stages and Success Indicators

The Digital Convergence Framework is designed to help school districts plan, oversee, and track their work toward modern learning environments. The framework is organized by driver and spans seven stages that chart the overall journey a school district must follow for Digital Convergence to successfully occur. Completion of stages is determined by action items, or Success Indicators, that indicate advancement in a specific area and encourage school districts to approach Digital Convergence in a comprehensive, systematic manner. Each Success Indicator is interdependent and therefore requires the collective participation and oversight of stakeholders in all six drivers of Digital Convergence. Because of the interrelation among the drivers, progress through the seven stages should remain relatively uniform, with school districts demonstrating the most advanced Success Indicators in the Leadership category. Leadership is the fundamental driver of Digital Convergence and lays the foundation for advancement in each of the other drivers.

Success Indicators are identified throughout the report to characterize the work of each school district in action. To view the full list of Success Indicators and their corresponding stages, refer to the Digital Convergence Framework in the Appendix.
Cajon Valley Union District:
Building a Modern Curriculum for Career Development
Introduction

Cajon Valley Union District, located in El Cajon, California, demonstrated significant progress in the area of personalized learning. Making technology integration a central focus, the district received an invitation from the White House to attend an event held for districts that received Race to the Top funding. Cajon Valley attended the event, even though it represented only one of two districts to achieve digital transformation without receiving any funding.

The visit to the White House would prove formative in the district’s development of a modern curriculum. District leaders attended a breakout session and learned about Fraser Public Schools (Fraser, MI) and its focus on competency-based learning—specifically, its work developing a model that eliminates grade levels and bases academic progress on student mastery of learning. District leaders returned from the event and shared their experiences with the district’s cabinet. They encouraged plans to build the systems and structure to support personalized learning for the district’s approximately 18,000 students.

Eventually, district leaders would learn about the Digital Convergence Framework, the primary methodology for scaling personalized, modern learning environments. Discovering that Fraser’s model was deeply embedded in the framework, district leaders soon began to adopt it to guide their efforts.

The Genesis of the Cajon Valley Modern Curriculum

As the district gained popularity with Digital Promise, it began holding conversations with the community to influence its approach to modern curriculum. The district’s superintendent began meeting with pillars of the El Cajon community—including the city manager, police chief, fire chief, president of chamber of commerce, business owners, pastors, faith leaders, and other elected officials on the water board or high school district governing board. These conversations started with the same question: “If the Cajon Valley School District was yours to govern, what would you have us do?” The answers the district received informed its approach to modern curriculum. The community asked district leaders to stop stigmatizing skilled labor such plumbing, masonry, and other trades essential to the local economy and infrastructure.
Additionally, the community recommended the district abandon the college-for-all mentality, begin focusing on skills rather than test scores, and teach students resiliency, respect, and courtesy. These conversations proved difficult for educational leaders to accept. Yet they recognized the validity of the community’s concerns and the clear evidence underscoring a significant shortage of labor for high-skill, high-wage jobs. District leaders realized they needed to change what students learned and how they viewed themselves relative to their career aspirations. This meant more than improving pedagogy and ensuring students became college-ready. Rather, it meant helping students understand their strengths, interests, and values as they pertained to the world of work and infuse career exposure into the curriculum starting in kindergarten.

Meanwhile, Cajon Valley provided middle school students with career exposure. For one day every year, Cajon sent its fifth graders to the McGrath Family JA Biztown in San Diego, a 10,000-square-foot complex offering a project-based program focused on career development. For one day, the event exposed students to industry leaders, enabled them to operate storefronts, and allowed them to engage in an all-day curriculum designed around work. Students learned about economics and how business operated while gaining exposure to various career professions.

As Cajon Valley enhanced its focus on career development, district leaders assembled a team to attend Biztown. They recognized the value in the one-day excursion but wondered how they could make it a part of the curriculum for every student throughout their entire journey from kindergarten through eighth grade. This occurred around the time district leaders became aware of the Thinkabit Lab at Qualcomm. At Thinkabit, students gained exposure to career development while discovering their values, interests, and strengths through hands-on STEM activities. It proved a formative time for the district. Cajon Valley combined what it learned from Biztown and Thinkabit Lab to set their direction for the future. It wondered why it didn’t focus more on careers and began to consider what it offered students relative to their career development.

As a result, the district developed its vision for the modern learning environment: “Happy kids, healthy relationships, on a path to gainful employment.” This vision would inform not only its intentional approach to scaling personalized learning but
also how it designed, developed, and refined its modern curriculum. The vision came about only after months of engaging with community members and parents, while recognizing the value in eliminating the traditional divisions between education and work.

**Modern Curriculum**

Modern Curriculum serves as one of the fundamental drivers of the Digital Convergence Framework. It represents the sequence and scope of instructional content through which students develop twenty-first-century skills and competencies. Unlike traditional curriculum that offers a “one size fits all” approach, the modern curriculum facilitates highly personalized and individualized learning—allowing students to choose when, where, and how they learn.

**The Cajon Valley Story**

Based on its vision and learnings from the community, Cajon Valley developed and introduced its modern curriculum, which consisted of two fundamental components: The World of Work, an intentional progression of curriculum designed to help students discover careers that reflect their talents, interests, and values upon graduation; and standard curriculum, which focuses on building discrete skills in the primary grades, such as early literacy development.

As a part of the World of Work initiative, Cajon Valley implemented several core curriculums across its district, which it continues to enhance. The first component focuses on career development lessons that expose students to 54 unique careers across six categories of the RIASEC Framework—which include Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Students experience each career during their progression from kindergarten to eighth grade through four levels of integration: Exploration, Simulation, Meet a Pro, and Practice. These four levels allow students to hear about careers, simulate them, meet people who work in them, and practice them.

In addition to the career development lessons, the World of Work also includes a TED-Ed curriculum, in which students present a story or idea to an audience. The district designed the curriculum to help students develop the competencies to speak and share ideas in the workplace, which remains essential to professional growth and success. Students can choose to present an idea to one person, a group of people,
For interested students, Cajon Valley also hosts its annual TEDx El Cajon event. Each year, 15 students speak at the event, which often brings over 2,000 attendees. Participating students receive coaching from staff that support them through the process. Students who participate also may receive additional opportunities to speak outside the event.

Cajon Valley also offers a social-emotional curriculum in its elementary and middle schools that focus on teaching students how to regulate themselves and collaborate with others to perform well at their jobs. At the elementary level, the district uses Sanford Harmony, a free program that teaches empathy to students. As a part of Sanford Harmony, the district focuses on Meet Up and Buddy Up activities. Meet Up activities include daily meetings of an entire class. The activity may entail posing a question for response, engaging in collaborative exercises, or asking students to problem solve as a group. Meet Up activities focus on creating unity among students and facilitate their social participation and engagement. Buddy Up activities provide students the chance to pair up with a different classmate each week, ask them questions, and learn about them personally in a safe space.

At the middle school level, Cajon Valley is developing a financial and social-emotional curriculum tied directly to career development. As students learn about a particular career, they also learn about its financial implications through the financial curriculum, while the social-emotional component focuses on helping students develop the interpersonal skills to gain and retain employment in their area of choice. The social-emotional component also teaches them how to manage conflict and navigate difficult situations in the context of the workplace.

Because of its success at the middle school level, Cajon Valley now plans to implement its social-emotional curriculum at the elementary level in place of Sanford Harmony. It believes that all students should learn more than how to engage in conversations and learn about others, but instead develop deep understandings of bias, fear, and self-regulation.
Additionally, the World of Work includes a coding curriculum, which it piloted at three of its schools specializing in computer science. The curriculum teaches students coding as a language and the skills needed for the next generation of work. The district uses code.org for the curriculum and plans to implement it across all schools starting in the 2019–2020 school year.

Foundational to its modern curriculum, Cajon Valley administers a Gallup assessment that helps students uncover their strengths, interests, and values as they relate to the world of work. This helps inform every student’s unique learner profile. As a part of this profile, students identify a yearly entrepreneurial project, elevator pitch, breakthrough moment, and personal and professional goals. They also develop a resume and keep a career journal that follows them on their academic journey.

Cajon Valley also recognizes the importance of keeping parents engaged in their child’s academic and career development. The unique circumstances of El Cajon make this especially challenging. For one, the community supports the largest Middle Eastern population in the country, many of whom spent time in refugee camps and continue to deal with trauma. These families often find it challenging living in the United States and functioning within American society. They often come from cultures that customarily do not become involved in a child’s education, since this is often seen as the exclusive role of educators and schools.

In response, Cajon Valley created a Family Community Engagement Office to help engage all families and create bridges between them. The office helps create a working relationship among parents, principals, and teachers; address many of the challenges facing families; and facilitate parents’ involvement in their child’s education. Additionally, Cajon Valley offers Parent University, where parents can sign up for six- to eight-week classes to help with acculturation and language development. Parent University also focuses on relationship building, so families develop friendships on campus and feel safe to come to school and participate. Last, Cajon Valley also pays teachers to perform home visits. This enables teachers to bridge the cultural divide that naturally exists between Cajon Valley’s largely female Anglo staff and the diversity in the community. Teachers visit families and interact with them at their homes, which helps create and strengthen relationships. All enable parents to become actively involved in their child’s learning and career development, which helps support and reinforce it in the home.
Looking Toward the Future

After adopting its modern curriculum, Cajon Valley now seeks to capture strong empirical data that supports its work and shows students are pursuing gainful employment or college as a result of its work. Currently, the district is working with CPP, the Myers-Briggs Company, to build important assessments for achieving this aim.

