

# SmartLab Contracts with the Johns Hopkins Center for Research and Reform in Education to Study Impact of Programs

*Research will examine effects on math and science achievement and students' STEM identity*

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[EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- SmartLab

announced it has contracted with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Research and Reform in Education (CRRE) to conduct a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental study evaluating the impact of SmartLab® Explorer and Pathfinder programs on student outcomes. This multi-district research

initiative will examine changes in students' science and mathematics performance measured through independent measures of learning. The study will also include educator and administrator interviews, along with student focus groups, to gather deeper insight into

“

We're not just building STEM skills—we're nurturing future-ready mindsets.”

*Dr. Jennifer Berry, CEO of SmartLab*



Students engage in hands-on, project-based learning in a SmartLab environment, where collaboration and creativity drive real-world problem solving.

perceived impacts on learning, equity and access, and opportunities for program improvement. The Explorer study will further examine shifts in SmartLab students' STEM identity relative to non-SmartLab students.

The study will be fielded across three states reflecting the diversity of U.S. schools: Texas, Illinois, and California. Each participating site will be compared with non-SmartLab

schools of similar demographics, offering a clearer picture of SmartLab's effect on student learning, equity, and access to effective STEM programming. SmartLab's flexible learning environments, purposefully designed for collaboration, inquiry, and hands-on exploration, provide the setting where students engage with these experiences. Participating schools will remain anonymous in public reporting; districts may choose to self-identify independently.

“We’re not just building STEM skills, we’re nurturing future-ready mindsets. It’s critical to study the measurable impact on student outcomes. When students leave a SmartLab, they carry more than knowledge. They carry the belief that they can shape the world.”  
— Dr. Jennifer Berry, CEO, SmartLab

CRRE’s design meets Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Tier 3 evidence standards—“promising evidence”—by comparing SmartLab schools with appropriate comparison groups. CRRE will preregister and share study materials on the Open Science Framework (OSF) to reinforce transparency and replicability.

“We believe in creating STEM environments that impact student outcomes, where learners can explore their potential, develop durable skills, and see themselves as future innovators shaping the world.”  
— Bryan Kind, Head of Product and Academics, SmartLab

The schools participating in this study include SmartLab environments funded through philanthropic support. Because these investments expanded access to hands-on STEM learning in the participating states, SmartLab invited philanthropic leadership to reflect on the broader importance of ensuring students have opportunities to explore STEM in meaningful, future-focused ways.

“When we invest in learning spaces like SmartLabs, we’re investing in opportunity. It’s about making sure every student—regardless of zip code—has access to experiences that build confidence, curiosity, and a belief in what’s possible.”  
— Marco Campos, CEO, Campos EPC, and Founder, Campos Foundation



SmartLab Explorer and Pathfinder programs integrate hands-on technology and interdisciplinary career-connected challenges designed to strengthen STEM understanding and future-ready skills.



The study will explore how SmartLab programs influence students’ confidence, curiosity, and identity in STEM fields across diverse schools in Texas, Illinois, and California.

SmartLab is investing in a multi-faceted evidence strategy that includes:

- Advisory teams of subject-matter experts, facilitator focus groups, and pilot studies to continuously refine curriculum and implementation.
- Third-party validation efforts, including STEM identity measures, the CRRE longitudinal approach to student achievement, and renewal of the ISTE Seal.
- Customer health and satisfaction indicators—bi-annual efficacy surveys, retention trends, Net Promoter Score, customer referrals, and district expansions — to ensure solutions deliver value in real classrooms.
- Partnerships with districts through continuous improvement cycles and sustained support.

To learn more about SmartLab and hear directly from teachers and students on their experience, [watch this video](#) or [reach out for a conversation](#).

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SmartLab is a career-connected STEM ecosystem that prepares today's students for tomorrow's challenges by building a strong STEM identity—one that includes both technical skill and a mindset that prepares students for real careers whether or not they eventually choose STEM fields. Each hands-on PBL+STEM solution connects grade-appropriate applications to one of eight industry pathways, helping students solve meaningful problems while developing real-world skills. SmartLab programs include dedicated classroom setups or flexible modular systems, along with standards-aligned curriculum, teacher training, and ongoing technical and curricular support. A strong STEM identity is a learner's self-belief that I belong, I can master rigorous challenges, and my ideas make an impact. This mindset takes shape through active, student-centered learning cycles - each ah-HA! moment steadily converting raw curiosity into resilient, purposeful, problem solving. [To learn more, visit SmartLabLearning.com](https://www.smartlablearning.com).

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