

Microsoft Recognizes the World's Most Innovative Schools

Wednesday, October 05, 2011 01:00:00 PM (GMT)

Nearly 100 schools from across the globe inducted into Microsoft's Partners in Learning for Schools Program on World Teachers' Day.

REDMOND, Wash., Oct. 5, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Today on [World Teachers' Day](#), [Microsoft Corp.](#) announced the 2012 Pathfinder and Mentor Schools as part of its Partners in Learning for Schools Program. The 65 new Pathfinder Schools and 17 new Mentor Schools demonstrated a passion for creating a collaborative community to advance the uses of technology in the learning process.

Partners in Learning for Schools is an educational program that is part of Microsoft's 10-year, nearly \$500 million commitment to help transform education systems around the world. The program provides members with access to educational experts; helps them discover, share and scale best practices; helps them create knowledge and collaborative communities; and helps them understand how technology can further increase their teaching and learning practices. Pathfinder and Mentor schools are making the most of these benefits and are selected through a rigorous application process that includes written and video documentation.

"As these school leaders prepare students for the realities of life and work in the 21st century, they recognize that technology can be a powerful catalyst for learning when used in creative and inspiring ways," said Anthony Salcito, vice president, Worldwide Education for Microsoft. "By recognizing these pioneers and providing them with additional tools and resources, we hope to further our commitment to advancing student outcomes through digital inclusion and innovative teaching and learning practices."

Pathfinder Schools demonstrate strong school leadership skills with a proven record of creativity and successful change implementation, have a vision for learning, and have started on the road to whole school transformation. The following are a few of this year's inductees:

- **Sartre Gymnasium (Germany).** With a passion to increase good teaching practices, Sartre Gymnasium features an inspiring learning environment inside and outside the school, specialized and interdisciplinary curriculum, and integrated technology throughout the learning experience, including the utilization of gaming and social media.
- **Futures Tech (Egypt).** Focused on raising a critical mass of well-educated and well-rounded global citizens, Futures Tech is set to create a unique educational and cultural model that takes forward a commitment to narrowing the ever-growing skills gap in the country. Being a model of excellence, Futures Tech adopts and adapts the latest educational technologies and implements one-to-one computing, setting itself as a showroom for other educational institutions in the community at large and around the world.
- **EMEF Professor Joao Campestrini (Brazil).** The main goal of this school is to provide parents and children with access to a high-quality basic-education alternative, allowing for a successful starting point in a globalized world. The school offers a Web-based alternative education system for children ages 6–12, which reinforces a combination of learning face to face and in a game-like environment. It allows children to learn at their own individual pace, and a key to the school's transformation has been the change in teacher roles, from lecturers to learning coaches.

Mentor Schools go a step further and are invited into this program because they have achieved a level of change within their education systems and are viewed as leaders in their countries and regions. Their innovations have a global interest and are replicable models that other schools can follow. The following are a few of this year's inductees:

- **New Maryland School (Canada).** The New Maryland School has implemented a rigorous transformation process throughout the whole school community, turning the school into a successful 21st-century-skills-focused institution. Goals include staff members becoming 21st-century educational leaders, students becoming competent 21st-century citizens by demonstrating leadership and ownership of learning, and by staff members and students focusing on innovative learning through technology.
- **Highland Tech High (United States).** Located in Alaska, Highland Tech High is one of the global

pioneers of personalized learning. Putting students in the driver's seat has helped them become passionate about their own learning. Technology is supporting this highly motivating approach from backend to one-to-one computing.

- **Escola Secundaria da Lagoa (Portugal).** With its motto of "Feel, Think, Grow and Inspire," Escola Secundaria da Lagoa has devoted itself to innovation as a way to attract and motivate its students, who mostly come from disadvantaged financial and social backgrounds and families of deficient schooling. The goal is to encourage these students to become proactive, productive and capable of developing 21st-century strategic skills: connectivity, communication, creation, coordination and collaboration.

"Participating in the Partners in Learning for Schools Program contributed to our reputation and inspired us as a learning community, as well as enabled us to reach out to other schools with a view to sharing the potential that the Partners in Learning initiative offers to those willing to embrace their own innovative journey," said Paul Cassar, headmaster, Eunice Girls High School, Bloemfontein, South Africa, a 2012 Mentor School.

Representatives from the 2012 Pathfinder and Mentor Schools will attend the [Partners in Learning Global Forum](#), Nov. 7–10 in Washington, D.C.

Today's announcement coincides with World Teachers' Day, established in 1994 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to celebrate the profession and to promote international standards for teaching. This year's theme is "teachers for gender equality," and earlier this year [Microsoft joined UNESCO's global partnership](#) addressing the growing social and economic issue of unequal education opportunities and low literacy rates for women and girls across the world. More information on the importance of gender equality is available at [Education Insights](#).

The Partners in Learning for Schools community is open to any primary or secondary school worldwide by signing up for the Partners in Learning Network. Members are given access to a broad range of resources, including the online toolkit, assessment tools, training events, monthly virtual universities, participation in local-level Partners in Learning forums and the Partners in Learning School Research tool to help measure their own innovation. Those schools seeking a deeper level of engagement in the program can then apply to become Pathfinder Schools and work toward achieving Mentor Schools status. More about Partners in Learning, and the opportunity to sign up for the network, is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/education/pil/partnersInLearning.aspx>.

About Partners in Learning

Partners in Learning is a 10-year, nearly \$500 million commitment by Microsoft to help education systems around the world. Since its inception in 2003, the Partners in Learning program has reached more than 196 million teachers and students in 114 countries. Supporting the program is the online Partners in Learning Network, one of the world's largest global professional networks for educators, connecting millions of teachers and school leaders around the world in a community of professional development.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

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Countries: United States

Industries: Computer Electronics, Hardware & Software, Education, Multimedia, Internet & Wireless Technology

Languages: English

Primary Identifiers: MSFT-US

Related Identifiers: MSFT-US