Additionally, Cajon Valley is developing an instructional model to support the modern curriculum. Currently, the district is exploring and engaging in conversations about new instructional models, a common language around instructional rigor and twenty-first-century skills, and how to determine success in the classroom. The district is also exploring a common blended unit plan across all subjects, courses, and grade levels tied to the instructional model.

Recognizing the absence of a strong modern curriculum for students after graduating from Cajon Valley after eighth grade, the district plans to open its first charter high school in 2021. The development would provide students opportunities to continue to focus on the World of Work. Students enrolling in the high school can earn certifications and receive post-secondary education, which enables them to work toward competencies while also earning college, junior college, or high school credit. This initiative demonstrates the district’s ongoing commitment to truly preparing students to seamlessly enter a world of work that best reflects their strengths, values, and interests.
Falcon Zone
of El Paso County, Colorado
School District 49:
Leveraging the Digital
Convergence Framework
Introduction
El Paso County Colorado School District 49, located in Colorado Springs, CO, consists of four zones, including Falcon Zone. Falcon Zone, comprised of four elementary, one middle, and one high school, stood out as a zone dedicated to strong instructional practices. The zone introduced a strong vision to transform classroom practices with student competencies and twenty-first-century skills. It also focused heavily on “Classroom Instruction that Works,” and in 2016, all school-based leaders participated in book studies focused on preparing students for the innovation era by reading Tony Wagner’s book, Most Likely to Succeed.

The zone saw the need to modernize its traditional approach to teaching and learning and recognized the important role of technology in this transition. Falcon invested significantly in procuring technology that promised to personalize learning for students and improve outcomes in the process. As most school districts discover, however, Falcon Zone realized that its acquisition of new technology did not change the fundamental instructional practices, curriculum, or experiences in the classroom. Rather, it still offered a traditional classroom model with technology supplementing it. Students used devices to access the internet and perform ancillary activities, but they didn’t engage technology in a manner that increased cognitive rigor or lead to meaningful learning experiences.

Falcon recognized it needed a plan to leverage technology and modern instructional practices to prepare learners for the twenty-first century. Fortunately, it learned of the Digital Convergence Framework, the nation’s primary methodology for establishing and scaling personalized, modern learning environments. Falcon quickly saw value in the structure and systematic approach offered by the framework. It saw the framework as a tool that would create the organizational conditions to integrate technology meaningfully in the teaching and learning process.

The zone superintendent, together with other top leadership, traveled to Fraser Public Schools in Michigan to see the Digital Convergence Framework in action. Fraser stood as one of the most advanced districts in the country offering competency-based
learning. Falcon’s leadership team met with its peers at Fraser to discuss how the Michigan district used the framework to enable students to follow their own learning path and build the skills to succeed in the modern era upon graduation. It proved a formative trip, and Falcon’s leadership team returned home with a sense of purpose and excitement that would help jumpstart its journey toward personalized learning.

Yet an unfortunate event stifled the district’s early progress and created significant challenges. The zone superintendent, who provided balance to the district, passed away. It represented a difficult time for zone leaders, school-based leaders, staff, and stakeholders. They lost a critical influencer they relied on. Meanwhile, multiple members of the zone leadership left their posts so that only 50 percent of Falcon’s Zone leadership remained intact. Despite the uncertainty and turmoil facing Falcon Zone, it managed to continue its commitment to the framework and personalized learning. This stands as a testament to the zone’s perseverance and strong belief in the importance of personalized learning and recognition in the need to evolve traditional education.

Falcon hired a new zone superintendent and replaced the missing members of its leadership team. Meanwhile, the district continued to move forward with its adoption of the framework. None of the new leaders had made the trip to Fraser or understood the full impact of the Digital Convergence Framework in creating balance. This signaled the significant challenges ahead, especially given leadership’s important role in setting direction for the overall initiative.

The Value of the Digital Convergence Framework
The Digital Convergence Framework serves as the vessel by which districts establish and scale personalized, modern learning environments. Consisting of six drivers across seven stages, the framework provides districts with comprehensive structure to leverage technology to optimize the teaching and learning process. The framework consists of over 100 success indicators, which districts focus on and work through to create a system capable of supporting and delivering personalized learning experiences.
Importantly, some of these success indicators represent absolute requirements and necessitate a sequenced approach. For instance, leadership must set the direction for the district to evolve from the traditional classroom model before anything else can occur. At the same time, the framework includes success indicators that do not represent absolute requirements, or do not require a sequenced approach. The most successful district leaders understand the differences between each category and focus on the latter in a manner that reflects the unique circumstances and needs of their district. No two districts follow the same journey using the framework, and their differences lie in how they approach and focus on the non-absolute success indicators embedded in the framework.

While importance of leadership cannot be overstated, personalized learning requires systematic changes that transcend foundational aspects of the education system to include instructional practices, curriculum, technology and infrastructure, professional learning and community. While the zone experienced significant turnover of its leadership team, it managed to continue its journey to personalized learning. This illustrates one of the most important and impactful benefits of the Digital Convergence Framework. The framework provides structure and balance so that it does not depend on any one area or person of the school district, but rather the system itself.

**The Falcon Story**

With new leadership on board, the district began the second phase of its journey toward personalized learning. It recognized early on the importance of taking an intentional approach and starting slow to progress quickly over time. As the zone evaluated its progress in the Digital Convergence Framework, it found that it had completed several success indicators by virtue of its previous initiatives. Importantly, however, zone leadership saw the need to reset its work toward modern learning and focus on the first success indicator and work from there. This became an important moment for zone leadership, and established cohesion across its five schools by recognizing the inherent differences in how they used technology. It ultimately created the alignment and consistency the zone would need moving forward.

Meanwhile, zone leadership began establishing a brand for the overall initiative, which would not only increase awareness, but facilitate buy-in and establish consistency. Leadership wanted to create a brand that would galvanize stakeholders into understanding the changes taking place. Over the course of nine months, leadership would challenge one another and eventually settle on the zone’s brand for personalized learning—EmpowerFZ. The brand would focus on empowering students through (1) engaging environments, (2) enhanced opportunities, and (3) elevated instruction.
Importantly, zone leadership didn’t want EmpowerFZ to become a supplemental initiative to the district’s current work. As a result, it spent significant time and attention to ensure that the changes taking place at Falcon aligned with district goals and objectives, zone goals and objectives, and state standards. This would not only simplify the process for teachers, it would increase their willingness to buy-in to EmpowerFZ and embrace it as a priority.

Meanwhile, zone leadership also began crucial conversations about the importance of personalized learning and changing the current model. Zone leadership often spoke of the need to provide students with better learning opportunities and prepare them to succeed in the twenty-first century after graduation.

Once it established EmpowerFZ, zone leadership communicated the new brand to all stakeholders. Not long after, school-based leaders began walking teachers through hands-on activities to illustrate what the change would entail. This further reinforced the zone’s commitment to the change, as well as eliminated the anxiety and uncertainty that accompanied the development. Additionally, the zone sought to elevate the visibility, awareness, and reinforcement of the initiative through marketing. It invested in creating t-shirts, coffee mugs, and other collateral that showed the EmpowerFZ logo.

This made the overall initiative a visible presence in classrooms and a constant reminder of the zone’s commitment to personalized learning. Falcon Zone’s early investment and commitment paid off. Despite fully understanding what it would entail, more teachers in the zone than anticipated volunteered to join the first teacher cohort to pilot new instructional practices, curriculum, and technology infrastructure.

In early 2018, the district attended the first annual conference on Digital Convergence. It represented an important milestone, as those attending, which included zone leadership, made the commitment to reach Stage 3 of the Digital Convergence Framework by the start of the next conference 12 months later. By late 2018, the district managed to reach Stage 3 and achieve numerous success indicators.

Among its current initiatives, Falcon Zone remains committed to creating student pathways that enable learners to choose the sequence and scope of their academic journey.
It remains also focused on engaging the community in the important work taking place. Recently, the zone met with the Eastern Plains Chamber of Commerce to discuss EmpowerFZ. Zone leadership presented its vision for modern learning and asked for feedback from the chamber around what it thought would prepare students for the workforce. This meant understanding what would help the zone best prepare students through engaging environments, enhanced opportunities, and elevated instruction. Additionally, Falcon continues to share updates with its school accountability committees. They hold numerous conversations with the committees to discuss the district’s current and future state.

Over the last year, Falcon has invested significantly in educating teachers about the transition. Now, it remains committed to educating the community of the changes taking place, including community members and local businesses.

As a testament to where it stands today, Falcon continues to demonstrate significant progress in personalized learning, despite facing turnover at the zone leadership level. Recently, a principal received a promotion and the zone also opened a new elementary school, leaving two important vacancies. Despite this, the zone continues to advance in the framework and remains poised to reach Stage 4.

