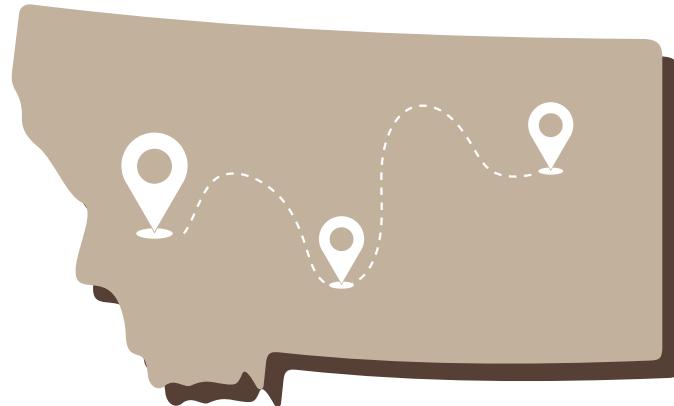
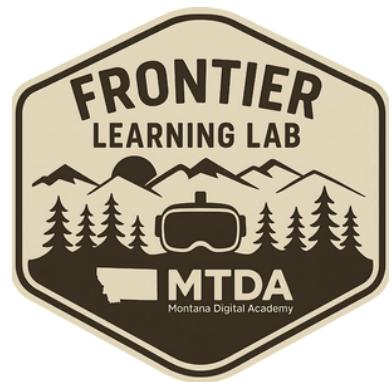


The Frontier Learning Lab

Governor Greg Gianforte's signature on House Bill 2, the 2025 General Appropriation Act unlocked funding for the **Frontier Learning Lab** (FLL)—a bold next step for Montana Digital Academy (MTDA), building on its established leadership in virtual education to deliver a focused, statewide initiative supporting AI and XR integration in K-12 schools.

Overview

The Frontier Learning Lab, an initiative of MTDA, is designed to equip **Montana's students, educators, and schools** with the tools, skills, and support needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving technological world. Anchored in the values of expanding access, privacy, learning science, and innovation, the Lab will serve as a **statewide hub for implementing cutting-edge educational technologies**, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR).



Projected Impact

With the critical investment by the State of Montana, the Frontier Learning Lab will build capacity across Montana's educational ecosystem, preparing students for the AI-driven workforce while supporting teachers with meaningful tools and training.

Implementation Strategy

MTDA will lead the initiative by:

- Developing a **modern, responsive professional learning strategy** that seeks to meet educators where they are at, including active social media to support educators
- Designing and facilitating adaptive local, regional, and statewide **professional learning programs**
- **Establishing the first-in-the-nation "AI Help Desk"** for teachers, professors, or administrators
- **Collaborating with schools, vendors, policymakers, tribal leaders, private businesses, workforce development, and higher education**
- **Offering a one-stop catalog for vetted AI/VR/AR services** integrated with existing systems for access to schools across Big Sky Country
- Upholding **strong data privacy standards** aligned with Montana law and future-looking expectations of educational technology toolsets

Benefits of the Lab

As a statewide initiative developed by Montana Digital Academy, FLL builds on a proven foundation of digital learning to deliver the clear benefits of these core goals:

- **Build AI and Immersive Learning Literacy** for educators and students, developing clear competencies that promote ethical awareness, critical thinking, and responsible use.
- **Expand Access to Vetted Tools and Learning Platforms** through a centralized system that prioritizes reduced vendor overhead and ensures usability across diverse learning environments.
- **Deliver Scalable, Stackable Professional Learning Experiences** via workshops, pop-up labs, microlearning, and train-the-trainer models—supporting enhanced teacher efficiency through AI-assisted practices.
- **Foster Local Innovation Through Co-Design and Implementation Support**, allowing schools to pilot, refine, and share practices, including using personalized AI-powered tutoring platforms and community-authored approaches.
- **Close Opportunity Gaps by Prioritizing Rural Reach and Readiness**, with a strong commitment to accessibility, support for students with special needs, and immersive CTE experiences powered by VR/AR technologies.

Why It Matters

Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality **transform how we live, learn, and work**. While the potential is vast, the path to thoughtful, responsible implementation—especially in education—is complex.

Many Montana schools, particularly those in rural or under-resourced communities, lack the time, tools, and staffing capacity to navigate this shift alone. **Without coordinated support, these innovations risk reinforcing inequities rather than reducing them. The Frontier Learning Lab was established to meet this challenge head-on!**



CONTACT US

Caitlin Byers, Director, Frontier Learning Lab

Jason Neiffer, Ed.D., Executive Director

Montana Digital Academy

Phyllis J. Washington College of Education

University of Montana

<http://mtda.org/FLL>

AI Help Desk for Educators: ai.help@mtda.org



MTDA
Montana Digital Academy