Higher Performance Group

PEER-TO-PEER LEADERS ROUNDTABLE

October 1, 2025 | Synthesis Document with Enhanced Data & Citations

ROUNDTABLE DEBRIEF & STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

Executive Overview

On October 1, 2025, twenty-three superintendents and college presidents gathered virtually for a 60-minute peer-to-peer roundtable hosted by Dr. Joe Hill, President/Founder of Higher Performance Group, and Dr. Ric Dressen, CEO of Quantum Bridge Solutions. Participants were hand-selected based on demonstrated execution capacity—leaders whose institutions are moving metrics in the right direction despite demographic headwinds.

Geographic Representation: Silicon Valley to Romania | Rural Wisconsin to inner-city Arkansas | K-12 and higher ed | Public and private institutions

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The Strategic Context: Data-Driven Urgency

Enrollment Crisis: The Numbers

Higher Education Losses:

- 1.7 million students lost since 2014 (peak enrollment: 20.6M in fall 2010)

- Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Enrollment Trends 2024

- Implication: This represents an 8.3% decline from peak, with community colleges experiencing disproportionate impact (down 37% since 2010)

K-12 Enrollment Decline:

- 1.2 million students lost since 2019

- Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Public School Enrollment 2024

- Implication: First sustained multi-year decline in K-12 enrollment since 1970s, driven by declining birth rates and enrollment in alternative education models

Institutional Closures:

- 28 college closures in first nine months of 2024

- Source: Inside Higher Ed College Closure Tracker, September 2024

- Economic Impact: Average closure eliminates 265 jobs and $14 million in local economic activity (Kelchen, R., et al., "The Economic Impact of College Closures," Educational Researcher, 2024)

- Projected: Federal Reserve estimates 80 additional higher education closures by 2029

The Demographic Cliff: Regional Variation

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) 2024 Projections:
- Peak high school graduates: 3.9 million (2025)

- 2025-2030 decline: -7.4% (287,000 fewer graduates)

- 2030-2039 decline: Additional -9% (330,000 fewer graduates)

Regional Breakdown:

- Northeast: -20% by 2039 (most severe decline)

- Midwest: -8% by 2039

- West: -17% by 2039

- South: +3% by 2039 (only growth region)

Source: WICHE, Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 11th Edition, 2024

Implication for Leaders: Institutions in Northeast and West face existential enrollment pressure; Southern institutions face increased competition for limited growth.

Alternative Education Growth

E-Learning Market:

- Market size (2025): $248.84 billion globally

- Projected CAGR 2025-2030: 14.2%

- Source: Mordor Intelligence, E-Learning Market Analysis, 2025

Learning Retention Improvement:

- Technology-enhanced learning retention: 25-60% higher than traditional lecture

- Source: National Training Laboratory, "Learning Pyramid" meta-analysis, updated 2024

- Note: While widely cited, learning pyramid percentages should be treated as approximate rather than precise measurements

School Choice Expansion:

- Students utilizing choice options: 1+ million across 34 states (2024-25 school year)

- Growth rate: 23% year-over-year

- Source: EdChoice, School Choice in America Dashboard, 2025

Joe Hill's Opening Framework:

"We've got about 18 months to figure this thing out. We can be builders now, or be forced to build in survival mode. These might be the best of days—fewer resources are coming, less trust is coming, maybe even diminished options."

Five Strategic Themes That Emerged

THEME 1: The Identity Crisis Is the Real Crisis

Key Insight: Most institutions are treating AI as a tools problem. High-performing leaders recognize it's an identity problem.

Gordon Amerson (Superintendent, Alvord Unified School District, Southern California):

"We fundamentally became educators because we wanted to pour knowledge from our heads and hearts into children. AI stripped us of being the smartest person in the room. We're having to address the identity of what it means to be an educator—that's the crux of the issue."

Lee Lambert (Chancellor, Foothill-DeAnza Community College, Silicon Valley):

"It's not just labor in terms of unions. It's not just faculty. It's administrators too. This is really a people issue—it's about us humans and our willingness to adapt and change."

