



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Contact: Kat Stein
Kstein[at]fi.edu

Chris Lehmann
chris[at]practicaltheory.org

**Philadelphia Public School “Science Leadership Academy”
Hosts Innovative EduCon 2.2 Conference January 29-31**

*Attendees Come From 34 States & 4 Countries for Third Annual Event
The Franklin Institute Hosts Kick-Off Event for Sold-Out Conference*

January 26, 2010, Philadelphia – The Franklin Institute will host the kick-off event for its partnership high school’s third annual **EduCon 2.2** on Friday, January 29 with a panel discussion entitled “What Is Smart?” featuring a successful twitter software developer, well-known author, the chair of the Princeton African American Studies department, a leading neuroethicist, and others. The provocative discussion is one of the many draws to the sold-out conference that has drawn people from 34 states and 4 countries. Organized by Philadelphia’s Science Leadership Academy (SLA), a progressive public magnet high school set to graduate its first class this year, the innovative conference will also be streamed virtually (<http://educon22.org>).

Now in its third year, **EduCon 2.2**, is a conference and conversation on education and innovation from January 29-31st. Hosted in partnership between the School District of Philadelphia’s SLA and The Franklin Institute, the conference centers on marrying the best progressive pedagogical ideas to 21st-century tools, and features a range of education and technological luminaries, including Jeff Han, Will Richardson and Sylvia Martinez.

SLA, which has a 1-to-1 laptop ratio for its students, has quickly earned a national reputation for educational innovation centered on technology learning. The conference has no vendors and no sponsors, and is devoted to creating a *conversational* environment for educators from around the world to teach, think and learn how to improve their own practices – as well as inform the larger dialogue on education. In its third year, the conference has attracted educators and non-educators from 34 states and 4 countries. The conference will also be presented virtually – with webstreaming and chatrooms attracting an estimated 5,000 unique visitors last year. A list of the scheduled conversations can be found at <http://educon22.org>.

“The Franklin Institute has almost 200 years of innovation in education,” said Dr. Frederic Bertley, Vice President for the Center for Innovation in Science Learning and The Franklin Center. *“As the partner to SLA, we have been extraordinarily proud to support their efforts, and thrilled with their determination and success at communicating and creating a dialogue with the world around them to further their success. Their influence and capacity to create a lasting model for change is inspiring.”*

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“EduCon is a natural outgrowth of the School District of Philadelphia and The Franklin Institute’s desire to create an innovative school that would have an impact on both Philadelphia and the wider educational community,” said Chris Lehmann, principal of the Science Leadership Academy. *“For us, EduCon is an opportunity to both share what we have learned and learn from some of the best educational minds from all over the world. We’re excited for this weekend’s discussions both in person and online.”*

Details of the conference kick-off panel discussion:

- January 29 – President and CEO of The Franklin Institute Dr. Dennis Wint hosts this kick-off event at The Franklin Institute entitled “What is Smart”. Panelists include **Loren Brichter**/CEO of atebits software and developer of Tweeter Twitter software, **Professor Martha Farah**, Director of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience and the Annenberg Professor of Natural Sciences, University of Pennsylvania; **Professor Eddie Glaude**, William S. Tod Professor of Religion and African American Studies and Chair, Center for African American Studies, Princeton University; **Happy Fernandez**, President of the Moore College of Art; Author **David Shenk** (*The Genius in All of Us, Data Smog*). Moderated by Dr. Bertley.

EduCon is built on the Axioms:

- 1) Our schools must be inquiry-driven, thoughtful and empowering for all members
- 2) Our schools must be about co-creating -- together with our students -- the 21st Century Citizen
- 3) Technology must serve pedagogy, not the other way around.
- 4) Technology must enable students to research, create, communicate and collaborate
- 5) Learning can -- and must -- be networked.

General conference registration is \$150 and \$100 for School District of Philadelphia employees and includes Friday admittance to SLA's partner museum The Franklin Institute and The National Constitution Center. Pre-Conference registration is \$100.

The Science Leadership Academy (SLA) is a small, progressive magnet high school that partners with The Franklin Institute under the School District of Philadelphia. The SLA offers a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum with a focus on science, technology, mathematics and entrepreneurship. Students learn in a project-based environment where the core values of inquiry, research, collaboration, presentation and reflection are emphasized in all classes.

About The Franklin Institute

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania’s most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for learning about science by offering access to hands-on science education. For more information, visit www.fi.edu.