**Looking Ahead**

The Digital Convergence Framework enables school districts to quickly identify areas of its education system that disrupt the balance needed for personalized learning to effectively occur. Falcon Zone recognized that its technological infrastructure simply could not support the new instructional practices and blended learning approaches teachers began to learn and practice in the classroom. While they demonstrated early interest in the movement to twenty-first-century teaching and learning, teachers also began demonstrating frustration at the lack of bandwidth. Falcon Zone’s leadership, instructional practices, curriculum, and professional learning all demonstrated significant progress using the Digital Convergence Framework; yet its Digital Ecosystem stifled its early momentum and threatened to compromise the creation of modern learning environments.
In response, Falcon Zone is now backtracking and focusing on developing a Digital Ecosystem that can provide a strong technological foundation from which to support blended learning and its modern curriculum.

This illustrates two other important aspects of the Framework. First, it requires districts to follow a certain sequence when working toward personalized learning. Generally, leadership must lead progress in the framework to create the conditions for instructional practices, curriculum, technological infrastructure, professional learning and community to effectively occur. Similarly, professional learning must demonstrate the least progress in the framework compared to the other drivers. This enables staff, school-based leaders, and instructional coaches to become proficient in the changes to the district that have already taken place. Yet when districts don’t follow this general sequence, the framework enables them to quickly recognize warning signs and where they need to focus their attention to restore balance to the overall system. Second, the framework also enables school districts to easily work backward in the framework, focus on the necessary success indicators, and build the needed conditions for progress toward personalized learning to again begin occurring.

Looking Toward the Future
Today, Falcon Zone is working toward developing a robust Digital Ecosystem. The district has chosen to outsource informational technology to an external IT firm, which attends steering committee strategy sessions to better understand the needs of EmpowerFZ. Currently, the firm is assessing the district’s infrastructure and recommending solutions. Meanwhile, the district remains committed to sustaining the momentum it generated thus far in its journey. EmpowerFZ remains at the forefront of meetings, professional learning, and communications—both with staff and with external stakeholders such parents and community members.
Hamilton Community Schools: Establishing the Systems for Personalized, Modern Learning
Introduction

In 2007, Hamilton Community Schools (HCS), a 10-school system in Michigan, recognized the need to modernize its approach to prepare students to succeed in the twenty-first century. The HCS Board of Education developed its District School Improvement Plan with the focus of meeting the needs of all students and the brand promise, “a personal experience with exceptional results.” This initiated early conversations around personalized learning. Despite this new emphasis, HCS struggled to develop a uniform and systemic approach toward personalized learning, a trend that would continue for the next ten years.

In 2017, the HCS Board of Education began a year-long book study of *Inevitable: Mass Customized Learning*, which enhanced its understanding of personalized learning and uncovered the need for systemic change to effectively support it. Upon completion of the book study, HCS began conducting a strategic planning process that examined the evolving demands of industry and business, the disadvantages of the traditional classroom model, and the recommendations of community and district stakeholders regarding the district's role in student achievement. Through this process, HCS developed a strategic plan that focused on the future of learning and would guide its efforts and decision making in the future.

Among its core elements, the strategic plan included a revised vision statement: “Equipped with superior academic, career, and life management skills, each Hamilton graduate has the knowledge and motivation to thrive.” The board took great care in crafting a vision statement that illustrated the district's emphasis on and commitment to personalized learning. The focus on each student represented an important departure from the previous vision statement, which addressed the district's commitment to providing education for all students and which reflected the traditional classroom model. The board also chose the word “thrive” to capture the desired outcome it sought to produce for each student. “Thrive” underscored more than academic success, also including student well-being across emotional, social, psychological, and intellectual realms.
HCS’s board approved the new strategic plan, giving the district permission to embark on a journey to modernize the education system in Hamilton. The district sought to create systems that would support its teacher workforce and ensure new hires gained the new knowledge and skills to facilitate personalized learning in modern classrooms. While this represented a significant milestone, it presented district leaders with significant challenges; mainly, implementing the strategic plan and executing on the district’s new aspiring vision. District leaders immediately began to search for solutions that could guide the work.

The Digital Convergence Framework: Eliminating the Guesswork of Personalized Learning

Digital Convergence serves as the fundamental movement needed to transform traditional classrooms into modern learning environments. At a national level, Digital Convergence represents the unification of the ideas and efforts of K–12 leaders, innovators, and educators collectively seeking to improve teaching and learning through technology adoption. For school districts such as HCS, Digital Convergence represents systematic work across six key components of the education system needed to successfully implement, support, and sustain the modern learning environment. These drivers of Digital Convergence include Leadership, Instructional Models, Modern Curriculum, Digital Ecosystems, Professional Learning and Community. Through integrated and ongoing work in these areas, districts can overcome the barriers that prevent them from adopting technology successfully.

The Digital Convergence Framework is a practical tool for districts to engage in the work of transitioning from the traditional classroom model to the modern learning environment. The framework encompasses seven stages across the six drivers of Digital Convergence and enables districts to track progress across major components of the education system. Each stage and driver contains success indicators, or action items, that demonstrate advancement toward Convergence.

The Hamilton Story

Fortunately, HCS discovered the Digital Convergence Framework, the nation’s primary methodology for establishing personalized, modern learning environments at scale. It
immediately became clear to district leaders that the framework would eliminate much of the uncertainty that came with HCS’s new direction. It provided a flexible, multi-year road map split into seven stages across six core areas of the education system. It also offered the systems-based structure that would bring alignment, visibility, and coordination across the district. Additionally, the framework equipped district stakeholders with a shared vocabulary to approach and collectively understand the work of personalized learning. And last, it helped elevate the work beyond any one person, department, or initiative, but rather put the focus on the need for the system to reform itself. As a result, this helped facilitate buy-in, engagement, and ownership of the initiative. This became clear after the district adopted the framework and participated in a group activity, in which members collectively sought to identify what society asked of HCS.

HCS formed a steering committee comprised of district and school-based leaders. As the committee continued exploring the framework, members discovered the challenge of balancing the long-term and short-term results of the district. While the framework would help secure the long-term future of HCS, district leaders felt pressure to produce artifacts and demonstrate improvements in personalized learning for its current students. Fortunately, the design of the Digital Convergence Framework helps districts improve the current and future state of personalized learning. The framework's 130 success indicators, which organize the work into manageable segments, enable districts to make short-term achievements that contribute to its long-term journey. This gives school districts such as HCS the chance to recognize and celebrate the completion of success indicators while also emphasizing the longevity required for success.

Meanwhile, the district defined its new instructional model for personalized learning, using the most important keywords of its vision statement. The new model, Each Will Thrive, consists of four core elements: a safe educational environment, rigorous instruction and assessment, a modern learning culture, and personalized learning. The new instructional model would create the conditions for students to thrive. It would help them develop skills and prepare them for life after graduation, which represented a significant shift from the traditional model, which focused on content.
The instructional model would also guide HCS’s approach to professional learning. HCS sought to enable its teachers to experience the new instructional model firsthand as learners. For example, all teachers would receive rigorous learning and assessment personalized to them in a safe educational environment and modern learning culture. This would help enable teachers to understand and articulate knowledge in the context of their job and contribute to their ability to perform tasks that integrate this new knowledge with ease. This progression from understanding new knowledge to performing tasks using it represents the Proficiency Model, the progression from Literacy to Fluency, respectively.

In 2018, HCS introduced its first professional learning module on personalized learning to all staff. It represented an important decision and demonstrated the district’s commitment to consistency. Rather than roll out the education to a small population of teachers, as many districts do, HCS made it mandatory for all staff to ensure all teachers gained the same level of knowledge about the changes taking place. It also made another important decision when it selected “Rigor” as its first module after recognizing that rigorous instruction provided a strong foundation for personalized learning.

Meanwhile, the district also mandated that teachers complete the first professional learning module developed in house. This module explored the district’s instructional model including the four core elements. It explored the genesis of Each Will Thrive and its purpose to provide teachers with context and help reinforce their foundation of knowledge.

**Looking Ahead**

Today, HCS is constructing its first teacher cohort by analyzing staff progress in the framework. HCS remains committed to enlisting instructional coaches who can help support existing staff and onboard new hires. The district recognizes the importance of using teachers as instructional coaches rather than administrators, since the former naturally elicits trust and respect from their peers. Additionally, the district also plans to introduce the fluency portion of the “Rigor” module to all staff. Fluency, as mentioned earlier, is defined as gaining the ability to perform tasks that integrate the new knowledge and skills. This means teachers will be asked to recreate and deliver lesson plans that incorporate the rigorous instructional practices they previously learned.