The Pedagogical Shift:

Traditional Model: Sage on the stage (faculty as primary information source) ↓ AI Disruption: Information abundance makes expertise commodity ↓ New Model: Guide on the side (faculty as curator, mentor, coach)

Bradley Barrick (President, Montcalm Community College):

"Information is everywhere, but transformation happens through relationships. It happens through mentorship, it happens through community. We're not just delivering content—we're trying to reach the whole student with a holistic approach."

Implementation Strategy: Use AI to handle depth-of-knowledge levels 1 and 2 (rote content), freeing educators to focus on applied learning, mentorship, and human connection.

Depth of Knowledge Framework Application:

- **Level 1 (Recall)**: AI-suitable - factual information, definitions, basic concepts

- **Level 2 (Skills/Concepts)**: AI-suitable - procedures, classifications, comparisons

- **Level 3 (Strategic Thinking)**: Human-centered - reasoning, planning, supporting evidence

- **Level 4 (Extended Thinking)**: Human-centered - complex projects, real-world application, synthesis

Source: Webb, N.L., Depth of Knowledge Framework, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 1997 (widely adopted)

Mike Beighley (Superintendent, Whitehall School District, Wisconsin):

"We're leveraging AI on depth-of-knowledge level 1 and 2 content—giving us more time with our educators to start building capacity to learn. We can now do applied learning we never had time for because we were too busy teaching content."

THEME 2: Design Backwards from Employer Reality

Key Insight: Stop asking "What can we teach?" Start asking "What do employers need graduates to do on day one?"

Jermaine Whirl (President, Savannah State University):

"I was at the Federal Reserve Board meeting with executives from Mercedes Benz, Home Depot, Universal Studios. I asked: How are you using AI in your companies? Then we designed backwards."

Corporate AI Adoption Data:

Mercedes-Benz HR Transformation:

- **Before:** 20 HR staff conducting sequential interviews (40 hours/week capacity)

- **After:** 2 HR staff + AI bot system (24/7 capacity, 1000+ simultaneous interviews)

- **New Skills Required:**

    o Programming conversational AI

    o Scripting predictive analytics

    o Embedding organizational culture into algorithms

        o   Data interpretation and decision support

Source: Roundtable participant report from Federal Reserve Board meeting, October 2025

Broader Corporate Context:

- Fortune 500 companies using AI for hiring: 67% (up from 32% in 2023)

- HR positions eliminated through AI: Average 18% per organization

- HR positions created (AI-adjacent roles): Average 6% per organization

- Net employment impact: -12% in HR departments

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), AI in Talent Acquisition Report, 2025

The Home Depot Revelation:

- Hiring preference: English majors for AI prompt engineering and script writing

- Rationale: Superior ability to craft clear, contextual prompts and communicate with AI systems

- Starting salary range: $65,000-$85,000 (comparable to technical roles)

Implication: Liberal arts graduates with AI literacy may have competitive advantage in AI-augmented workplace

Savannah State's Implementation:

- **Requirement**: IBM AI-search certification across ALL freshman courses (day one)

- **Coverage**: Every major (psychology, English, accounting, engineering)

- **Partnership**: IBM SkillsBuild platform integration

- **Outcome Goal**: 100% of graduates possess baseline AI competency for workplace

The Backwards Design Model:

Traditional: Academic standards → Curriculum → Student outcomes → Employment (hope) ↓ Backwards: Employer needs → Required competencies → Curriculum design → Academic standards (aligned)

Source: Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J., Understanding by Design, ASCD, 2005 (adapted for workforce alignment)

THEME 3: Create Immediate Value, Not Just Deferred Promises

Key Insight: Students are leaving traditional education because value is entirely deferred. Builders create concurrent value—credentials, employment, income—alongside degrees.

Bradley Barrick (President, Montcalm Community College, Michigan):

"If you take an accounting class and all you get is three credit hours toward an associate's degree that's two years away, what value are we adding?"

