



Cisco's Global Education group is actively engaged in the work of transforming education systems to meet the needs of 21st century learners, educators, and organizations. This transformation will require a shift in the way teachers teach, leaders lead, and students learn.

Case Study



School Districts Can Benefit from Public-Private Partnerships to Support Education Transformation Agenda

Collaborating to Improve Student Outcomes

Cisco believes that to bring about lasting change, it is essential to change processes before introducing new technologies—an approach that is widely supported by research.

Cisco® Global Education is transforming processes is by bringing together partners with different strengths and skills to help catalyze education reform. Based on the premise that a collaborative approach is required to meet every objective, Cisco has worked directly with the school districts to determine their goals and the criteria needed to support their plan, and what other products and services would be required.

Several diverse partners joined the Cisco 21st Century Schools Initiative (21S) to contribute their expertise and support the districts in their progress toward authentic, relevant learning.

Partners supporting education transformation:

- Schlechty Center
- Digital Opportunity Trust
- November Learning
- One Economy Corporation

The 21S Holistic Approach to Education Reform

After Hurricane Katrina struck in August 2005, Cisco unveiled an initiative, known as the 21st Century Schools Initiative (21S), to help rebuild the devastated Gulf Coast schools and communities. In addition to equipping each school with instructional technologies and advanced networking equipment, the focus of 21S is to develop a blueprint for 21st century education based on a holistic approach to education reform, supported by Cisco's business experience in management and system change.

21S is a multiphase initiative that aims to create a sustainable, scalable, and replicable model of education reform that will extend beyond Mississippi and Louisiana. The 21S model incorporates transformative technology, tools, and training; backed by the expertise of a dedicated technology and business partner. Support for every implementation is provided by an onsite Cisco Fellow.



The Schlechty Center for Leadership in School Reform

The Schlechty Center's pioneering professional development work is based on the core belief that the key to improving schools is to provide students with engaging work. In addition, the Center views leadership as a key component of system transformation.

Developing a Leadership Vision

In partnership with Cisco, the Schlechty Center worked with 21S districts and community leaders to develop a shared understanding of the need for change. Schlechty design teams were established at each participating school, and a cross-functional design team was created at the district level to develop the overall leadership and reform vision.

Based on the resulting vision, the Schlechty Center team focused their efforts on student work and on structures for building continuity, innovation, flexibility, participatory leadership, and results-oriented decision making.

Increasing Student Engagement

The Schlechty Center helps the 21S schools organize themselves around students' work rather than around teachers' work; believing that students are volunteers whose attendance can be commanded but whose attention must be earned.

"The growth of my staff's ability and desire to transform their teaching practices to create more engaging work is nothing less than phenomenal," said Melvia Fountain, principal at Rowan Elementary School in the Hattiesburg School District. "The Schlechty Center facilitated our journey from looking introspectively at who we were, to comparing that to where our students needed us to be, and then charting the course to get there."

Digital Opportunity Trust

A second partner, Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT), helps people develop technology skills to improve local economies around the world.

Familiarizing Teachers with Technology

DOT provides interns to help 21S teachers and specialists integrate technology into the curriculum and promote economic development. Interestingly, many DOT interns who help familiarize teachers with new technologies become interested in pursuing a teaching career after being exposed to the transformative impact of the 21S vision.

Integrating New Technologies into the Curriculum

The DOT interns help teachers integrate classroom technologies such as interactive whiteboards, MovieMaker, podcasting, Skype, blogging, and wikis. They also work with teachers and students on web research, online surveys, and collaborative websites and with parents on online assignments and test information.

"It was great having an intern like Jessica," says Jefferson Parish fifth grade teacher Eleanor Grimball. "She gave me her cell phone number from the start, so that I could contact her if I had any problems. There were a couple of occasions when I found myself in a dilemma that Jessica was quickly able to resolve. I always pressed her for more information, and she was eager to help."

November Learning

November Learning works with school leaders, government organizations, and industry leaders to articulate a shared vision, manage change, and align technology with primary goals.

Preparing Students for the Global Economy

Senior partner Alan November participated in a professional development conference in Louisiana and conducted numerous workshops at Mississippi school districts to share his innovative ideas about web literacy and Web 2.0 applications for K-12 education.

“The real revolution is not about technology,” says November. “It’s not about the wires, it’s about what flows through them. The reality of the networked global economy is that any desk job can be moved anywhere in the world within seconds. Our students must learn the global survival skills of competing and cooperating with people around the world.”

