



## Year in Review 2016-17

### A Year of Inspiring, Empowering & Engaging

*Wrapping up its second year, WeThinkBig continues to explore and expand efforts to support educational innovation and partnerships between the learning and business communities.*

*The past year was filled with successes and new opportunities for collaboration. In addition to its signature “pop up” professional development programs, WTB brought new models of business and education collaboration to greater Madison -- engaging business people, educators and students in exploring new and deeper ways of learning together.*

*WeThinkBig’s novel approach and its work with those “making a difference” have not gone unnoticed, garnering attention from both local and national media.*

*This recognition, and the promise of what working together as a community to advance teaching and learning can accomplish, have created a great foundation for WTB’s important work in the year ahead!*

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#### Mission

**WeThinkBig** is an independent, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to improving educational experiences for students by bringing innovators across education, business and public/private sectors to collaborate, learn and advance excellence in education and student learning. It works to foster collaboration, incentivize action, and catalyze breakthroughs among educators, businesses, community leaders and other key players.

**WeThinkBig** works to:

- Inspire and shape a shared vision for educational innovation in the region;
- Empower educators and provide the tools and resources they need to realize that vision; and
- Engage across sectors to create the partnerships and relationships necessary for success.

**WeThinkBig** accomplishes this through initiatives that:

- Showcase emerging ideas and models for educational innovation;
- Put the best and latest learning tools for students into the hands of our teachers; and
- Catalyze relationships and create partnerships between education, business and the entire community to support innovation success.

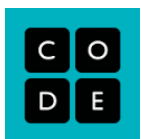
## SIGNATURE PROGRAM INITIATIVES DURING 2016-17

**Sparks! Innovation Showcase series** – Hosted a series of themed, informal after-work gatherings around town to inspire, provide resources and help educators meet and support each other, featuring 15 innovative practitioners who shared their ideas and programs with over 160 educators from the region.



- Mindfulness & Resilience – *Empowering the True Educator in You*
- Game On! – *A Teacher’s Guide to Playing Around with Interactive Media for Learning*
- There’s No Place Like Home – *Using Interactive Local Storytelling to Spark Engagement*
- Well-Read – *A No-Guilt Book Club for Educational Leaders and Innovators*
- Trends in Professional Development – *Advance Yourself through Micro-Credentials & Badges*
- Make-ing Learning Fun! – *Assessing Learning with Maker Kits*
- Getting “Personal about Learning” – *Moving from ‘Sage on the Stage’ to ‘Guide on the Side’*

**Taste of Tech Series** – Expanded hands-on programs to introduce educators to new technologies and involve the business community in professional development for educators:



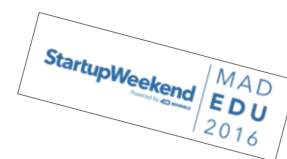
- **Happy Hour of Code Parties** – 44 participants (35 teachers & 9 business coaches) explored coding, classroom applications, and tips and ideas in a fun social setting.



- **Camp MAD Media Digital Literacy Summer Camp for Educators** – 72 participants, 8 volunteer instructors, 7 major partners helped educators expand their digital literacy and explore animation, podcasting, coding, maker-mindset, virtual reality and game theory as engaging new techniques for learning.

**The Next “Big” Idea** – Introduced new ideas and models for educational collaboration and excellence:

- **Startup Weekend for Education** – Brought the first-ever Startup Weekend for Education to Wisconsin, attracting over 100 attendees, including 44 registrants, 37 business volunteers and two dozen innovation supporters for a 54-hour marathon of team building, education-focused creative problem solving, prototype development and business pitch competition.
- **Cities of LRNG Model** – Introduced the MacArthur Foundation-initiated “Cities of Learning” model of connected learning as a way to connect, unite and enhance learning experiences throughout the community to nearly 50 community organizations.



**Fostering Community** – Continued conversations with educators, students, administrators, education students, early career and retired professionals, parents, community leaders and other key stakeholders in the region.



- Managed the TeachersNet and Madison Education Group communities
- Co-created the Tech Education Alliance
- Created Happy Innovators Workshop for launch of WPT Educator Innovation Network



## HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2016-17



- Expanded **“Pop Up” Professional Development Programs** in restaurants, libraries, museums and other accessible locations to introduce and unite local **community resources and experts with educators’ needs** (*Sparks! Innovation Showcase, Taste of Tech Series, Camp Mad Media*)



- Expanded infrastructure for local **communities of practice and networks** of educators, business & professional folks and community leaders (*Teachers Net; Madison Education Group; WPT Education Innovation Network*)
- Introduced the **“Cities of Learning/LRNG.ORG” initiative** to 50 education and community organization representatives as a way to link and enhance meaningful learning opportunities throughout the community.



## HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2016-17



- Continued **Hour of Code** introduction events for educators; catalyzed new annual “**Wisconsin Code Week**” by DPI to celebrate coding in WI.



- Brought first-ever “**Startup Weekend – EDU**” to Wisconsin to foster collaboration and educational innovation.

- WeThinkBig CEO Kathe Crowley Conn honored by **Madison Magazine** as **2016 “M List” Teachers & Mentors Awardee** for contributions to education and the community.
- Co-founded the **Tech Ed Alliance**, a consortium of 25+ organizations and programs sharing resources and working together to support digital access and education in our community.

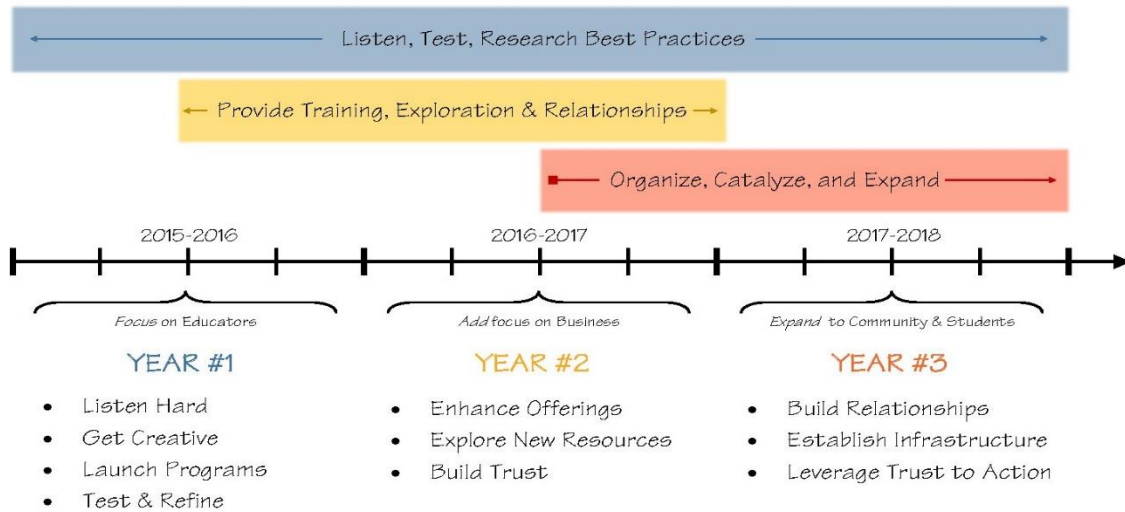


- Successfully nominated local education leader Dr. Patricia Deklotz to win the award and be nationally recognized as **Education Week’s “Leaders to Learn From” for Innovation**, putting Wisconsin on the national map for innovation in education.