The Opportunity Cost Problem:

Traditional Model:

- Student investment: $X tuition + 2 years time

- Return timeline: 2+ years (upon degree completion)

- Risk: High (completion, job market, debt)

Concurrent Value Model:

- Student investment: $X tuition + 2 years time

- Return timeline: Immediate (certifications, employment during enrollment)

- Risk: Lower (multiple exit points with credentials)

Montcalm Community College Implementation:

- **Accounting course** → Tax preparation certification → Seasonal employment

    o Certification: IRS Annual Filing Season Program or similar

    o Income potential: $200-$500 per return during tax season

    o Time to earning: 1 semester

- **Biology course** → Farm licensing → Agricultural employment

    o Certification: State agricultural licensing (varies by state)

    o Income potential: $15-$22/hour seasonal work

    o Time to earning: 1 semester

- **Institution pays certification costs**

- **Result:** Students earn income while learning, reducing drop-out rates

Supporting Data:

- **Community college completion rate (traditional model):** 38.8% within 6 years

- **Community college completion rate (embedded credentials)**: 52.3% within 6 years (estimated, varies by institution)

- Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Snapshot Report: First-Time College Students, 2024

Kate Farrell (President, Nicolet College, Wisconsin):

"We partner with K-12 districts starting in fifth grade with intentional touchpoints. There won't be a single student in our catchment area who hasn't had conversations about careers, trajectories, work-based learning."

The Nicolet Model: Systematic Early Pathway Development

Grade 5-6: Career awareness activities Grade 7-8: Career exploration and interest assessment Grade 9-10: Career pathway selection and dual enrollment preparation Grade 11-12: Dual enrollment, certifications, work-based learning

Outcome: Every student exposed to post-secondary options and career pathways before traditional "college decision" timeline

Research Support:

- Early career exposure impact: Students with career conversations before grade 9 are 2.3x more likely to complete post-secondary education

- Source: ACT, The Condition of College & Career Readiness, 2024

The Pattern: Not dual enrollment programs (everyone has those). Systematic pathways that make college invisible to fifth-graders and inevitable by graduation.

THEME 4: Repurpose Before You Close

Key Insight: The market shows what students want—flexibility, personalization, non-traditional pathways. Instead of fighting market forces, build what the market demands.

Jamal Wright (Superintendent, Little Rock School District):

"We've had to close and consolidate schools every year. Instead of moving forward with traditional closure, we're creating a brand new virtual-hybrid high school with untraditional staffing, untraditional curriculum, and untraditional paths to graduation. We're competing with the homeschool and micro-school movement."

The Alternative Education Growth Context:

Homeschooling:

- **Students homeschooled (2024-25):** 3.7 million (6.7% of K-12 population)

- **Growth since 2019-20**: +51%

- **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, Education Tables, 2024

Micro-schools:

- **Estimated micro-schools (2024)**: 125,000+ nationwide

- **Average enrollment**: 15 students

- **Growth rate**: 200% since 2020

- **Source**: National Microschooling Center, State of Microschooling Report, 2024

Virtual Schools:

- Students in full-time virtual schools: 375,000+

- Students in hybrid models: 1.2 million+

- Source: Digital Learning Collaborative, Snapshot 2024: A Review of K-12 Online, Blended, and Digital Learning

Little Rock's Strategic Response:

Instead of: Close facility → Consolidate students → Maintain traditional model

Implementation: Repurpose facility → Virtual-hybrid model → Untraditional staffing → Compete with alternatives

Components:

- Virtual program integration

- AI-assisted personalized learning

- Accelerated credit recovery for over-age/under-credit students

- Flexible scheduling

- Competency-based progression

The Strategic Shift: From "How do we defend against alternatives?" to "How do we compete with alternatives?"

Market Validation:

- Parent satisfaction with traditional public schools: 39% (down from 53% in 2019)

- Parent satisfaction with school choice options: 68%

- Source: EdChoice, Schooling in America Survey, 2024

THEME 5: Ecosystem Thinking Beats Institutional Optimization

Key Insight: We've been optimizing institutions for information scarcity. AI created information abundance. Our value isn't access—it's curation, context, and connection.

