FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 8, 2017

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New Playbook Helps Educators Launch Pilots that Generate Insights into EdTech Efficacy
Leading pilot network launches toolkit designed to close the edtech implementation gap; encourage partnerships between companies, educators, and researchers that test the efficacy of classroom technologies

CHICAGO, IL – Today, the Learning Assembly, a national network of organizations that design pilot programs to support schools in adopting innovation, released a comprehensive toolkit to help educators, schools, districts, and edtech companies successfully develop, implement, and assess edtech and personalized learning pilots.

The market for education technologies is expected to reach $252 billion by 2020. Despite increased investment in edtech, school districts face a dearth of reliable data to inform purchasing decisions. According to one recent survey, although 93 percent of teachers use digital tools to guide instruction, two-thirds of teachers said they are not fully satisfied with the tools' effectiveness.

"School leaders and entrepreneurs alike want to unlock the promise of technology to help personalize the learning experience. But knowing where to start can be overwhelming," said LEAP Innovations CEO Phyllis Lockett. "Over the past two years, the Learning Assembly has worked to identify the most effective practices. The toolkit translates our research and experience into actionable insights that can be used by teachers, school leaders, entrepreneurs, and researchers to create and design a meaningful pilot. The more these types of pilots are conducted, the more we can learn and share what works, provide critical feedback to edtech companies, and scale evidence-based practices and products."

The Learning Assembly, a network of seven nonprofit organizations – Citizen Schools, Digital Promise, Highlander Institute, iZone, LearnLaunch Institute, LEAP Innovations and the Silicon Valley Education Foundation – supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, works with schools across the country to improve learning outcomes by applying and testing new tools and strategies in the classroom. Collectively, they have run edtech pilots with hundreds of educators in areas including Chicago, New York City, Boston, Providence, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The toolkit establishes a standard approach for edtech pilots, defining pilots by two objectives: "implementation" and "efficacy." The guidance provided in the toolkit will help schools design pilots that implement technologies with fidelity and surface meaningful insights for educators and edtech companies, and to the field at large.

The toolkit also builds on the Learning Assembly Evaluation Taxonomy, which was developed to bring clarity to the kinds of evaluation and trial research that can inform the use of technology and new teaching practices in the classroom.

"The toolkit lays out concrete ways for schools and educators to test and measure product effectiveness, rather than just paying for a new product and hoping for the best," said Shawn Rubin, Chief Education Officer at the Highlander Institute. "By creating and sharing this toolkit, it is our hope that others will learn from our experience. These best practices can ensure more educators feel empowered when it comes to using technology to help advance their learning objectives and personalized learning goals."

The toolkit is organized into four distinct sections with differentiated advice for piloting organizations, edtech companies, school and district teams, and individual teachers, and includes guidance for each pilot stage, including:
- Planning and preparing
- Selecting the right products
- Garnering buy-in
- Measuring results
- Sharing findings

"Throughout our years of running pilots, we've found that professional development is a crucial, often-missed factor during edtech implementations," said LearnLaunch Co-Founder Eileen Rudden. "This toolkit provides advice on how to provide the right training for teachers and many other elements that will make implementations more successful."

The toolkit is free and can be accessed online at: http://toolkit.learningassembly.org

For more information or to speak with the authors of the toolkit, contact Katherine@whiteboardadvisors.com.

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About the Learning Assembly

We believe that by fostering collaboration between great educators and technology innovators, we can truly transform learning. The Learning Assembly members include Citizen Schools, Digital Promise, Highlander Institute, iZone, LearnLaunch, LEAP Innovations and the Silicon Valley Education Foundation, and are supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The members of the Learning Assembly collaborate with educators, edtech companies, and research partners to:

- Rigorously assess and curate the best edtech tools in the market;
- Collaborate with teachers and schools to identify the best edtech tools to support teaching and learning;
- Provide edtech companies with critical feedback from teachers and students to improve their products; and

- Raise the bar for quality in the edtech market by analyzing and sharing evidence of learning outcomes.

Learn more at learningassembly.org.