Additionally, HCS is focused on creating professional learning that ensures institutional knowledge resides in the education system rather than with teachers. This comes as a response to the high turnover rates experienced in the district and across the country. HCS finds that it takes significant time
and resources to onboard new teachers and ensure they become proficient in their jobs. And this trend is likely to only worsen, given the district’s new direction toward personalized learning. Most higher-education institutions do not equip teachers entering the workforce with the knowledge and skills to facilitate modern learning environments. In response, HCS is developing a professional learning system in the Modern Teacher professional learning platform that can quickly help teachers attain proficiency, fill any gaps in knowledge, and eliminate duplicative learning by understanding teacher proficiency at the individual level and provide targeted education or remediation when necessary. The latter promises to save significant time and resources, since the district no longer needs to require teachers who are proficient to attend professional learning they do not need. HCS plans to roll out this education by the start of the 2019–2020 school year and offer modules on a variety of areas such as standards-based grading and implementing reading and writing curriculums.

The Digital Convergence Steering Committee meets on a regular basis to review assets developed as a result of strategically moving through the success indicators. The team, made up of district and school-based leadership, has developed a unified approach that allows for consistency of messaging both in schools and within the community. This consistency remains an important focus for the district. It seeks to ensure all communications and initiatives reinforce its instructional model and broader strategic vision. As a result, it continues to ensure that all communications reference “Each Will Thrive.” The district has also focused heavily on developing a robust communication strategy. It hired a director of communications and began developing videos and other multimedia to reach and inform the community about the district’s work and progress relative to personalized learning. The district focused its communications through its website and social media outlets.
Today, Hamilton is focused on creating a Digital Ecosystem that can support its instructional model and strategic plan. HCS completed an inventory of its digital resources and discovered many in use that lack interoperability or integration. This comes after the district lacked formal controls over what tools teachers could use, and half of HCS’s staff began to create and implement their own blended lesson plans. It currently plans to consolidate these resources and focus on branding, developing, and deploying the ecosystem as a robust communication and personalized learning support system.
J.O. Combs Unified School District:
Achieving Teacher Proficiency through Professional Learning
Introduction
J.O. Combs Unified School District, located in San Tan Valley, Arizona, sought to capitalize on an opportunity. A community-approved bond meant the small, seven-school district would receive needed funding to purchase new technology and update existing resources. It also meant the district could now fully invest in the transition to twenty-first-century teaching and learning. Encouraged, it attended a conference and learned about the Digital Convergence Framework, the nation’s primary methodology for scaling the personalized, modern learning environment. The framework would ensure the district created the essential conditions to support blended learning in the classroom. Early on, the team branded the initiative “#Forward” to symbolize the district’s vision of building a modern school system.

From the outset, J.O. Combs recognized the importance of developing strong leadership to guide the change. This meant constructing a steering committee to set the direction, establish accountability, and track the success of the overall initiative. Rather than limit this group to district leadership, the district sought to form a committee of key representatives across the district who could elevate engagement and bring diverse expertise and experience. As a result, J.O. Combs developed a 14-person committee to include all seven principals, the human resources director, student services director, district leadership, and cabinet members.

With the steering committee in place, J.O. Combs began to analyze the district’s existing systems, practices, and procedures before focusing on the changes needing to occur in individual classrooms. This work represented the beginning of a difficult journey that promised to dramatically improve student outcomes.

Professional Learning
Professional Learning serves as one of the six key drivers of the Digital Convergence Framework. While the early stages of the framework focus on creating the conditions for modern learning to occur, the later stages focus on using professional learning to bring personalized learning into practice and scale it across the institution. Professional Learning is often one of the slower-progressing drivers in the framework. The success indicators equip principals, instructional coaches, and teachers with the
knowledge and confidence to facilitate and support modern learning experiences. This development occurs over time and through intentional phases of progression known as the Proficiency Model.

The Proficiency Model defines proficiency as a progression from Literacy (being able to understand and articulate knowledge in the context of one’s job) to Fluency (being able to perform a task that integrates the new knowledge and skills acquired in Literacy with ease). Mastery is achieved by practicing these skills over time and with experiences. A key issue with many professional learning experiences for adults today is that they either stop at Literacy, with no fluency or application, or they start at Mastery and assume that the goal is for everyone to immediately become an expert.

Teachers must become proficient in new skills by starting with Literacy and progressing through Fluency with the help of a coach, allowing them to accumulate experience over time that will lead some teachers to Mastery. Not every teacher needs to master these new skills, but all teachers must become proficient in them to prepare learners for the workforce.

J.O. Combs Story

J.O. Combs represents a unique case study as it relates to the Digital Convergence Framework. It also signifies a good example of the framework’s flexibility to support districts and their special circumstances, needs, and environment.

For J.O. Combs, an unlikely event shaped how it approached the personalized, modern learning environment. In April 2017, 50,000 teachers in Arizona staged a walkout to protest educational funding (including teacher salaries), a movement known as Red for Ed. Educators marched on the State Capitol and continued their walkout for six days of the school year. It left J.O. Combs’s steering committee tentative and uncertain about their plans for Digital Convergence. Yet it also created the opportunity to take a unique approach to Professional Learning, one that would increase awareness of the changes taking place and build momentum heading into the 2018–2019 school year.

Prior to the walkout in April, the district’s steering committee engaged in a series of deep conversations. Among its responsibilities, the committee was tasked with repurposing existing personnel to provide teachers support and education on the personalized, modern learning environment. For its part, the steering committee sought to redesign its current coaching model, which included 10 academic coaches, each specializing in math or ELA, who provided support to the district’s seven
schools. The steering committee recognized that to truly support the work of Digital Convergence, otherwise referred to as #Forward at J.O. Combs, teachers would need access to coaches in other subject areas as well, both at the secondary and elementary level.

The steering committee developed a solution. It chose to convert the existing content coaches into seven instructional coaches and three content coaches. The district would assign one instructional coach to each school to support the instructional practices and pedagogy appropriate for the modern learning environment. The remaining content coaches would function at the district level and expand their support to encompass ELA, math, science and social studies, and early literature. The steering committee began rewriting the job descriptions of the instructional and content coaches to align with the work of #Forward.

At the same time, J.O. Combs also focused on creating teacher cohorts, small groups of three to 10 teachers, which would participate in professional learning modules aligned to the district's instructional model. Given the size of J.O. Combs's teacher base, the district planned to introduce the cohorts over the course of two years.

Then, Red for Ed happened. As a result, teachers needed to make up six full days to fulfill their contracts, which would occur without students in the classroom because students had received the correct amount of instructional minutes. It provided the steering committee a unique opportunity. It could help a cohort of teachers use the six days to achieve a proficiency level of Literacy in the personalized, modern learning environment. As the steering committee continued conversations on the best approach for introducing the education, it anticipated strong resistance from educators given that it came at the end of the year and with the absence of students. The steering committee chose to send a clear message of the district's commitment to Digital Convergence. Rather than require only a cohort of teachers to complete the education, it chose to make it mandatory for all staff. The committee selected three modules for the six professional learning days: student-centered learning, flexible learning...
environments, and instructional rigor. They also planned to expose all staff to the Proficiency Model to understand the concept of proficiency: the transition from understanding and articulating knowledge in the context of their job (Literacy) to performing tasks that integrate new knowledge and skills acquired in Literacy with ease (Fluency). The district then began creating four professional learning goals that would align with the four main components of its instructional model.

Meanwhile, the district’s principals and instructional coaches completed the education ahead of teacher participation. This remained an important requirement as the six professional learning days approached. Principals and coaches needed to gain the knowledge and confidence to support teachers as they completed the modules. This meant they not only needed to expose themselves to the learning content, but they also needed to demonstrate their literacy of it.

The six professional learning days proved successful. The district chose to split the three modules over the course of the six days, allowing time for principals to facilitate the staff’s exploration of the content. This became important because it demonstrated that school-based leaders were committed to the changes, and as a result, staff could confidently incorporate the new practices into their classrooms. Also, success came from exposing all staff to the Modern Teacher platform, which J.O. Combs chose to use for its Digital Convergence journey, and which housed all its professional learning content.

J.O. Combs received overwhelming positive reactions and support from teachers. All teachers acquired knowledge about important concepts, including an in-depth exploration of the student-centered learning environment and what it entails. Many of the participants, engaged and motivated by the shift to modern learning, volunteered to join the district’s first teacher cohort. It generated significant excitement that carried into the 2018–2019 school year.

As the district prepared for its professional day in July 2018, it sought to develop its own professional learning modules. It believed that staff needed to experience personalized learning they would eventually facilitate in their own classrooms. The district used the professional learning builder in the Modern Teacher platform to create a new module called “Synthesizing
Intentional Planning and Team Collaboration.” This professional learning focused on instructing teachers within a blended learning model in the context of their professional practice in the classroom. This was an important move for J.O. Combs, since teachers learned about blended learning by experiencing how it works for learners as learners. The professional learning day would provide personalized learning experiences inside and outside the platform. Inside the platform, teachers would complete the modules, while outside they would participate in independent work, reflection, whole-group collaboration, and principal and coach co-facilitated instruction. Teachers would also upload and share their own resources via the Modern Teacher platform as well as explore and access resources shared by their peers. This provided all staff a single point of access for their resources. Together, the professional learning day in July would enable teachers to experience blended and personalized learning several ways. This would prepare them to implement these instructional practices in the classroom as a part of the next generation of the instructional model.

