

For Immediate Release
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EdgeMakers and STEM Learning Lab Announce Merger

New company will empower both teachers and learners to become changemakers through STEM 2.0—the combination of high-quality STEM programs with a groundbreaking innovative thinking curriculum

San Francisco, CA and Calgary, AB — [EdgeMakers](#) and STEM Learning Lab announced today that they have merged, paving the way to provide the curriculum and professional development that empower K-12 educators to deliver the authoritative, integrated approach to teaching the disciplines of the 21st century. The new company will be known as EdgeMakers and will combine STEM Learning Lab's education and professional development programs, which are unmatched in their ability to teach students the essential "hard skills" needed for 21st century success, with EdgeMakers' groundbreaking innovative thinking curriculum, which helps learners apply their skills toward a true purpose to effect meaningful change.

EdgeMakers is creating a movement that empowers both teachers and students to self-identify as creators and changemakers through learning environments and programs that build on the momentum of STEM, but are now coupled with the innovative thinking curriculum necessary to create "STEM 2.0"—STEM with a purpose. Human-centered STEM 2.0 fosters the development of people who have the capacities for creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication—the essential "soft skills" for lasting impact and achievement—combined with the technical skills that will be needed in a future driven by the speed of innovation.

"What does it mean to be employable in the 21st century? Changes in society and the global economy demand that we rethink the answer to this question. At EdgeMakers, we have considered it carefully and, by integrating our innovative thinking framework with the excellent programs developed by STEM Learning Lab, we are confident we can deliver on every need of today's learners," said Dr. John Kao, founder of EdgeMakers. "Together, we will provide educators and students with equitable access to the leading learning experience, worldwide, that helps young people develop each of the skills, competencies and mindsets necessary, according to the evolving definition of 21st century success."

Built upon the work of Dr. Kao and STEM Learning Lab founder Dr. Gina Cherkowski, EdgeMakers programs are supported by unmatched expertise in curriculum development and unparalleled knowledge of the teaching and learning of 21st century skills. Kao, who was named "Mr. Creativity" by *The Economist*, has spent the better part of 30 years creating compelling learning experiences for emerging innovators and entrepreneurs. He launched his innovative thinking curriculum during a 14-year tenure as a professor at Harvard Business School and also taught innovation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Stanford University.

Cherkowski, who holds a PhD in Mathematics Education as well as in Culture Studies in Education, has extensive experience in teaching and learning as a remediation specialist, a classroom teacher, and as a university professor for both undergraduate and graduate courses in education both in Canada and internationally. She is an acclaimed developer of STEM

learning programs for teachers and students that have advanced the mission to ensure all students have access to high-quality STEM learning experiences so they are aptly prepared for our technology-driven, dynamic world.

“I’m a longtime believer in the power of creativity and entrepreneurship to enhance STEM learning, and John Kao’s innovative thinking framework is the premier means for fostering these skills. There is nobody else I would want to partner with to create STEM 2.0 to drive the future of education and the workforce,” said Cherkowski. “In bringing together the world’s best innovation curriculum with our elite, educator-developed STEM programs, I believe we have all the elements necessary to develop the next generation of societal and economic difference-makers.”

The unique combination of Kao and Cherkowski’s work has established the authoritative, integrated approach to teaching the disciplines of the 21st century. The combination of STEM with innovative thinking ensures that all learners can access a comprehensive education including the technical proficiencies, soft skills and entrepreneurial mindset to be not only employable according to the evolving demands of the global economy, but to become skilled, passionate difference-makers who solve the world’s wicked problems and drive cultural and socioeconomic change.

“This merger represents something far more significant than the mere integration of two companies or curricula. It is, in fact, a true ‘merging of the minds’ between John Kao and Gina Cherkowski, bringing together the foremost thinkers in innovation and STEM to create something truly unique in the education marketplace,” said Chris Besse, CEO of EdgeMakers. “Preparing students for an uncertain, ever-changing future requires big ideas and bold steps, and we’re confident that this merger represents the definitive pathway toward 21st century academic and career achievement.”

The future demands a global citizenry equipped to create new value, catalyze change and stand up for and develop innovative ideas. EdgeMakers seeks to transform the DNA of the existing education system to set standards and create accessible, credentialed learning experiences and programs for all who aspire to be changemakers. Some of the key tenets of EdgeMakers programs include:

- A comprehensive education that rethinks the question, “What does it mean to be employable in the 21st century?”
- The integration of social-emotional learning (SEL)—the necessary “soft skills”—with the technical STEM skills required for success.
- A complete innovative thinking framework that includes creativity, storytelling, design, collaboration and entrepreneurship.
- The combination of STEM skills with entrepreneurship and purpose, which drives learners toward meaningful changemaking and enables them to innovate beyond barriers when they “hit the wall” in traditional STEM pathways.

EdgeMakers will have headquarters in both San Francisco and Calgary. To learn more about EdgeMakers and the programs available in your area, visit <https://edgemakers.com>.

About EdgeMakers

EdgeMakers provides the curriculum and professional development that empower K-12 educators to deliver its authoritative, integrated approach to teaching the disciplines of the 21st century. By introducing students and teachers to hands-on STEM 2.0 experiences that ensure all learners develop the technical proficiencies, soft skills and innovative thinking mindset to be highly skillful problem-solvers who are prepared for success in the global economy, the organization is supporting the next generation of cultural and socioeconomic changemakers. Built on the unmatched curriculum development expertise of Dr. John Kao and Dr. Gina Cherkowski, EdgeMakers combines the subject matter and technical knowledge most frequently prioritized in education with the oft-overlooked missing ingredients, to create a well-rounded, meaningful learning experience where students' knowledge and skills are always combined with a purpose. Students leave school and enter the workforce not only capable and competent, but as creative catalysts of change.