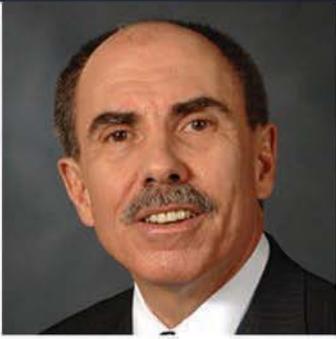




VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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Making Learning in 2025 a Reality in 2013

The Honorable Bob Wise, President
Alliance for Excellent Education

Bob Wise is president of the Alliance for Excellent Education (the Alliance) and former governor of West Virginia (2001 to 2005). Prior to his governorship, he served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 18 years. The Alliance is a nonprofit organization that has become a national leader for reforming the nation's high schools so that all students graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college and a career.

Governor Wise led the Alliance in pioneering the first-ever Digital Learning Day in 2012. Digital Learning Day is an annual awareness campaign promoting digital learning and the successful use of technology in public schools.

In 2010, Governor Wise joined former Florida Governor Jeb Bush in chairing the Digital Learning Council, a bipartisan effort that culminated in the release of the "10 Elements of High-Quality Digital Learning." He is chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and author of *Raising the Grade: How High School Reform Can Save Our Youth And Our Nation*.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Duke University and a law degree from Tulane University School of Law.

Imagine a classroom in the year 2025 where students can engage in an interactive video chat with an astronaut at NASA. Imagine a classroom in 2025 where a teacher receives real-time data on students' achievement levels and uses it to customize and personalize learning for each student and the class as a whole. Imagine a classroom in 2025 where students get more individual attention from teachers because new blended-learning models, which combine digital content with personal instruction, permit teachers to spend more one-on-one time with each student, instead of lecturing in front of the classroom.

For a growing number of schools across the nation, the 2025 classroom is not just a distant vision; it is reality. These forward-thinking classrooms are the exception. If the nation is to prepare its students for success in the modern high-skills world, more classrooms need to embrace digital learning, which is the effective application of technology in a learning environment. Technology is only part of the solution; to use it effectively, it must be combined with great teaching and planning strategies.



Effective digital learning provides technological tools that allow teachers to be designers of each student's individual pathway for achieving success, allowing students to learn in the best pace and manner, to ensure they move on to new material only when they have mastered the prerequisite material. Through an effective application of technology, the teacher can use innovative instructional strategies, high-quality digital content that provides real-time student data and other important technology-driven resources. Teachers also benefit from online professional development opportunities that can connect them with mentors and expert colleagues worldwide, enabling live collaboration on lesson plans and best practices.

To help schools move closer to this advanced education approach, the Alliance for Excellent Education (the Alliance) created Project 24, an ambitious 24-month initiative focused on helping school districts across the country strategically plan and integrate technology into instruction to improve student learning and make it relevant in the modern world.



More and more school districts across the nation – Quakertown Community School District (Pennsylvania) Mooresville Graded School District (North Carolina), Dysart Unified School District (Arizona), and Cajon Valley Union School District (California) – have already implemented technology to improve learning for their students. Several school districts in West Virginia are doing the same, but the time has come for many more districts, in West Virginia and across the country, to follow their lead, and many are taking the challenge.

More than 1,000 school districts in the United States, representing almost one-quarter of the nation's students, are participating in Project 24, but West Virginia is the first state in the nation to participate in a statewide effort. Every school district in the state, as well as the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind, has signed up to participate. I was pleased and honored to join Governor Earl Ray Tomblin when he announced this comprehensive statewide education

planning effort that would integrate quality teaching with modern technology and bring successful and highly effective digital learning practices, such as blended learning, to the immediate learning experience for West Virginia students.

Through assistance from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, the State of West Virginia, the West Virginia Board of Education and the Alliance are partnering to initiate and support this comprehensive statewide and school district-level planning process. The goal of the effort is to improve student learning outcomes in every public school in West Virginia. The first step will be to provide the state with an independent assessment and report on the status of its use of digital learning and the steps needed. This will allow the state's schools and districts to adopt innovative and personalized instructional models for all of its students.

Technology provides students with access to rich sources of academic content through online and traditional classroom

opportunities. By combining data systems and interactive software with a comprehensive strategy and strong teacher support – something West Virginia is already doing – technology can be used as an equalizer in education by providing the same educational opportunities to low-income students and students of color as it does for more affluent students. Education technology also can be used to tailor and personalize learning for each student based on his or her particular needs.

West Virginia is providing national education leadership and taking a major step to improve learning for all students. Technology can play a huge part in boosting student achievement, but it must be planned for, and that is what the state is doing through this comprehensive strategy. The best part is that we do not have to wait until 2025 to see the results. ▽