

Digital Learning Initiative Grants 2026-2027

*Lindsey Sipe, Consultant
Office of Digital Learning and School Connectivity*

September 2026

Overview of DLI Grants 2026-2027:

Pathway 1

Supports high-quality
professional learning
aligned with the North
Carolina Digital Learning
Plan and the ISTE Digital
Learning Competencies

30 Total Applications

Pathway 2

Supports the integration
of **innovative
technologies** in
alignment to the North
Carolina Digital Learning
Plan and the ISTE Digital
Learning Competencies

46 Total Applications

76 Total Applications for 2026-2027 DLI Grantees

2026-2027 Allocated Funding:

- 5 Instructional Innovation Grants Recommended

- Pathway 1: 2 Grants Recommended
- Pathway 2: 3 Grants Recommended
- Funding Amount: \$217,425.00

- Impact Grants Continuation of Funding through 2026-2027:

- Edenton-Chowan Public Schools, Catawba, Lake Norman Charter, Guilford County Schools, Wake County, Alamance-Burlington, Chatham, Orange County, Moore County, Cumberland County, Randolph County, Buncombe County
- Funding Amount: \$1,000,701.00

- Total Funding for all 2026-2027 DLI Grants:

- \$1,218,126.00

Submitted Grants Primary Focus:

- AI: 26
 - AI Literacy: 15
 - AI Feedback: 5
 - AI Productivity Tools: 6
 - AI Coaching: 4
- Robotics/Coding: 11
- STEM/STEAM: 10
- Intentional Technology Integration: 6
- Innovative Spaces: 4

- Academic Platforms: 4
- Workforce Pathways: 4
- Digital and Media Creation: 3
- Blended Learning: 2
- Device Refresh: 2
- Data Dashboards and Student Goal-Setting: 1
- Digital Citizenship: 1
- PBL & Student-Centered Inquiry: 1
- eSports and Avatation Pathway: 1

Grant Review & Selection Process for DLI Grants

- DLI grants follows the CNTR-001 SBE Policy, a three tier review process.
 - Tier One: A large team from across DPI that grades each redacted grant, based on the rubric
 - Tier Two: Section Chiefs and Directors from Digital Learning and School Connectivity
 - Tier Three: DPI's Chief Information Officer and their designated agency representative(s)
- Each application is scored across nine criteria:
 - Project goal, demonstrated need, and intended impact
 - Standards alignment and innovative instructional approach
 - Plan quality and feasibility
 - Program narrative quality and coherence
 - Evaluation and continuous improvement
 - Stakeholder engagement and dissemination
 - Budget quality, allowable use, and compliance readiness
 - Application completeness and submission compliance
 - Required statewide dissemination and deliverables

Johnston County Schools

- **Grant Score:** 2.8
- **Region:** North Central
- **Funding Amount:** \$50,000.00
- **Overview of the Grant:**
 - The FLAME PLC will support educators across four elementary schools in creating meaningful, student-centered learning experiences. Teachers will receive ongoing professional learning, instructional coaching, and collaborative planning support from The Science House and district leaders. This work will help educators design interdisciplinary lessons that engage students in real-world inquiry, science and engineering practices, digital learning, and problem-solving. Students will have more opportunities to collaborate, think critically, make decisions, and take ownership of their learning. The long-term goal is to develop a sustainable instructional model that can be expanded to additional schools across the district.

Research Triangle High School

- **Grant Score:** 2.78/3
- **Region:** North Central
- **Funding Amount:** \$17,625.00
- **Overview of the Grant:**
 - The district will launch an AP Cybersecurity course in fall 2026 that gives students hands-on experience with real-world cybersecurity work. Using an AI-supported simulation environment, student teams will operate as Managed Security Service Providers, create simulated firms, take on specialized industry roles, and respond to cybersecurity scenarios. Students will practice defending networks, analyzing threats, responding to incidents, and evaluating the effectiveness of their decisions. The program is designed to strengthen AP exam performance, prepare students for CompTIA Security+ and Network+ certifications, and build career-ready digital skills aligned with ISTE competencies.

Asheville City Schools

- **Grant Score:** 2.58/3
- **Region:** Western
- **Funding Amount:** \$49,800.00
- **Overview of the Grant:**
 - The Impactful Technology Use Framework initiative will help educators use classroom technology more intentionally to improve student learning and support the creation of high-quality work. Digital Learning Coaches and teacher teams will participate in professional learning focused on strategies that keep students actively thinking, problem-solving, and working through challenges rather than relying on technology to do the thinking for them. Progress will be monitored through classroom observations, coaching data, and educator feedback. The initiative will also create practical, open-source resources that can be shared with schools across the state.

Anson County Schools

- **Grant Score:** 2.49/3
- **Region:** Southwest
- **Funding Amount:** \$50,000.00
- **Overview of the Grant:**
 - Anson County Schools will transform the new Anson Middle School media center into an Innovative Learning Hub where students can participate in hands-on, standards-aligned learning. The space will support makerspace activities, digital creation, podcasting, design challenges, inquiry, and collaboration. The media specialist will work alongside classroom teachers to integrate technology and redesign lessons so students can create, communicate, solve problems, and demonstrate what they have learned through authentic products. The initiative will support North Carolina content standards, Digital Learning Standards, ISTE-aligned competencies, and the North Carolina Portrait of a Graduate.

Elizabeth City Pasquotank

- **Grant Score:** 2.29/3
- **Region:** Northeast
- **Funding Amount:** \$50,000.00
- **Overview of the Grant:**
 - Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools will create a Drone Sports and Aviation Network that gives students hands-on experience in aviation, engineering, coding, digital learning, and career exploration. Building on the district's partnership with Elizabeth City State University, students from multiple secondary schools will design and build drones, participate in competitions, solve problems collaboratively, and connect their learning to aviation and STEM careers. Educators will receive professional learning to support the use of emerging technologies, while students develop future-ready skills aligned with the North Carolina Digital Learning Plan and ISTE Standards.

Digital-Age Learning Initiative

Grant Recipients