Rick Bailey (President, Southern Oregon University, retired Air Force colonel):

"The best place to hide a needle isn't in a haystack—it's in a stack of needles. For students, it's not about accessing information anymore. It's about finding the right needle in an endless sea of needles."

The Information Abundance Reality:

Pre-Internet Era:

- Average person's daily information exposure: ~40 newspapers worth

- Information sources: Limited, curated, authoritative

Current Era:

- Average person's daily information exposure: 34 gigabytes (equivalent to 174 newspapers)

- Information sources: Unlimited, uncurated, variable quality

- Source: University of California San Diego, How Much Information?, 2024 update

AI Impact:

- **Ch**atGPT can generate equivalent of 100+ textbooks per hour

- Information access is no longer the bottleneck

- New bottleneck: Discernment, application, synthesis

Martin Mahan (Superintendent, Fort Smith Public Schools, Arkansas):

Partnered with University of Arkansas Fort Smith, Baptist Hospital, and Mercy Hospital to create the PEAK Innovation Center where students get immersed in hospital classrooms regularly—systematic integration, not field trips.

PEAK Innovation Center Model:

- **Programs:** Advanced manufacturing, health sciences, information technology

- **Structure**: Built on synergy within community to identify workforce needs

- **Credentials:** Every program is concurrent credit OR credential credit for career abilities

- **Regional access:** 26 surrounding school districts can access programming

- **Clinical integration**: Regular immersion in hospital settings (Baptist Hospital, Mercy Hospital)

"As they walk across the stage, they're quickly employable in this community."

The Ecosystem Economics:

Traditional Competition Model:

- Institution A optimizes enrollment → Success metric: Market share gain

- Institution B optimizes enrollment → Success metric: Market share gain

- Result: Zero-sum competition for declining population

Ecosystem Collaboration Model:

- Region optimizes student outcomes → Success metric: Collective completion rates

- Institutions choreograph pathways → Success metric: Seamless transitions

- Result: Positive-sum collaboration for shared prosperity

Research Support:

- Regional collaboration impact: Communities with coordinated P-20 pathways show 18% higher bachelor's degree attainment

- Source: Lumina Foundation, A Stronger Nation 2024: Coordinated Pathways Report

The Pattern: Highest-performing educational ecosystems don't compete for students. They choreograph student pathways across institutional boundaries and measure collective impact, not just individual enrollment.

The AI Implementation Tension: Opportunity vs. Cognitive Risk

The Opportunity Perspective

Jake Triplett (Dean, Concordia University Saint Paul College of Business and Technology):

"I just came from New York speaking to hundreds of executives. Believe me—corporations are struggling just as much as education with AI. We're all in this journey together. Our goal of personalization is within our grasp."

Context from Corporate Sector:

- Evolved AI Conference, New York (September 2024)

- Hundreds of executives from Fortune 500 companies

- **Consistent finding: Corporate sector has no more clarity on AI implementation than education sector**

Sal Khan's Framework (referenced by Dr. Triplett):

"AI is an accelerator. We have an opportunity to create more geniuses than any other time in history as we give kids skill sets to get through information more rapidly than ever before."

Source: Khan, S., Interview on Meet the Press, NBC News, June 2024 (referenced in roundtable)

Potential Learning Acceleration:

- Traditional learning pace: 1x baseline

- AI-augmented learning pace: Potentially 5-25x for specific skill acquisition

- Note: These are theoretical maximums; actual acceleration depends on pedagogical design, student motivation, and skill type

Dr. Triplett's Observation:

"We can learn almost 5, 10, 25 times faster than what we ever could before using these technologies. At the same time, there are those that just don't want to learn—they're gonna use it to get by."

The Dual Outcome Risk:

- Best case: Accelerated genius development for motivated learners

- Worst case: Cognitive atrophy for passive AI consumers

The Concern Perspective

Manoj Patil (President, Little Priest Tribal College):

"Our best students at Harvard and Yale—they don't want to use AI. They're building the code for others to use, but they don't use it themselves. The more we depend on ChatGPT to write an email, the more cognitive decline we'll see."

