

The following NBIs were among those adopted at the Massachusetts Teachers Association Representative Assembly on May 20, 2017:

NBI #6 MTA Opposes the MAPLE/LearnLaunch Partnership with Massachusetts DESE

MOVED

1. The MTA opposes the MAPLE/Learn launch partnership of the Massachusetts DESE, on the grounds that it reflects a predetermined plan to impose a new, untested "personalized" oversight system on the public schools. This initiative is privately controlled by LearnLaunch, a non-profit consortium of for-profit education technology ventures. The MTA will investigate the legality of this partnership and its appearance of being a crony arrangement to guarantee return to for-profit vendors who would benefit financially from the policies being imposed through collaboration with the DESE.

The MTA will inform the DESE of our position in a letter, accompanied by a press release to the public. 2. The MTA will establish a MAPLE/LearnLaunch Toolkit Page, which will collect and review reports from members, describing instances where, in their professional judgment, the educational opportunity of students and the respect for teaching staff are undermined by the products and working conditions demanded by the consortium.

3. MTA members and staff will use our toolkit to share strategies to combat the harmful effects of and unvalidated edtech products on our students, and to defend teachers' professional judgment and standards against interference by business interests.

SUBMITTER'S RATIONALE

1. Office of Digital Learning Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street Malden, MA 02148-5023 odl@doe.mass.edu www.doe.mass.edu/odl
@MASchoolsK12

Digital Learning Advisory Council Meeting Minutes Date: Wednesday, January 6, 2016:

"a. MAPLE (Massachusetts Personalized Learning EdTech) Consortium is a public / private partnership emerging between ESE and LearnLaunch as an effort to catalyze personalized and blended learning supported by technology in districts and schools across the Commonwealth. MAPLE is having discussions with some philanthropic organizations to support this effort.
b. There will be a convening of the DCPS (Digital Connections Partnership Schools) Grantees at LearnLaunch Symposium and a second convening of the DCPS later in the spring.
c. The Commissioner set goal of 100% online testing in Commonwealth by 2019. ODL/DLAC will be involved in advising for this effort."

2. Promotional materials for the Center for Collaborative Education describe its agenda-driven out-of-state backers: "In 2016, CCE launched the Massachusetts Personalized Learning Network (MA PLN) to work with district leaders, principals, and teachers to design and implement personalized learning plans..."

Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) is proud to partner with Massachusetts Personalized Learning Edtech Consortium, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Agilix. CCE is a regional partner with Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC)

as part of a national initiative to scale up personalized learning schools. PLN is supported by EDUCAUSE through the Next Generation Learning Challenges, the Barr Foundation, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation, and IBM.”

<http://cce.org/work/district-school-design/massachusetts-personalized-learning-network>

3. LearnLaunch is a “non-profit” consortium of for-profit investors and vendors, which specifically advertises to member investors that it has the capacity to maximize their financial return. Examples: “Investor Path Want to hear from other edtech investors on how they make decisions in such a fast- paced marketplace? Want to see demos from LearnLaunch Accelerator startups and pitches from our pitch competition finalists? Check out these sessions for a closer look into the trends, innovations, and companies that are shaping the future of edtech.”

<http://learnlaunch.org/investorpath/>

LearnLaunch Sponsors

<http://learnlaunch.org/sponsor2017/>

LearnLaunch Accelerator for-profit member Companies

<http://learnlaunch.com/accelerator/accelerator-companies/>

SOME SUPPORTING LINKS

Our Children @ Risk – Parents Across America Details the Dangers of EdTech

<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/children-risk-paa-reports-detailing-dangers-edtech/>

Follow the Money – Who is Nellie Mae? Saving Maine Schools

<https://emilytalmage.com/2016/03/30/who-is-nellie-mae/>

Overview and Timeline of personalized learning drive in Massachusetts

<https://wrenchinthegears.com/2017/01/30/hybrid-learning-cicada-killers-the-next-big-fight/>

NBI #12 Sharing Member Research on Privatization in Massachusetts

MOVED

Be it moved that the MTA create a webpage dedicated to posting articles about privatization of public education. We can exhibit research and curate articles about privatization of public schools and union- busting. We should solicit investigations from our rank and file members. This will continue to build the Save Our Public Schools campaign.

SUBMITTER’S RATIONALE

Promoting and publishing the informed opinions of educators in our rank and file membership as well as other researchers is essential for us in our struggle to save our public schools. We can curate scholarship on the various fronts of our struggle and from each of our local communities. Empowerment Turnarounds, charter and innovation schools, testing companies, private consultants and vendors, digital learning initiatives like LearnLaunch/MAPLE, Summit, etc. are a significant threat to the integrity of universal quality public education. Microsoft, Pearson, Apple, Facebook, and other companies are poised to take over public schools by digital degree. Who are the people and institutions behind digital learning and takeovers? What is their mission? What is our union position? We can no longer observe new forms of privatization

without a strategy: a dedicated webpage on privatization is an immediately doable and engaging way to save our public schools.

NBI #13 Systematic Investigation of Privatization and “Personalized” Learning

MOVED

Be it moved that the MTA update its policy statement “The Threat to Public Education Centers on Massachusetts” to investigate and make a systematic analysis of the use of personalized (computer) learning systems in replacing human beings in education to sell technological products for private profit.

SUBMITTER’S RATIONALE

The Broads, Waltons, Kochs, Gates, Carnegies, Zuckerbergs and their companies Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, Google, etc. and their foundations are promoting the use of technology to replace human relations in public education in order to sell their products. It is imperative for educators and the public to know that privatization threatens public education not only by charter schemes like “Empowerment” and “innovation” schools—computer technology is taking more and more time learning in human relation away from the students and educators of our public schools. We must preserve human relationships in public education from the threat of digital takeovers.

Personalized Learning is a convergence of neo-Taylorist “scientific management” through continuous testing systems to track data for profit. Now is the time we must update this indispensable policy statement that served as our systematic critique of Question 2. The threat now includes not only charter expansion, but the marketing of personalized learning for private profit. We must investigate the impact of personalized learning and the private interests behind this movement.

References:

http://www.massteacher.org/issues_and_action/~media/Files/charter_schools/threat_from_the_right.pdf

<https://wrenchinthegears.com/2017/05/14/personalized-learning-poised-to-take-center-stage>

<https://wrenchinthegears.com/2016/09/10/digital-learning-goes-back-to-school>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/16/learning/questions-for-how-google-took-over-the-classroom.html>