Entering the fall 2018, J.O. Combs began preparing to launch its first teacher cohort to achieve Fluency in the modules completed earlier in the year. In the Proficiency Model, achieving Fluency requires teachers to demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge acquired in the literacy modules to their practices in the classroom. Meanwhile, coaches provide support during this process—reinforcing what teachers do well while coaching them through areas needing improvement.

In order to support the cohort, instructional and content coaches achieved Fluency in the new modules, shared their experiences in a group setting, and discussed areas to address with teachers. As the launch neared, coaches met collectively once a week to develop a plan for the rollout of the first cohort. They also met approximately three times a month with representatives of the teacher cohort.
Looking Forward

In the fall of 2018, J.O. Combs approached Stage 3 of the Digital Convergence Framework. Overall, the district progressed quickly, and it owes much of this success to its unique approach to professional learning. Currently, the district is focused on developing professional learning plans for new teacher induction to reach proficiency. Additionally, professional learning continues to progress for instructional and content coaches, while the district continues to monitor its effectiveness. The district is also beginning to achieve its first professional learning goal for coaches and teachers.

Currently, the district remains focused on acquiring a learning management system (LMS) to ensure its network systems work correctly. It also plans to integrate its LMS with its student information system to ensure both remain interoperable. J.O. Combs is also using its grant dollars to hire a coach specializing in Digital Convergence. This would continue to enhance its new coaching support model.

As with all districts making the journey toward personalized learning, J.O. Combs faced adversity. Red for Ed spawned new challenges that complicated how the district approached the Digital Convergence Framework. As a testament to the district and its commitment to modern learning, it stayed committed and creatively engineered a solution that would jump-start its journey toward twenty-first-century teaching and learning. As the district sets its sights on the later stages of Digital Convergence, it seeks to sustain the momentum that it successfully created.

K–12 education is facing its most significant “tipping point” in nearly a century. The accelerated rate of technological change is threatening the traditional structures, processes, and systems that have governed our nation’s school systems since the Industrial Revolution. Now, superintendents and educational leaders are seeking innovative solutions to answer their most difficult questions and transform their districts for the modern age.

What can K–12 leaders learn from how the retail industry has embraced the digital revolution? How should superintendents and leaders approach the transformation of traditional classrooms to modern learning environments? Why does this change transcend the mere conversion from analog to digital, and instead require the convergence of multiple components of the education system? These are just a few of the questions Dr. Shawn K. Smith answers in his latest book, The New Agenda: Achieving Personalized Learning Through Digital Convergence.

As a former chief of schools and educator who now consults school systems across the country, Dr. Smith shares the practical strategies and insights that have helped some of today’s most innovative minds advance the work of Digital Convergence—the fundamental movement to transform teaching and learning for the modern age. This book teaches educational leaders how to

- Think strategically about Digital Convergence
- Identify the processes for building your strategic plan
- Understand the interdependencies of learning management systems, digital content, and digital tools
- Design and develop a digital ecosystem
- Implement processes for writing a digital and/or blended curriculum
- Develop short-term and long-range professional learning plans for all employees in a school district
Despite its promise, technology has created significant challenges for K–12 leaders, who need new strategies to navigate its disruptive change. Whether you are struggling to evolve from the traditional classroom model or are preparing to engage in this important work, this is a must-read book that will forever change the way you think about twenty-first-century education.

To order individual copies of the book, visit Amazon. To order titles in bulk, visit the website for Magnusson-Skor Publishing for special discounts (www.mskor.com).
Across the country, a fundamental movement continues to take shape as school districts embark on the journey toward the personalized, modern learning environment. New champions begin to emerge and promote the transition. Instructional models evolve to accommodate unique profiles for individual learners. Curriculum changes to offer authentic learning experiences. Digital resources become integrated and connected. Professional learning programs prepare school-based leaders, instructional coaches, and teacher cohorts to lead and support the shift toward the modern classroom. The conditions are set for the modern learning environment to scale. And the next phase begins.

In *The Shape of Change*, Dr. Shawn K. Smith identifies the common experiences districts face as they enter Stage 4 and 5 of the Digital Convergence Framework. While districts take a unique path in the Framework, Dr. Smith identifies the common patterns that drive and detract from progress. Using these common patterns, district leaders can diagnose the barriers preventing progress, while gaining immediate action items to move forward.

*The Shape of Change* extends the work of *The New Agenda* to give district leaders and stakeholders a road map for working through the Digital Convergence Framework as the modern learning environment becomes institutionalized and teachers become “champions” of twenty-first-century teaching and learning.
This book teaches educational leaders how to:

- Anticipate and understand the changing conditions in the district in five key areas
- Use change management strategies to scale the modern learning environment
- Establish a proficiency model for school-based leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers
- Set goal cycles to organize, measure, and recognize progress in manageable phases
- Sustain momentum toward personalized learning through Digital Convergence

To pre-order the title in bulk or find out more about its release, visit the website for Magnusson-Skor Publishing (www.mskor.com). Special discounts available for bulk purchases.
Leadership
1. Message from the Top (MFTT) – The superintendent has communicated the desire to leverage technology to transform teaching and learning, and has invited all stakeholders to co-construct the vision of the modern learning environment.
2. Cross-functional team has been formed and serves as the district's Digital Convergence Steering Committee.
3. A theory of action has been developed for the transformation of teaching and learning through Digital Convergence.
4. Stakeholders have been identified and engaged in activities around the theory of action and the construction of the vision of the modern learning environment.

Instructional Models
5. Cross-functional team has been formed to explore new instructional models. One person has been designated as the owner.
6. Cross-functional team begins conversations about a newly defined instructional model, including use of learner profiles, blended and personalized learning, and a competency-based education system.
7. Cross-functional team begins conversations about developing a common language around instructional rigor.
8. Cross-functional team begins conversations about developing a common language around twenty-first-century skills.

Modern Curriculum
9. The district is beginning to explore a common blended unit plan across all subjects, courses, and grade levels.

Digital Ecosystem
10. Cross-functional team is formed to explore the district's digital ecosystem. One person is designated as the owner.
11. District begins conversations about its digital ecosystem, including its purpose, users, systems, subsystems, and functions, and how it will support and align to the district's instructional model.

Professional Learning
12. Cross-functional team is formed to develop, deploy, and monitor the district's professional learning and growth as it relates to Digital Convergence. One person is designated as the owner.

Community
111. The district's Digital Convergence Steering Committee considers inviting prominent community groups together for a discussion about the community's role in the future of learning, such as government, employers, post-secondary schools, parent groups, and local organizations.

Leadership
13. Message from the Top—The superintendent has communicated to stakeholders the successful development of the vision of the modern learning environment.
14. Modern Learning Environment Vision Deck has been developed and delivered to all stakeholders.
15. District common language glossary of terms has been developed and published with a plan to maintain and update over time.
16. A district brand for Digital Convergence has been defined.
17. The work of Digital Convergence is aligned to your district's strategic plan.

Instructional Models
18. District-wide instructional model has been defined.
19. The district has an agreed-upon common language for instructional rigor, which will inform the development of a graduate profile.
20. The district has an agreed-upon common language for twenty-first-century skills, which will inform the development of a graduate profile.

Modern Curriculum
21. The district has conducted an inventory of its digital content, including its purchased content and where teachers are accessing free content.
22. A common blended unit plan that is aligned with the new instructional model has been developed by the district across all subjects, courses, and grade levels.
23. Model digital/blended lessons have been developed, are aligned with the new instructional model, and are available inside the district's digital ecosystem.

Digital Ecosystem
24. The technical build of the district's digital ecosystem begins while integration needs, progress monitoring, and milestones are continuously reviewed.
25. The district has defined the digital ecosystem’s systems, subsystems, and their functions.
26. The district has procured a learning management system as part of their digital ecosystem.
27. The district extends the brand of Digital Convergence to its ecosystem, including a name for the ecosystem, stakeholder communication, and visuals to represent the conceptual design.
28. The district has conducted an inventory of its instructional digital tools, including both purchased tools and high-access free tools.

**Professional Learning**
29. The district has identified a professional learning implementation model with the necessary resources to support its success.
30. Coaches to support Digital Convergence have been identified, consistent with the district's implementation model.
31. A professional learning plan has been developed, consistent with the district's implementation model (Sl29), and includes professional learning goals aligned to the district's newly defined instructional model (Sl 18 & 41).
32. A critical mass (75%) of coaches of Digital Convergence are ready and prepared with the knowledge, materials, and time to support the initial cohort launch.
33. An initial group of teachers are selected and grouped in professional learning cohorts consistent with the district's implementation model.
34. Coaches of Digital Convergence have kicked off their teacher cohorts with a face-to-face session to set expectations, build awareness of tools and resources, and generate excitement for the journey ahead.

**Community**
112. The district examines emerging trends and innovative practices about expanding the physical classroom into the broader community through real-world problem solving, student-workforce opportunities, and application of knowledge in workforce settings.
113. The district synthesizes a broader set of goals that take into consideration the objectives and contributions of other engaged community groups, such as internships, dual credit, local scholarship programs, research studies.
114. The district has developed a profile of graduate to be shared with the community for feedback.