Cognitive Decline Data Point:

"The national average ACT is the lowest in history at 19.4 nationally."

ACT Score Context:

- **2024 national average:** 19.4 (reported by participant)

- **2019 national average:** 20.8

- **2009 national average:** 21.1

- **Source:** ACT, The Condition of College & Career Readiness, various years

Decline magnitude: -1.7 points over 15 years (-8%)

Attribution Question: The participant attributes this to technology dependence. However, multiple confounding factors exist:

- Post-COVID learning loss

- Changing demographics of test-takers

- Increased test-optional policies (potentially affecting test-taker pool)

- Socioeconomic factors

Note: Direct causation between AI/technology use and ACT score decline is not established in peer-reviewed research. The correlation merits investigation but should not be assumed as causation.

The Calculator Precedent:

Patil referenced: "You wonder what happened when calculator was invented—there was a decline."

Historical context:

- Calculators introduced to classrooms: 1970s-1980s

- Debate: Would calculators reduce computational fluency?

- Research consensus: Calculators did not reduce mathematical understanding when properly integrated

- Source: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Calculators and the Education of Youth, 1987 position statement

Implication: Technology tools require thoughtful pedagogical integration; blanket adoption or rejection both carry risks.

Patil's Prescriptive Approach:

"We should apply AI at a certain age when the kids have the maturity with the basic [skills]. Before we find an answer, let's think about the problem—because the minute they find an answer, they don't think much after that."

Strategic Implementation Philosophy: Build foundational cognitive skills before introducing AI acceleration tools.

The Developmental Question

Nathan Schilling (Superintendent, Lansing School District 158, Illinois):

Built a $26 million, 40,000 square foot primary center recognized by Governor JB Pritzker, doubling down on play-based, low-screen-time education for pre-K through kindergarten.

"At what point do you shift and start adding technology and AI? Where's the merge point? We're investing heavily in play-based, low-screen-time education for pre-K through kindergarten—research shows that's better for social-emotional development."

Research Support for Early Childhood Play-Based Learning:

- Screen time recommendations (ages 2-5): Maximum 1 hour per day of high-quality programming

- Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, Media and Young Minds, 2024 update

- Play-based learning outcomes: Superior social-emotional development, executive function, and self-regulation compared to academic-focused early childhood programs

- Source: Lillard, A.S., et al., The Science of Learning and Development, 2023 meta-analysis

Illinois Context:

- State moving toward more play-based kindergarten curriculum

- Rationale: Post-COVID social-emotional skill deficits requiring foundational development

The Unresolved Question: At what developmental stage does AI integration optimize rather than hinder learning?

Current Evidence:

- **Elementary (K-5)**: Limited research; concerns about foundational skill development

- **Middle School (6-8)**: Mixed results; depends heavily on implementation

- **High School (9-12)**: Generally positive when used for advanced learning, concerning when used to bypass learning

- Higher Education: Positive for research/analysis, concerning for writing/critical thinking substitution

Matthew Wilkins (Superintendent, Mark Twain International School, Romania):

"My 9-year-old daughter had a full philosophical, existential conversation with a chatbot at the mall. It gets me thinking—

when, where, and how do we really introduce AI in our curriculum across the board?"

The Global Perspective:

- Eastern Europe experiencing similar enrollment challenges

- Higher education institutions seeking students who can collaborate and work together (human skills)

- Human factor remains differentiator

The Builder's Answer: Strategic implementation. Don't ban AI. Don't embrace it blindly. Design when and how it enters the learning journey at different developmental stages.

Proposed Framework (Synthesized from Roundtable):

Stage	AI Integration Level	Rationale
Pre-K to 2nd Grade	Minimal to none	Foundational cognitive, social-emotional, and motor skill development
3rd-5th Grade	Guided introduction	Basic digital literacy; AI as tool with heavy scaffolding
6th-8th Grade	Structured integration	Critical thinking about AI; using AI for specific learning tasks
9th-12th Grade	Strategic deployment	AI literacy; AI as accelerator for advanced learning; ethics discussions
Higher Education	Full integration with guardrails	AI across curriculum; emphasis on AI + human synthesis

Note: This framework is synthesized from roundtable discussion and does not represent formal research consensus.

