U.S. Partners in Learning

Technology is a powerful tool that can help people, communities, and nations realize their potential. But for millions, the promise of technology is still unrealized. Microsoft Corporation has made a comprehensive commitment to digital inclusion — helping individuals, communities, and nations gain access to the technology tools, skills, and innovation they need to realize their potential in the changing economy. Microsoft's flagship digital inclusion initiative is Partners in Learning.

Despite real improvements in access to, and use of, information and communication technology (ICT) in education, many students and teachers still lack basic access to technology and training. The result is a widening ICT skills gap that contributes to disparities in quality of life, competitiveness, and economic development.

Microsoft's commitment to education in the United States — which is long-standing and proven — is about providing innovative tools, programs, and practices to help students and educators realize their full potential. Through the Partners in Learning initiative, Microsoft will take that commitment to the next level by focusing its resources — people, partnerships, services, philanthropy, and products — to stimulate positive change in education.

Partners in Learning seeks to address the digital inclusion issues facing education today by facilitating access to technology and training. Microsoft recognizes the need for students, teachers, and administrators not only to master the technical skills needed to use technology successfully, but also to understand how technology can be integrated throughout the academic environment to help make teaching and learning more rewarding for teachers and students.

How It Works

Partners in Learning consists of **three components** — Fresh Start, School Agreement, and Grants. The first two, Fresh Start for Donated Computers and School Agreement licensing, are designed to provide access to Microsoft® software for schools in the U.S., including teachers through work-at-home rights and students through the student option. The third component, Grants, is designed to build capacity within schools to use technology effectively in the teaching and learning process. As shown in the diagram below, access to ICT will enable digital literacy, an educated competitive workforce, and an improved quality of life.
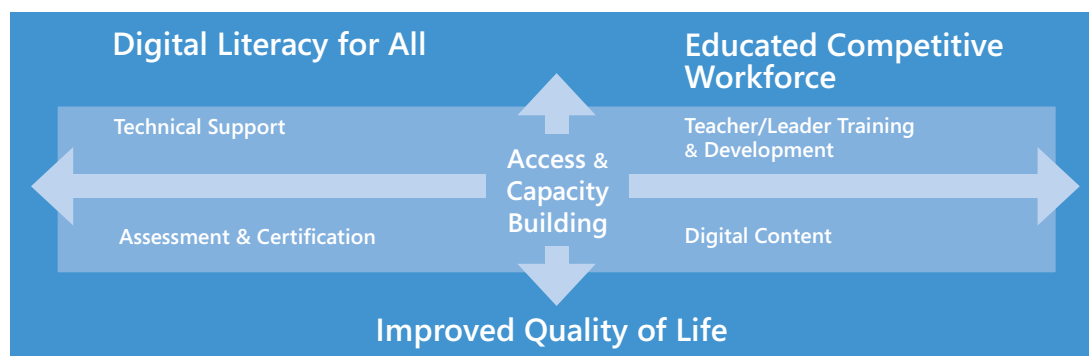
Access
- Partners in Learning — *Fresh Start for Donated PCs*
- Partners in Learning — *School Agreement*

Capacity Building
- Partners in Learning — *Grants*

Partners in Learning

Fresh Start for Donated Computers Program

Computers that are donated to schools often lack installed or properly licensed software programs. To remove this barrier to computer use and increase access to technology, Fresh Start for Donated Computers will provide primary and secondary (K–12) schools with Microsoft® Windows® 98 or Windows 2000 licenses for donated computers at no charge. For more information, please visit:
http://www.microsoft.com/education/freshstart

School Agreements

Microsoft's School Subscription Licensing Agreement Program is an annual, subscription licensing program specifically created to address the unique needs of K–12 educational institutions. This program offers low academic pricing and reduced administrative costs, while enabling schools to stay current on the technology. For more information, see:
http://www.microsoft.com/education/PILSA.aspx

Grants

The Partners in Learning Grants Program will provide investments, over the next five years, to assist state and local governments and the education community with the development and implementation of public/private partnerships that aim to jump-start and/or advance local information and communications technologies (ICT) goals. These partnerships will be designed around the following components considered vital towards digital inclusion in schools:

• Teacher and school leader training and development

• Assessments and certifications

• Digital content and curriculum integration

• Technology support — Student Help Desk

• Research and reporting

There are three investment models available to fund public/private partnerships under the Grants component.

National Programs Microsoft is establishing a series of national programs with governments and education leaders who are interested in partnering with Microsoft to deliver curricula, tools, and resources for comprehensive ICT skills training and curriculum leadership. The curriculum content areas are Digital Literacy, IT Skills, Curriculum Integration, Peer Coaching, and School Leadership. Ultimately, these programs will seek to provide primary and secondary school teachers, school leaders, and students with 21st-century teaching and learning skills.

Example of a National Project: The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation mandates that by 2006 every eighth-grade student in the United States be proficient in technology literacy skills. To help teachers monitor student progress and meet the requirements, an innovative new online tool to assess the technology literacy of middle school students was launched in June 2004. Developed collaboratively between the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE®) and Microsoft, the assessment tool is a component of Microsoft's U.S. Partners in Learning. To access the free online tool, please visit:
http://www.iste.org

State Innovation Partnerships Microsoft is establishing five-year public/private partnerships, with a limited number of states, to invest in building innovative solutions for the areas listed above that have yet to be developed or deployed by the state due to resource limitations. The end result will be a broad and diverse set of models that can serve as blueprints for other schools or educators across the U.S. Microsoft will be extending early support through dedicated project managers and funding to the selected states. The states, in turn, will commit to guide and sustain the effort, building off the solid foundation created by the partnership.

Example of a State Partnership Project: The State of Washington is our first state partnership, which consists of two key projects. First, through a challenge grant application process, one public College of Education (COE) will be awarded the grant for their proposal on how to best deliver 21st century skills–ready teachers and administrators. Second, for a designated K–12 at-risk student population, Microsoft and the State of Washington will use existing and emerging technologies to develop a technology-rich plan to help raise student achievement and graduation rates.

Project Partnerships Many of the most innovative and impactful education projects are driven by educational organizations at a local and regional level. However, limited resources and partnerships prevent many of these projects from growing, scaling up, and serving a broader community. Under this model, Microsoft will seek to partner and invest in opportunities to build out and scale proven, successful models for increasing digital inclusion.

For additional information, please visit:
www.microsoft.com/partnersinlearning/us

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