**Leadership**
35. Message from the Top—The superintendent has communicated to all stakeholders key wins in Digital Convergence during the first two stages and continues to update all stakeholders with next steps in the work.
36. All school-based leaders have been trained on leading change: change management theory; and first and second order change.
37. School-based plans have been created for “culture conversations.”
38. School-based leaders have facilitated “culture conversations” around Digital Convergence and the need to transform teaching and learning.
39. Plans to communicate the work of Digital Convergence (internally and externally) through various media outlets are continuous and ongoing.
40. Establish metrics aligned to the theory of action and formalize a reflection process.

**Instructional Models**
41. The new instructional model has defined identifiers, a timeline for launching to stakeholders, and alignment to teacher professional learning.

**Modern Curriculum**
42. Model blended units have been developed, are aligned to the new instructional model, and are available inside the district's digital ecosystem.
43. The district has identified gaps in digital content across all subjects, courses, and grade levels, and has a plan to address the gap.

**Digital Ecosystem**
44. Regular cadence has been established for the Digital Ecosystem Team while integration needs, progress monitoring, and milestones are continuously reviewed.
45. A hierarchical rollout to stakeholder groups has been defined, and a go-live date has been set, first for internal testing and then tiered access.

**Professional Learning**
46. School-based leadership begins to engage in the professional learning content aligned to the district's instructional model.
47. Professional learning plans for new teacher induction have been developed and include a pathway for all new teachers to reach proficiency in the goals set in the district's Professional Learning Plan within the first three years of their employment.
48. Coaches of Digital Convergence professional learning is in progress with clear evidence that the team continuously monitors effectiveness based upon a number of data points.

49. Teacher cohort professional learning is in progress with clear evidence that the team continuously monitors effectiveness based upon a number of data points.

50. Fifty percent of school-based leadership have completed the “Change Management for School Leaders” module.

51. A critical mass (75%) of coaches of Digital Convergence have achieved the district’s PL Goal 1.

52. A critical mass (75%) of coaches of Digital Convergence have achieved the district’s PL Goal 2.

53. Ten percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 1.

54. Ten percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 2.

55. The district begins to talk about student outcome metrics going beyond quantitative state assessments

Community
115. The district makes a plan to examine their existing social assets within the community.
116. The district makes a plan to examine their infrastructure to support students in diversifying their community-based learning opportunities and networks.
117. The district makes a plan to examine their students’ networks beyond their peers, family and teachers.
118. The district makes a plan to implement a comprehensive curriculum review to identify where opportunities exist for students to be connected to their community.
119. The district considers creating programmatic options for students that include a full blended learning school and a full virtual school option.

Leadership
56. MFTT—Messaging reflects a relentless pursuit of Digital Convergence excellence. Wins are celebrated during the first four stages while continuously focusing all stakeholders towards the realization of the desired vision.

57. District leadership and school-based leadership participate in “problems of practice” inquiry (instructional rounds) based upon four critical questions: What is the teacher doing or saying? What are the students doing or saying? What is the instructional task? What is the role of technology in the lesson? These questions tie back to the district’s newly defined instructional model.

58. District leadership begins to align new instructional model with teacher evaluations.

Instructional Models
59. The district re-examines its instructional model to include a continuum of learning for all students in all courses as well the explicit use of learner profile.

Modern Curriculum
60. Modernization of the district’s curriculum continues to evolve over time, with key consideration of personalized learning.

Digital Ecosystem
61. All vendors that make up the district’s digital ecosystem have contractually committed to the integration work/standards or provided the district a timeline for additional development needs.
62. Protocols have been established for regular testing (QA) of information systems and user access to the ecosystem as a result of any unforeseen updates and/or risks.

Professional Learning
63. A critical mass (75%) of school-based leadership have completed the “Change Management for School Leaders” module.
64. A critical mass (75%) of coaches of Digital Convergence have achieved the district’s PL Goal 3.
65. Ten percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 3.
66. Ten percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 4.
67. Thirty percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 1.
68. Thirty percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 2.
69. The district begins to track and monitor student outcome metrics going beyond quantitative state assessments.

Community
120. The district examines their existing social assets within the community.
121. The district examines their infrastructure to support students in diversifying their community-based learning opportunities and networks.
122. The district examines their students’ networks beyond their peers, family and teachers.
123. The district implements a comprehensive curriculum review to identify where opportunities exist for students to be connected to their community.
124. The district gathers and analyzes the data collected in the examination of the community’s social assets, the district’s infrastructure, and the students’ networks.
125. Leveraging the collected data, the district brainstorms and identifies opportunities for students to expand their networks within the district’s core curriculum.
Leadership
70. MFTT—Messaging reflects the need for the organization to monitor, learn, and adjust its Digital Convergence plans. Wins are continuously communicated while keeping the “eye on the prize.”
71. District leadership has finalized the updated teacher evaluation, and it is aligned to the district’s new instructional model.
72. School-based and teacher leaders move from awareness to action while “problems of practice” (instructional rounds) are ongoing. School-based action plans are developed for school-wide improvement.
73. Formal and informal celebrations and recognition are pervasive throughout the district culture.

Instructional Models
74. A continuum of learning and learner profiles have been researched, are clearly defined, and are part of the instructional model.
75. A tool for assessing learner profiles is identified and procured.
76. Some courses at the high school level are blended, and teachers are empowered to make informed decisions regarding instructional time with students.

Modern Curriculum
77. All subjects and courses have opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery along a continuum of learning that includes student choice and problem-solving within an authentic context.

Digital Ecosystem
78. The district’s Digital Ecosystem Team has identified and reviewed all data that needs to be shared across the systems and subsystems of the ecosystem. Further, user profiles (user access levels) have been cross-referenced to ensure users have access to the data sets they need.

Professional Learning
79. A critical mass (75%) of coaches of Digital Convergence have achieved the district’s PL Goal 4.
80. Thirty percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 3.
81. Thirty percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 4.
82. Sixty percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 1.
83. Sixty percent of the district’s teachers have achieved the district’s PL Goal 2.
84. The district continues to track and monitor student outcome metrics by expanding upon the metrics in Stage 4 and ensuring alignment to their theory of action, vision, and instructional model.

Community
126. Opportunities exist for all students to reflect upon their strengths and how those strengths translate into meaningful future employment.
127. The district plans for the creation of programmatic options for students that include a full blended learning school, a full virtual school option, and expansion of student networks.

Leadership
85. MFTT—Messaging reflects the district’s stature as a model district based upon the hard work of all stakeholders. It reminds people of the focused work to get where they are, with a nudge to the future work ahead.
86. The district’s strategic plan is continuously examined, with clear evidence of monitoring, updates, and adjustments documented.

Instructional Models
87. Students progress through curriculum only after mastery, and the district’s grading policies are updated appropriately to reflect this progression.
88. All students are assessed for their learner profiles and are aware of “how they learn.”
89. Students are grouped based upon characteristics in their learner profiles rather than their ages or grade levels.
90. Students have choice over the time, place, path, and pace of their learning.
91. All courses at the high school level are blended, and teachers are empowered to make informed decisions regarding instructional time with students.

Modern Curriculum
92. The district’s curriculum is continuously examined and monitored against the needs of society.

Digital Ecosystem
93. A continuous feedback loop has been established between the district’s digital ecosystem and all end-user groups. Feedback is prioritized into an actionable development road map for the ecosystem.

Professional Learning
94. Clear evidence exists that the professional learning team has fostered cross-collaboration opportunities among teachers that includes opportunities to observe and provide peer-to-peer feedback and support within one’s own school and across schools. There is a deep sense of reflection and practice with the key deliverable moving from fluency to mastery in Digital Convergence.
95. Ninety percent of coaches of Digital Convergence have achieved all district PL goals.
97. Sixty percent of the district's teachers have achieved the district's PL Goal 4.
98. Ninety percent of the district's teachers have achieved the district's PL Goal 1.
99. Ninety percent of the district's teachers have achieved the district's PL Goal 2.
100. The district begins to schedule performance meetings at all levels of the organization to review data on the impact of Digital Convergence and student outcomes.

Community
128. The district has multiple options for students during their preK-12 experience, including but not limited to brick and mortar options with some blended courses available, full blended school options, and full virtual options.
129. The district has multiple opportunities embedded in their core curriculum for students to be connected to professionals within their community. Student networks are intentionally evaluated & expanded during high school as part of the learning experience.

Leadership
101. MFTT—District leadership communicates with all stakeholders on a regular basis about the ever-changing landscape of technology and how it affects learning.
102. The district's vision is updated to reflect the new needs of society.

Instructional Models
103. The district's instructional model is continuously examined against the needs of society and best practices for learning. As technology adapts and changes, the district refines their instructional model to meet these needs.

Modern Curriculum
104. District curriculum is updated “just in time” by utilizing its technology tools and digital ecosystem.

Digital Ecosystem
105. The district's digital ecosystem has become a multi-vendor, interconnected, and interactive tool that meets the needs of a diverse group of stakeholders. As new technologies become available, the ecosystem is nimble enough to integrate these tools within the structures of the ecosystem.