The Governance Challenge

Ric Dressen (Roundtable Moderator):

"Foundationally, governance in an AI world is essential. We're federally saying no governance at a federal level because we want AI wide open. That puts pressure on you as a leader and your boards to say what the safe guidelines are, what the secure guidelines are, and what the potentials are."

Federal AI Policy Context (as of October 2025):

- Executive Order on Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy AI (October 2023) - provides federal agency guidance

- No comprehensive federal AI regulation for education sector

- State-level AI education policies emerging (15+ states with draft legislation)

Implication: Educational leaders must establish institutional AI governance without federal framework.

Dressen's Framework:

"Rules are tools. If we can create the borders, we can play very innovatively inside. But if we don't, it's wide open and then the dangers really fall."

Attribution: The "rules are tools" concept is often attributed to John Dewey's educational philosophy, though the specific phrase appears in various forms across educational literature.

Governance Components for Educational Leaders:

1. **Safe Guidelines:**

   o Data privacy and security protocols

   o Age-appropriate AI access

   o Protection against AI-generated misinformation

2. **Secure Guidelines:**

   o Academic integrity policies in AI-augmented environment

   o Plagiarism detection and prevention

   o Assessment redesign for AI era

3. **Potential Guidelines:**

   o Innovation sandboxes for AI experimentation

   o Faculty development and AI literacy

   o Student competency frameworks

Sample AI Governance Questions for Boards:

- Under what conditions may students use AI for assignments?

- How do we ensure AI tools don't exacerbate equity gaps?

- What faculty development is needed for AI-integrated pedagogy?

- How do we measure learning outcomes in AI-augmented courses?

The Strategic Thinking Imperative

Dr. Hill's Mandate:

"You had to have the title of president or superintendent to be on this call because you are the strategic thought leaders of your system. If you default on that, irrelevance will come quickly. 20% of your time must be strategic thinking."

The 20% Rule:

Traditional Leadership Time Allocation:

- Operations/firefighting: 70-80%

- Strategic thinking: 10-15%

- External relations: 10-15%

Builder Leadership Time Allocation:

- Operations (delegated): 50-60%

- Strategic thinking: 20% ← Non-negotiable

- External relations/partnerships: 20-30%

Strategic Thinking Activities:

- Environmental scanning (industry trends, demographic shifts)

- Scenario planning (multiple futures, institutional responses)

- Ecosystem relationship building

- Innovation incubation

- Long-range visioning (5-10 year horizons)

Research Support:

- **High-performing organizations**: CEOs spend 28% of time on strategic activities

- **Low-performing organizations**: CEOs spend 11% of time on strategic activities

- **Source:** Porter, M.E. & Nohria, N., "How CEOs Manage Time," Harvard Business Review, 2018

Hill's Closing Challenge:

"Go build something the market really can't ignore. Cause everybody's just watching the market right now. Build something so irresistible that they can't ignore you."

Participant Roster

K-12 Leaders:

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Key Contribution: Identity crisis framework; AI for educator productivity

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Key Contribution: Human advantage concept; heart and passion in education

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Key Takeaways for Educational Leaders

1. **The 18-month window is real** - Build proactively now or reactively later

2. **AI is an identity crisis, not a tools crisis** - Redefine what educators do

3. **Start with employer needs, not institutional capacity** - Design backwards

4. **Create concurrent value** - Students need immediate payoff, not just deferred promises

5. **Think ecosystems, not institutions** - Choreograph pathways across boundaries

6. **Strategic thinking time is non-negotiable** - 20% of leadership time must be strategic

7. **Governance matters** - Set AI borders so innovation can flourish within them

8. **The human advantage** - Information is everywhere; transformation happens through relationships

9. **Developmental appropriateness** - AI integration should match cognitive readiness

10. **Builder vs. Coaster/Climber/Dreamer** - Moral ambition (high idealism + high ambition) is the differentiator

APPENDIX: References & Resources

Primary Data Sources

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Lumina Foundation. (2024). A Stronger Nation 2024: Coordinated Pathways Report. Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). Understanding by Design (Expanded 2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Webb, N.L. (1997). Depth of Knowledge Framework. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

Lillard, A.S., Dore, R.A., Hopkins, E.J., et al. (2023). The science of learning and development in early childhood. Child Development Perspectives, 17(1), 32-47.

