

The Digital Learning Collaborative announces annual 2024 award recipients at the Digital Learning Annual Conference

The DLC is thrilled to announce our 2024 award recipients, recognizing a few of the incredible leaders and organizations that are improving student outcomes.

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Dr. Allison Powell, Chief Academic Officer, DLC

is thrilled to announce our 2024 award recipients, recognizing a few of the incredible leaders, schools, and organizations that are improving student opportunities and outcomes.

“We are so proud to recognize these distinguished digital learning leaders. Each year we have a new group of innovators and change makers, and we're pleased to learn alongside them to improve learning for K-12 education,” Dr. Allison Powell, DLC Chief Academic Officer, remarked.

The DLC Individual Excellence in Digital Learning Award recognizes someone who has changed the field of K-12

digital learning. This year's recipient is Ms. Jessica Enderson, assistant superintendent, for her exemplary implementation of competency-based education (CBE) for the North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE).

This year's Research Impact Award recognizes Mr. Joseph Freidhoff, vice president at Michigan Virtual for his research report K-12 Virtual Learning Effectiveness Report, 2021-22, published in March 2023. This award recognizes researchers whose studies in the field of K-12 digital learning have fostered best practices to advance the industry and have a real impact on practice.

Mr. Jeff Tracy, The Learning Center in Kansas, is the DLC's 2024 Individual Unsung Super Star Award recipient. This award illuminates the amazing work someone does that most people are unaware of, and the impact they have on their students' lives and learning over the past year. Mr. Tracy works tirelessly and closely with every student at The Learning Center Kansas and under his guidance The Learning Center's graduation rate has doubled.

This year's 2024 School or District Unsung Super Star Award is awarded to the Mesa Digital Learning Program (MDLP) in Mesa, Arizona, and was accepted by Julie Davis, department specialist. This award goes to an organization that is implementing innovative learning models that most people are unaware of, even with a significant impact on students' lives and learning. Mesa Digital Learning Program addressed post-COVID realities head-on and continues to support students, families, schools, and its district. The program's multifaceted initiatives and collaborative ventures with partner districts exemplify a forward-thinking and community-focused approach to education during these extraordinary times.

The 2024 DLC Spirit of DLAC Award recognizes someone who embodies the spirit of selfless sharing, support, and collegiality across our field that we seek to build at the [Digital Learning Annual Conference \(DLAC\)](#), and this year is awarded to two individuals.

Mr. Daniel Pfaff, Shelby County Schools (SCS) Digital Learning Coordinator, leads a groundbreaking online school within the district. At DLAC 2023, the idea of The Shelby Academy was born and grew from a concept into a vision to revolutionize online education. The Shelby Academy has evolved from multiple separate programs into a unified platform that represents academic excellence and the understanding and support of the educational and social-emotional needs of its students who find traditional learning environments challenging. Mr. Pfaff and his team have created a unique blend of personalized online learning, operationalized GED opportunities, and an alternative schooling approach, all delivered in a hybrid format. He generously shares with fellow educators, mentoring them to elevate their teaching methodologies.

The second Spirit of DLAC Award is awarded to someone whose work pre-dates DLAC, Ms. Julie Young. She was the founder of Florida Virtual School (FLVS) and most recently is a senior advisor to Arizona State University Prep. Long ago, Julie chose to help the US — and almost everyone who asks — because she wants to help students worldwide and improve digital learning. As the founding President and CEO of Florida Virtual School (FLVS), she successfully led the organization's growth from a small group of students in 1996 to a highly acclaimed online school that employed personalized, next-generation learning solutions. Ms. Young draws upon her extensive experience and recognized status as a leading authority on education to provide guidance and advice to others.

Winners were recognized in person at the Digital Learning Annual Conference (#DLAC24) Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, in Austin, Texas. The DLC honors all of the nominees and recognizes this year's recipients for their contributions to helping students reach their full potential.

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