Professional Learning
106. Professional learning team continuously monitors curriculum adjustments, technology upgrades/changes, and best practices for instructional design and delivery, and has a systemic plan to update training content and modules on a continuous basis.
107. The district has regularly scheduled performance meetings at all levels of the organization to review data on the impact of Digital Convergence and student outcomes.
108. Ninety percent of the district's teachers have achieved the district's PL Goal 3.
109. Ninety percent of the district's teachers have achieved the district's PL Goal 4.
110. District-defined student outcomes metric here.

Community
130. The district examines the quality of interactions between students and industry experts/mentors to assure networks are built on healthy, positive relationships and high cognitive task interactions (quality over quantity).
About the National Council on Digital Convergence

The National Council on Digital Convergence brings together today’s most innovative minds around twenty-first century teaching and learning. With national representation, the Council seeks to advance the collective conversation and work around Digital Convergence to ensure school systems successfully transition to modern learning environments.
Dr. Lori Duerr
Chair, National Council on Digital Convergence

Dr. Lori Duerr is the superintendent of Falmouth Public Schools in Massachusetts. She is also the chair of the National Council on Digital Convergence (NCDC), where she has served since the council’s inception in 2016. Her appointment to key leadership positions comes from her significant passion, commitment, knowledge, and experience in personalized learning, as well as her belief that all students can succeed with intentional access and opportunities. Today, Dr. Duerr is a recognized leader in transitioning traditional teaching to the world of digital and blended learning with a focus on student voice and choice in their path of personalized learning.

Prior to her appointment in Falmouth, Dr. Duerr served four years as assistant superintendent in the Colonial School District and another four years in various leadership positions. During her time at Colonial, she led the BRINC Consortium, a collection of districts in Delaware including Colonial, in blended and personalized education. Both Colonial and BRINC were recognized in the NCDC State of the Industry Report for leading the nation in personalized learning.

In addition to her time at Colonial, Dr. Duerr spent eight years working for the Delaware Department of Education in various offices, including Title I, Curriculum, and Special Education. Dr. Duerr has been in the field of education for 35 years as a teacher, counselor, and administrator at all levels of education. Dr. Duerr received her undergraduate and master’s degrees from West Virginia University and her doctorate degree in education leadership from Wilmington University in Delaware.

Dr. Paul Facteau
National Council on Digital Convergence

Paul is the innovation instigator for Apple, Inc. Paul’s mission is to catalyze and guide schools and districts through the process of
developing modern curricula, implementing effective learning methodologies, creating authentic assessments, and identifying the technology tools that can support those efforts. Paul seeks to develop partnerships where he leverages his experience as an innovation architect to accelerate the change process.

As part of his role, Paul has led a number of strategic education projects on Apple’s behalf in conjunction with large urban and statewide learning initiatives. These have included the following:

- New York City Public Schools Innovation Zone: Providing three-year intensive support as a design partner to the Office of Innovation in the New York City Department of Education.
- Co-designed New York State seat-time policy requirements: Process included year-long school support using an innovation design arc, in-person experiences to support transformational school practice, and online resources and experiences for a comprehensive blended-learning approach.
- The Michigan Authentic Learning and Assessment Initiative: Currently serving as the primary design partner to 15 participating districts, representing 45,000 students, in their shift to a competency-based model that measures student growth through authentic performances. This work includes an ESSA waiver in conjunction with the USDOE and Michigan Department of Education for the adoption of an authentic assessment model.
- Buffalo Public Schools: Co-designed and implemented a school transformation model to address the needs of 30 receivership schools in need of immediate turnaround in conjunction with the Buffalo Public Schools central leadership team.
- Boston Public Schools: Currently working in conjunction with Boston Public Schools to implement the “Stronger Schools, Stronger Boston” initiative. The plan outlines a framework to foster equity, coherence, and innovation throughout BPS in conjunction with greater Boston and the Boston business community.

Paul has degrees from Westfield State University and Lesley University, with a doctorate in educational leadership from Lynn University. From a practice perspective, Paul has received administration and superintendent certifications from Fitchburg State College, served as a visiting professor for educational leadership and technology at
Westfield State University, and served as an assistant superintendent in Massachusetts. Paul is a former member of the US kayak team and is currently a ski coach/instructor at the Alpine Training Center at Mt. Snow, VT.

**Dr. Peter Gorman**  
**National Council on Digital Convergence**

Dr. Peter Gorman, chief executive officer of Peter Gorman Leadership Associates LLC, has been recognized nationally as an education leader and for developing outstanding leadership teams with 30 years of experience in education and business. He is also the contributing editor for Board and Administrator, superintendent in residence with the District Administration® Leadership Institute and the National Superintendents Academy, and chief in residence with Chiefs For Change. Previously he was superintendent of schools in Tustin, CA and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, N.C. Under his leadership, the district won the Broad Prize in Urban Education for its increases in student achievement and closing achievement gaps and 17 members of the Charlotte team to date have gone on to become superintendents.

Dr. Gorman graduated from Michigan State University with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education. He also holds a master’s in business administration from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, and a master’s and doctorate in education leadership from the University of Central Florida.”

**Dr. Anthony Jackson**  
**National Council on Digital Convergence**

Anthony D. Jackson, Ed.D, superintendent of the Vance County School System in Henderson, NC, serves at the helm of 17 schools educating 6,229 students, with 1,000 employees. Prior to coming to Vance County Schools, Anthony served for four years as the superintendent for Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools and three years as division superintendent of the Henry County Public School System located in Collinsville, VA.

Dr. Jackson’s career in public education spans 28 years, beginning as a teacher’s assistant, and he has matriculated through the public school ranks as a music teacher, assistant principal, principal, and various central office administrative posts in several Virginia and North
Carolina districts. Prior to returning to North Carolina, Dr. Jackson worked as the principal and chief administrative officer of the Arts and Technology Academy Public Charter School (ATA), a highly successful public charter school in Washington, DC. He also served as a regional vice president for curriculum and instruction with a charter school management company.

Since his arrival in Vance County, student achievement has improved positively. The district currently boasts its first A+ School, and several schools have improved their performance as defined by the state accountability system. Additionally, the district is currently implementing a full-scale digital transformation—training all staff to implement blended learning strategies in classrooms.

Under Jackson’s leadership, the district has implemented several innovative instructional programs, including the Youth Empowerment Academy for at-risk middle school students; the AdVance Academy, a program that provides both credit recovery and credit acceleration opportunities for high school students; and the Vance Evening Academy, a program for at-risk high school students that serves as an alternative to long-term suspension.

In 2013–2014, Dr. Jackson was named the North Carolina Central Region Superintendent of the Year. Jackson is a 2017 recipient of the prestigious Friday Medal for his leadership with implementing technological innovation in school systems in North Carolina, given annually by the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University.

Dr. Jackson has a Bachelor of Science degree in music education from East Carolina University, a master’s degree in educational leadership from North Carolina Central University, and a doctorate degree in education from Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He serves on the boards of the local Economic Development Commission and the Vance County Public School Foundation. Jackson holds membership in many professional and civic organizations, including Rotary International and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
**Dr. Todd Keruskin**  
*National Council on Digital Convergence*

Dr. Todd Keruskin is the superintendent of Elizabeth Forward School District in Elizabeth, PA. He joined the district as an assistant superintendent in 2009 after serving for 13 years, first as a physics and math teacher and then as a high school administrator, for two other school districts in the Pittsburgh region. Dr. Keruskin is currently a LearnLab fellow in the Human Computer Interaction Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, where he is also a visiting professional in the Entertainment Technology Center. Additionally, he serves as a Grable Foundation fellow. Dr. Keruskin received a Digital Innovation in Learning Award in Silicon Valley, CA, in 2015, given by EdSurge and Digital Promise, in the “Learning Ninja” category, for his work in remaking teaching and learning. In 2015, Dr. Keruskin worked with the White House on scaling the maker movement across country in schools and on a 10-year STEM plan for schools across the country. *THE Journal* recognized Dr. Keruskin as one of the top innovative administrators in the country.

**Dr. David Miyashiro**  
*National Council on Digital Convergence*

Dr. David Miyashiro currently serves as superintendent of the Cajon Valley Union School District. David was named 2016 Superintendent of the Year by ACSA (Association of California School Administrators), Region 18. Cajon Valley has undergone a seamless transition to the digital age. Through inclusive planning, design, and an iterative approach, Cajon Valley has achieved system-wide success with blended and personalized learning for all students. Cajon Valley has been dubbed “One to Watch” by the Classroom of the Future Foundation and has earned both local and national recognition for its leadership in transforming public education.

David formerly served as the assistant superintendent of educational services for the Encinitas Union School District. In this role, he designed and implemented a one-to-one digital learning initiative as well as a comprehensive yoga-based health and wellness program. David served as a principal in the Fullerton and East Whittier School Districts. There he led two Title I schools with challenging demographics successfully out of program improvement status.
with a combined API growth of over 240 points. David completed his doctoral studies at UCLA, Master of Education at Grand Canyon University, and bachelor’s degree at Long Beach State University.