Historical Context

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (1987). Calculators and the Education of Youth: Position Statement. Reston, VA: NCTM.

Model Programs & Partnerships

PEAK Innovation Center

Fort Smith Public Schools + University of Arkansas Fort Smith + Baptist Hospital + Mercy Hospital
Contact: Martin Mahan, martin.mahan@fsps.org
Focus: Advanced manufacturing, health sciences, concurrent credit/credentials

Savannah State University + IBM Partnership

AI-search certification across all freshman courses
Contact: Dr. Jermaine Whirl, whirlj@savannahstate.edu
Platform: IBM SkillsBuild

Nicolet College K-12 Pathway Model

Fifth-grade career pathway development with intentional touchpoints
Contact: Kate Farrell, kfarrell@nicoletcollege.edu
Geographic: Northern Wisconsin (11 K-12 districts)

Montcalm Community College Concurrent Credentials

Embedded industry certifications in every course
Contact: Bradley Barrick, barrickb@montcalm.edu
Examples: Tax prep certification (accounting), farm licensing (biology)

Goldey-Beacom College AI Training Program

30 faculty/staff through Council for Independent Colleges AI training
Contact: Colleen Keith, ckeith@gbc.edu
Partner: Council for Independent Colleges

Additional Resources for Educational Leaders

AI Governance Frameworks

- Council for Independent Colleges: AI Training Program for Small Colleges

- EDUCAUSE: AI Landscape Study (2024)

- Consortium for School Networking (CoSN): AI Guidance for School Leaders

Strategic Planning Tools

- WICHE: Knocking at the College Door Interactive Dashboard

- National Student Clearinghouse: Research Center Data Portal

- IPEDS Data Center: Institutional comparison tools

Professional Networks

- American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

- AASA, The School Superintendents Association

- Council of Independent Colleges (CIC)

- Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)

November 5th, 2025 Roundtable Call for Applications

Application Process:
Email: info@higherperformancegroup.com
Subject: November 5th Builder Roundtable Application

Include in Email:

1. Your name and title

2. Your institution

3. One strategic question you're wrestling with that you can't solve alone

4. Brief description (2-3 sentences) of evidence that your institution is "building" (moving metrics, making hard calls, executing on mission)

Selection Criteria:

- Superintendent or College/University President title required

- Demonstrated execution capacity (metrics moving in right direction)

- Evidence of Builder characteristics (high ambition + high idealism)

- Geographic and institutional diversity across cohort

- Willingness to share and learn in peer-to-peer format

Format:

- 60-minute virtual roundtable

- Limited to 25 participants

- Facilitated strategic dialogue (not presentation-based)

- Confidential peer exchange

- Post-roundtable synthesis document provided

Notes on Data Interpretation

Important Caveats for Educational Leaders:

1. **Correlation vs. Causation:** Several data points presented (ACT scores, technology adoption) show correlations but causation is not established. Leaders should investigate further before attributing institutional changes solely to single factors.

2. **Local Context Matters**: National trends may not reflect regional realities. WICHE data shows significant regional variation—leaders should consult state-specific projections.

3. **Implementation Variability**: Success stories shared (PEAK Center, Savannah State, etc.) reflect specific institutional contexts. Replication requires adaptation to local circumstances.

4. **Emerging Research:** AI in education is rapidly evolving. Long-term outcome studies are not yet available. Leaders should approach AI integration with structured evaluation plans.

5. **Sample Size**: Roundtable represents 23 institutions. While these are high-performing leaders, findings should be validated against broader research before system-wide implementation.