EDUCATION WEEK  
**LEADERS**  
*to Learn from*

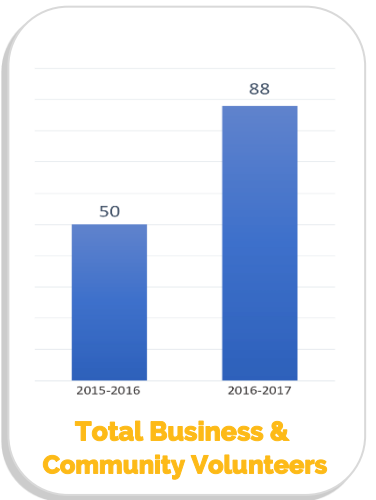
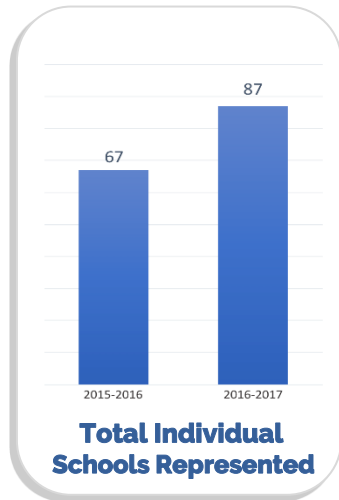
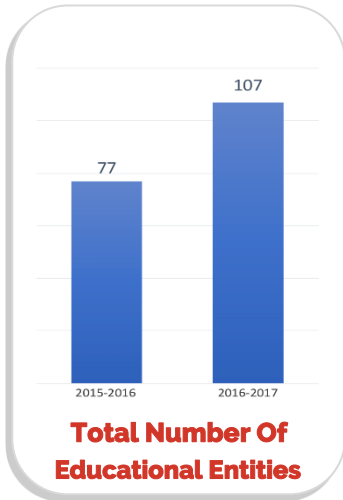
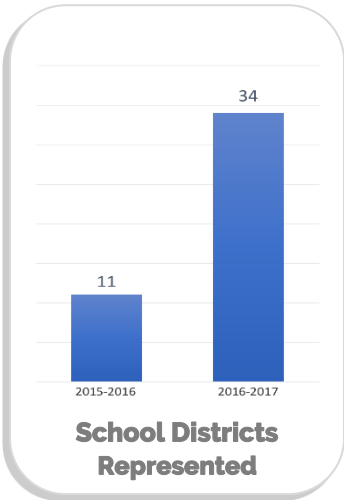
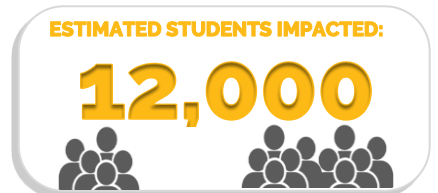
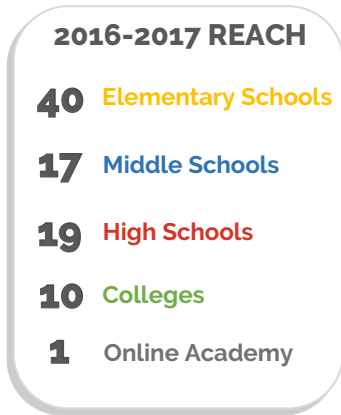
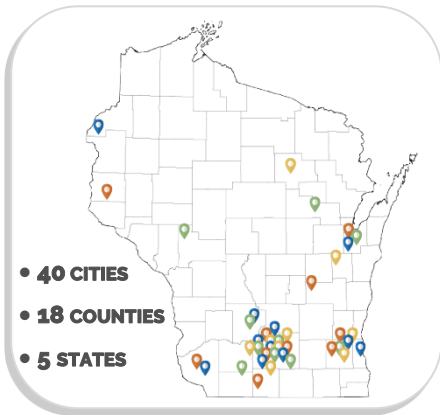
# WTB BY THE NUMBERS

## WTB History and Trajectory



### SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

- Sparks! Innovation
  - Happy Hour of Code
  - EdTech Sampler
  - Camp Mad Media
  - Startup Weekend
- Sparks! Innovation
  - Happy Hour of Code
  - Camp Mad Media
  - City of LRNG Intro
  - Tech Ed Alliance
- City of LRNG pilot
  - Connected Learning Alliance/HIVE
  - Tech Ed Alliance
  - Taste of Tech Series
  - Sparks Innovation/Future of Education



## QUOTES, FEEDBACK & TESTIMONIALS



*"WeThinkBig is such an important organization because it provides us teachers the space to come together, meet face to face, and discuss different topics."*

*"I really liked the fact that there were real coders to network with/share experiences."*

*"Collegial conversations that happen at events like these are where impactful ideas come from."*

*"Love these events. Keep them coming!"*

*"Love every time I'm involved! Keep supporting growth among educators."*



*"Great program. Very nice to have professionals in the field teaching us. Their expertise helps us see the importance of the process."*

*"Thanks so much – these are inspiring and so valuable!"*



## QUOTES, FEEDBACK & TESTIMONIALS



*"My head is on fire with ideas I will definitely use!"*

*"It's the content you had already wanted to teach, but it's more motivating, more interesting, and it has a purpose."*

*"This is so much fun! It can be really motivating to students!"*

*"Great – I love getting to see things I haven't even heard of before!"*

*"Amazing! Connecting me with the cutting edge of educational methods!"*

*"What a FUN day! Thank you so much for getting us together for this experience. I love being a part of your network."*

*"It was evident to me that our work as partners strengthens our service to Wisconsin educators."*

*"Such a powerful experience that will set the groundwork for my classroom."*

*"It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of your circle."*

**Here's what our participants had to say when asked, "Are these events helpful?"**

*"Yes! I feel my attendance opens me to the world of education innovation."*

*"Yes! By being exposed to a variety of ed techniques, I am able to build units that use deeper 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking skills."*

*"They're great; put fun back into teaching."*

*"I think it's great! And everyone I've met has been really into it too!"*





**WeThinkBig is dedicated to improving educational experiences for K-12 students by providing educators the inspiration, tools and partnerships they need to advance educational innovation in Wisconsin.**

### **Board of Directors**

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