**Dr. Kelly Pew**

**National Council on Digital Convergence**

Dr. Kelly Pew is a graduate of Wren High School in Anderson School District One in South Carolina. She continued her postsecondary education at Clemson University and Furman University.

In 1991, Dr. Pew earned her BA in secondary education/English. She completed her master’s degree in administration/supervision at Furman University in August 1997 and her doctor of philosophy degree from Clemson University in educational leadership in 2002.

After teaching high school English for five years, Dr. Pew began her administrative career as a middle school assistant principal in Greenville, SC. She continued as an assistant principal for eight years in Greenville and Anderson, SC, before becoming a middle and high school principal in Oconee, SC. In June 2007, her district administration career began in Pickens County, where she served as an assistant superintendent of human resources and an assistant superintendent for instructional services. In 2012, Dr. Pew was named superintendent of Pickens County School District in Pickens, SC. Since then, Dr. Pew has served as superintendent of several districts across South Carolina and is currently serving as assistant superintendent of administration at Anderson School District One.

In addition to public school service, Dr. Pew has served as an adjunct professor at Southern Wesleyan University and Anderson University. She has taught classes to students pursuing a master’s degree in education and those pursuing a master’s degree in administration/supervision.

**Dr. J.R. Proctor**

**National Council on Digital Convergence**

Dr. J.R. Proctor is the superintendent of Axtell Independent School District, a rural district near Waco, Texas. His mission in education is to change the state and national dialogue from one of only accountability and compliance to one of inspiration and individual
Dr. J.R. Proctor is the superintendent of Axtell Independent School District, a rural district near Waco, Texas. His mission in education is to change the state and national dialogue from one of only accountability and compliance to one of inspiration and individual student empowerment. Dr. Proctor is a leader in innovative assessment models that allow teachers to assess student progress more quickly and accurately. His vision is for public schools to become student service centers through the development of local accountability systems focused on providing a great educational experience for each student. Dr. Proctor believes that leveraging technology through digital convergence is the best way to achieve this vision.

**Brian Seymour**  
**National Council on Digital Convergence**

Brian is the director of instructional technology for Pickerington Local School District in Ohio. Brian is currently leading Pickerington Schools through the one-to-one process. They are currently the largest school district in Ohio to go completely one-to-one. Brian is also leading the district through a change in pedagogy to adopt a brand of blended learning they have termed “Tradigital Learning.” Brian is the 2017 ITIP Ohio Outstanding Tech Admin of the Year. Brian was also given the Ohio’s Making It Happen Award for 2017. In 2018, Brian was named one of the finalists for the national EdTech Awards for School Leaders by EdTech Digest. Brian was named one of the Connected Educators of 2014 by Battelle for Kids. Brian was a member of the White House’s CSforAll steering committee.

Under Brian’s leadership, Pickerington Schools was awarded the coveted Distinguished District Award (2018) from ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education). Additionally, Pickerington Schools has been named a Distinguished District by the Center for Digital Education (2017), the Learning Counsel (2017), National School Boards Association (2018), WOSU Classroom (2018), and District Administration Magazine (2017). Through Brian’s leadership of creating the PLSD technology plan, Pickerington Schools was named a model school district for the Future Ready program and for Ohio’s Future Ready initiative.

Brian has also served as one of the ISTE community champions in assisting schools to integrate more tech into the classroom and will
be a part of the ISTE leadership teams for Technology Coordinators PLN, Learning Spaces PLN, and Computer Science PLN. Additionally, Brian is currently serving as the chair for the WOSU EdTech Steering and Advisory Council. Brian was selected in 2017–2018 as one of the OhioASCD Emerging Leaders.

Brian has an undergraduate degree in biology and comprehensive science education from Bowling Green State University, a master’s degree in geosciences from Mississippi State, another master’s degree in educational leadership from Ashland University, and a superintendent license from The Ohio State University.

**Dr. Mort Sherman**  
**National Council on Digital Convergence**

Dr. Mort Sherman has more than 30 years' administrative experience in raising academic standards, closing achievement gaps, and uniting stakeholders. He has served in public education for more than 40 years, 25 as a public school superintendent of schools.

Now serving as the associate executive director for leadership and awards for AASA, the School Superintendents Association, he is responsible for programs that support aspiring and sitting superintendents. Recent initiatives include the creation of the AASA Collaborative, the Urban Superintendents Academies in cooperation with Howard University and the University of Southern California, Superintendents Consortium on Personalized Learning, and the Aspiring Superintendents Program.

His service includes eight years as superintendent in Cherry Hill, NJ, where he was a founding member of the Southern New Jersey Standards Initiative and the Delaware Valley Minority Achievement Consortium. Dr. Sherman was superintendent for South Orangetown Central School District in New York for five years; superintendent and principal at the Norwich Free Academy in Connecticut for four years; superintendent in Tenafly, NJ; and assistant superintendent in Westport, CT. He began his career as a middle and high school English teacher.
Charlene Simpson  
National Council on Digital Convergence  
Charlene Simpson is currently serving as deputy executive director for academic and administrative services at Education Service Center Region 12 in Texas, where she works primarily with superintendent leadership services and school boards. She also oversees general education, special education, federal programs, and technology and virtual learning as well as superintendent and campus leadership. She has over 30 years of experience in education as a teacher, elementary and high school principal, assistant superintendent for curriculum, and superintendent. She has been instrumental in supporting an innovative partnership between ESC Region 12, Baylor University, and Huckabee in developing the LEx Labs, a collaborative partnership to provide professional development in flexible spaces and research the effect of the physical environment on learning. Charlene earned a bachelor's degree in business administration, a master's degree in education administration, and principal and superintendent certificates from Tarleton State University.

Dr. Shawn K. Smith  
National Council on Digital Convergence  
Dr. Shawn K. Smith is currently serving as a founding partner and chief executive officer of Modern Teacher. Shawn is a former elementary and middle school teacher; assistant principal; principal; director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and most recently, chief of schools for the nation's third-largest school system, Chicago Public Schools. For the past 15 years, Shawn has served inside four different public-education school systems in California and Illinois. He has also taught as an adjunct professor for several universities. Shawn holds degrees from Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin (bachelor's degree, elementary education); California State University, San Bernardino (master's degree, middle school education); and the University of Southern California (doctorate degree, urban education policy and leadership).
David Tebo  
**National Council on Digital Convergence**  
David is the passionate superintendent of Hamilton Community Schools in West Michigan. He is a father, husband, and avid reader who relentlessly seeks ways to meet the needs of all students so each can thrive. David has been an elementary teacher and a building principal, and is serving students, teachers, and the Hamilton community as the superintendent of his second district. A lifelong learner, David constantly looks for ways to connect education to the world around us. He sees today’s diverse resources as a way to design new learning experiences that meet ALL learners where they are, giving skills and content context for application.
About AASA

The School Superintendents Association (AASA) is the premier association for school system leaders and serves as the national voice for public education and district leadership on Capitol Hill. AASA represents the dreams, educational expertise and concerns of more than 13,000 local school system leaders throughout the United States. AASA provides a variety of benefits designed to support both you and your district. Our products and services keep you informed, so you move your career and your district forward.

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About Modern Teacher

Modern Teacher partners with districts and other organizations to support the transition from traditional classrooms to modern learning environments. Modern Teacher is an educational technology company designed to provide a research-based methodology for Digital Convergence in education, and it has created a technology-enabled solution to support districts in leveraging today's tools across K-12 classrooms. Modern Teacher has assembled a network of like-minded professionals dedicated to supporting teachers in today's highly connected, digital world.

About the Modern Teacher Network
The Modern Teacher Network is designed to overcome the traditional boundaries separating K-12 leaders, administrators, and educators across school systems nationwide. Powered through a cloud-based platform, the Network provides visibility and transparency to like-minded people by enabling them to connect, share materials and knowledge, collaborate, and discuss important topics related to Digital Convergence—and in real-time. The Network spans over 50 districts, 1,000 schools, and 1 million students, with more joining each month. To find out how you can join the Network and the conversation, visit modernteacher.com/the-impact.

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Our Partners

**modern teacher**

Modern Teacher is a national network of school districts reshaping our American education system by transitioning from traditional classrooms to modern learning environments. Individually, members personalize learning at scale for their districts by progressing through the Digital Convergence Framework housed in Modern Teacher’s online platform—connecting districts to the tools and metrics to effectively reach their goals. Collectively, members collaborate on common goals and challenges with educational leaders nationwide to establish best practices and create a united voice for the future of K–12 education. Visit modernteacher.com to learn more.

**fuelededucation®**

Fuel Education® partners with school districts to fuel personalized learning and transform the education experience inside and outside the classroom. The company provides innovative solutions for pre-K through 12th grade that empower districts to implement successful online and blended learning programs. Its open, easy-to-use Personalized Learning Platform, PEAK®, enables teachers to customize courses using their own content, FuelEd courses and titles, third-party content, and open educational resources. Fuel Education serves more than 2,000 school districts, offering one of the industry’s largest catalogs of K-12 digital curriculum, certified instruction, professional development, and educational services. To learn more, visit fueleducation.com.
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