

Frenalytics Selected to Advance to Semi-Final Round of NSF's VITAL Prize Challenge

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Frenalytics, the patented personalized learning and data collection software for people with cognitive disabilities, has advanced to the semi-final round of the VITAL Prize Challenge.

On Friday, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Schmidt Futures, and the Walton Family Foundation, announced [the teams advancing to the semi-final round of the VITAL Prize Challenge](#), which is managed by Digital Promise.

The \$6 million, multi-phase challenge supports teams developing novel learning technologies with entrepreneurial training,

customer discovery support, seed funding and mentorship to build K-12 learning innovations for adoption nationwide. Frenalytics was just one of 54 teams out of 300 that moved into the Semi Final Round, winning \$20,000 in non-dilutive funding and \$15,000 in mentor stipends.

"NSF is thrilled to support these technologies and innovations that will impact diverse learners," said Erwin Gianchandani, NSF assistant director for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships. "The grassroots, multidisciplinary projects advancing to the Semi-Final Round today show great promise for transforming education through new ideas, tools, technologies and systems."

Since April, as part of the Discovery Round of the VITAL Prize Challenge, the Frenalytics team:

- Completed over 80 user interviews with key decision makers and end-users (including special education teachers and inclusion teachers across grades K-12, principals, superintendents, directors of special education, parents, and students with IEPs)
- Participated in weekly coaching sessions and four 3-hour training sessions
- Prepared and delivered a 5-minute presentation to an NSF Innovation Corps (I-Corps™) review



committee

Through the user interview process, the Frenalytics team was able to identify a number of extensive, systemic issues in the world of special education within K-12 public schools. The presentation focused on the following key problems:

1. Special education processes within and between schools and districts vary greatly, are incomplete, and are inconsistently followed;
2. The process of collecting IEP data is manual, tedious, and paper-based;
3. There is a severe communication breakdown between teachers, school leaders, parents, and the student – all at a disservice to the student; and
4. Due to significant time and financial burdens, districts – especially those with fewer resources – tend to delay student evaluations for special education services to a detrimental extent.



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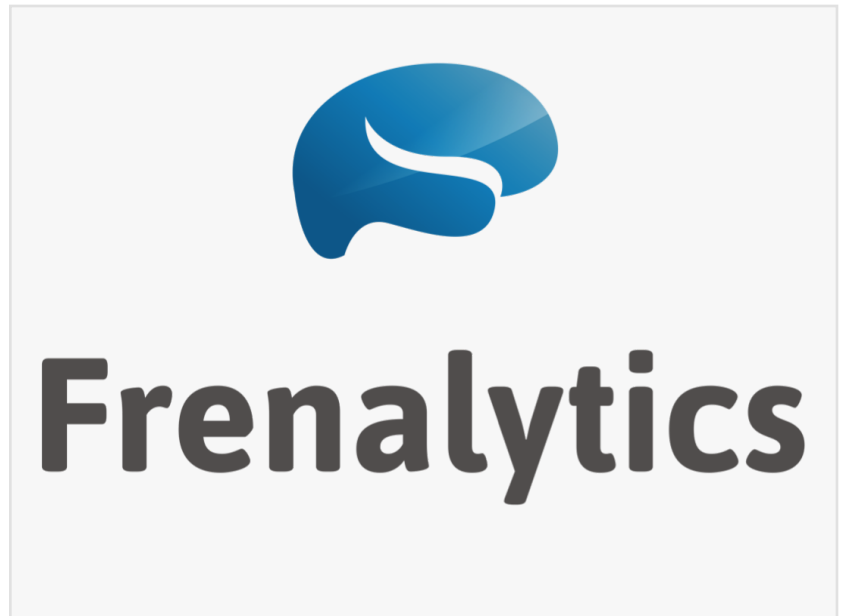
*Erwin Gianchandani, NSF,
Technology, Innovation &
Partnerships*

The presentation also positioned the many ways how FrenalyticsEDU – the company’s [award-winning personalized learning & data collection solution](#) for special education and English Language Learner (ELL) populations – can support and benefit students, staff, and families. [Watch the full presentation as delivered to the judges.](#)

“We are incredibly proud to be moving into the next round,” exclaimed Matt Giovanniello, CEO and co-founder

of Frenalytics. “Our team’s success in this competition to date is directly attributable to the tireless efforts of our deeply passionate team, especially Caitlyn Hutchison, our Lead Product Designer, and Stephanie Lance, our UI/UX Research Intern in the Spring 2023 program.”

The next round of the VITAL Prize Challenge commences in early August, with winning teams advancing to the final round to be announced in mid-November. Qualifying teams will have the opportunity to win up to a total of \$320,000 in non-dilutive seed funding and up to \$35,000 in mentor stipends.



“We have really enjoyed working with the Digital Promise, NSF I-Corps, and VentureWell teams in this competition, and are incredibly appreciative of our coach Christine Mooney for her expertise in navigating the intricate world of special education. We’re proud to have confirmed through this process that FrenalyticsEDU’s powerful personalized learning and data collection capabilities will address the many challenges plaguing our special education system,” added Matt.

About the VITAL Prize Competition

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Schmidt Futures, and the Walton Family Foundation, announced the VITAL Prize Challenge in early 2023, which stands for Visionary Interdisciplinary Teams Advancing Learning (VITAL) Prize Challenge and is managed by Digital Promise.

The VITAL Prize Challenge is intended to develop and support early-stage concepts and ideas based on equitable, innovative uses of technology and research. Frenalytics was accepted from over 300 teams for its novel EdTech-centric innovations proposed for FrenalyticsEDU.

About Digital Promise

Digital Promise is a global nonprofit working to expand opportunity for every learner. Working with a wide range of partners and practitioners in the U.S. and around the world, our initiatives have impacted over 4.4 million students and 180,000 teachers across 173 districts and in 27 countries to date.

About Frenalytics

FrenalyticsEDU is a patented, cloud-based interactive platform designed to personalize the learning process for students with unique learning needs, including autism and Down syndrome. The first version of Frenalytics was created by CEO Matt after his grandmother suffered a massive stroke during open-heart surgery. Designed with educators for educators, FrenalyticsEDU helps students learn life skills and academic concepts in a fun and engaging way, and helps teachers & parents easily measure IEP goals through our interactive progress dashboards.

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