Increasing Student Motivation

November Learning guided 21S schools with new strategies for increasing student motivation using technology-enabled capabilities such as creating podcasts of lessons. “In theory I knew what a valuable asset podcasting could be,” says Jennifer Morgan, a computer technology specialist from the Hattiesburg Public School District, “but after the demonstrations, I started thinking about all of the ways it could be used—to give verbal directions, present images, and enhance skills. The possibilities are endless.”

November agrees. “We have the opportunity to provide our students with authentic relationships over the Internet that can help dramatically improve student motivation,” he says.

One Economy Corporation

Cisco partner One Economy is a nonprofit organization that uses innovative approaches to deliver technology and information to low-income people to help them improve their lives and enter the economic mainstream.

Supporting the Home-School Connection

Since studies have shown that computer and Internet use at home can have a positive impact on student achievement, a primary goal of 21S is to provide continuous learning opportunities for children and parents. In support of this goal, One Economy helped 21S families acquire affordable laptop and desktop computers through microloans partly underwritten by Cisco.

Ensuring Sustainability

One Economy also offers training for families, free email, links to homework help and childcare information, and a bilingual portal that connects families to information about health, jobs, money, education, and family issues. Online newsletters and periodic training sessions are offered to help ensure sustainability.

“Because we are in the age of technology,” says Peggy Barfield, the grandparent of a student at Moss Point High School, “I wanted my granddaughter to be advanced and complete all her assignments and stay on top of her game. The training that One Economy offers gave me an opportunity to expand my knowledge and clear up any misconceptions.”

Additional Partnerships

Additional professional development support is provided by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Metiri Group, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Evaluations are conducted by the Education Development Center, and technology products and services are provided by Promethean, School Messenger, Wireless Generation, and others.

Cisco believes that substantive change requires the involvement of many partners, including government agencies and nonprofits to support community outreach and other components of 21S. “As a private sector entity, Cisco understands the power of strategic partnerships in achieving transformation,” says Cisco Chairman and CEO John Chambers.

The 21S schools are not facing the 21st century alone. They are supported by combined expertise and a shared belief that our students, with the appropriate preparation, can successfully compete in the global economy.

For more information about Cisco Global Education, please visit our website at <http://www.transformgloaleducation.org>.



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John Chambers
Cisco Chairman and CEO

Cisco Recommended Ecosystem Partners for System Transformation

Information on Integrating Technology

- **Metiri Group**
(www.metiri.com)
Education consultant that provides a broad range of services that empower educators to advance effective teaching and learning, use technology in powerful and meaningful ways, and foster 21st century skills.
- **November Learning**
(www.novemberlearning.com)
An organization that promotes the effective use of information and communication technologies to support and enhance learning for children and communities
- **Partnership for 21st Century Skills**
(www.21stcenturyskills.org)
An advocacy organization that is focused on infusing 21st century skills into education; Cisco is a founding member
- **WIDE World – Harvard Graduate School of Education**
(<http://wideworld.pz.harvard.edu>)
Offers online learning programs for professional development and using technology in classrooms

Online Content and Tools

- **Discovery Education Streaming**
(<http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com>)
A digital video-on-demand and online teaching service to help improve students' retention and test scores
- **ePals Global Community**
(www.epals.com)
A community of collaborative classrooms engaged in cross-cultural exchanges, project sharing, and language learning
- **History Channel**
(www.history.com)
Television station that offers free programming related to history and culture
- **Jing Project**
(www.jingproject.com)
An online resource that offers free software that allows teachers and students to capture and share videos and other content
- **NASA Education Program**
(education.nasa.gov)
Program that provides activities and information related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
- **National Geographic**
(www.nationalgeographic.com/education/)
Online resource for lesson plans, activities, and information related to geography, history, culture, animals, and other topics
- **Ning**
(www.ning.com)
An online platform that allows individuals and groups to create their own collaborative networks
- **Promethean Planet**
(www.prometheanplanet.com)
An online resource that includes lessons and professional development materials related to interactive whiteboards
- **Smithsonian American Art Museum**
(<http://americanart.si.edu/index3.cfm>)
Provider of education resources such as state standards-based, multidisciplinary lesson plans that span the fields of art, design, science, technology, history, culture, and language arts



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