Throughout its nearly two-century history, The Franklin Institute has served as an educational, cultural, and economic driver in the region. During the past two decades, investments to improve infrastructure and exhibitions, and to enhance public programs and the visitor experience, have transformed the Institute into one of the world’s leading science centers and a top visitor attraction in Philadelphia and the Commonwealth.

In response to a rapidly changing society and to ensure that it continues to provide the greatest service to its constituents and community, the Institute must continue to evolve.

The top ten jobs most in demand today are the result of changes in technology, and did not exist ten years ago. Tremendous improvements in science and technology have enhanced our lives, changed the economy, and positioned the United States as a world leader. Despite this progress, the country continues to face the dual challenges of a decrease in science literacy and a rise in science denialism, a dilemma made worse by the fact that an understanding of science and technology has never been more critical. At the same time, new technologies and personal expectations have changed the nature of learning in our society, moving traditional educational experiences to online personalized and customized learning opportunities.

To meet these challenges, The Franklin Institute will advance its efforts to provide meaningful science and technology learning experiences by offering engaging and dynamic programming in the places where people live, work, and play while striving to provide the most exciting and educational visitor experience.

The Franklin Institute’s innovative integrated programming structure will serve as an effective model for science centers across the country and around the world.

Science and technology are among the most powerful tools we have for understanding and shaping our world. The Institute will become the region’s premier partner for self-directed science and technology learning, helping Philadelphians to strengthen and redefine their scientific identity, and leading to a culture that respects and embraces science, and that has the tools to address the challenges and opportunities of our modern world with scientific solutions.
In 2012, The Franklin Institute directly reached 1.2 million people across the region and the country through educational programming within and beyond the building’s walls. Another 14 million visited the Institute’s website to find information about everything from current science to classroom lessons. These numbers are impressive, but the need for engaging, transformative science and technology education is far greater.

This strategic plan will transform The Franklin Institute into a true community partner, and will make its resources available to people when and where they need them—at the Institute, on digital devices, and in their own neighborhoods. By connecting our existing highly successful programs to innovative new offerings in schools, community centers, churches, libraries, parks, and academic institutions, we will help people connect their lives and activities with science and technology learning. By integrating these community initiatives with digital engagement and outstanding visitor experiences at the museum, Institute programs and experiences will become part of the everyday fabric of Philadelphia.

The Institute is uniquely positioned to meet the challenges of the modern world thanks to its experience and its role as a leader among science centers. Integrated programming initiatives will expand The Franklin Institute’s reach still further, and will help create scientifically literate citizens who are ready to take advantage of the enormous opportunities in STEM fields, and who can use science and technology to solve critical problems, now and for years to come.
To achieve these objectives, the Institute will offer integrated programming across three experiential paths:

**The community path:** Strengthen the STEM learning environment in the neighborhoods where people live, work, and play by creating a critical mass of integrated programs and collaborations.

**The digital path:** Develop and refine digital programming to connect The Franklin Institute with its target audiences, enhance their STEM learning experience, and further the community and destination paths.

**The destination path:** Create a science museum experience that provides engaging, personally meaningful STEM learning interactions and excellent customer service that competes with the top education and leisure time destinations.

With a thoughtful and strategic investment of resources, this programming model will build on two of The Franklin Institute’s chief strengths. First, the Institute will make use of its educators’ skills to take advantage of the science learning opportunities in real-time events. This real life, real time, real science philosophy will influence programming across the three experiential paths to help audiences understand current science as it develops, engaging people of all ages in discovery and discussion.

Second, in the Institute’s role as a collaborator and convener, it will continue to organize the collective strengths of multiple organizations. The philosophy of collaboration has helped guide the Philadelphia Science Festival, the LEAP into Science program with the Free Library, the Climate & Urban Systems Partnership, and many other successful initiatives. By convening partnerships, the Institute will expand the impact of the investments in science and technology of stakeholders across the region.
Science and technology surround us, and the opportunities to learn about science and technology extend throughout our communities. Thanks to The Franklin Institute’s long history of community engagement, the Institute is perfectly positioned to reach people in the spaces where they live, where they work, and where they play. Responsive to the specific needs and opportunities within each community, these local programs will serve as models that can be replicated nationally and internationally.

The Franklin Institute will:

Establish a wide-ranging environment for science learning by building new community partnerships and strengthening existing ones, and by establishing a physical presence in the community and in schools.

Develop innovative programs that build on and integrate with existing Institute programs, that connect participants among programs, and that connect to each other and to the museum experience.

Assemble transferable models of community engagement based on pilot site experiences, and ready these models for implementation in new neighborhoods with a variety of new partners.

Build adults’ capacity to create learning opportunities in their own communities, and solicit guidance and feedback from those communities.

STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

Percentage of students at a proficient or advanced level in science in the Philadelphia School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th Graders</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Graders</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Graders</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across all grade levels in Philadelphia, scores are particularly low among minority students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Students</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Students</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian Students</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESTINATION PATH

Wonder, curiosity, discovery: these are the results of a visit to The Franklin Institute. For everyone, but especially for students, to walk through the marble hall of the Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, to experience a planetarium show, and to interact with Institute presenters is a powerful experience. It instills not only the wonder and curiosity of the world of science, but also the feeling of being welcomed into one of Philadelphia’s historic institutions. To ensure the best experience possible for all visitors,

The Franklin Institute will:

**Raise** the level of visitor service offerings to one that competes with the top brands within the entertainment, retail, and hospitality industries.

**Refresh** core exhibits, continue to make capital improvements, and ensure an environment that supports a world-class science museum experience.

**Capitalize** on the excitement generated by the opening of the Institute’s new wing, the Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion.

**Improve** standards and processes to streamline building operations, visitor accessibility, and customer service.

**Implement** a robust new system for assessing, reflecting upon, and improving the visitor experience and sharing research results throughout the field.

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**STEM Professions**

- **2008**
- **2013**
- **2018**

**Non-STEM Professions**

According to the most recent international testing, however, American students rank 17th in the world in science and 25th in math.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264091450-en
Learners today expect to learn what they want, when they want, wherever they are. Technology makes this possible, and many opportunities for beginning, extending, and maintaining relationships between learners and digital educational content still need to be explored.

The Franklin Institute will:

1. **Create** opportunities for digital learning that take advantage of the rapidly changing technological environment and help learners access these opportunities.

2. **Build** on a long history of successful programming by designing digital experiences that reach diverse audiences in the most effective ways possible.

3. **Coordinate** digital science learning opportunities with community programming and with museum onsite programming in order to enhance and integrate all three experiences.

4. **Offer** online learning opportunities about scientific issues of importance to the community and videos about science topics for distribution to schools and community partners.

**DIGITAL PATH**

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**PERCENT OF FORMAL LEARNING**

5%

**PERCENT OF INFORMAL LEARNING**

95%

Average Americans spend less than 5% of their life in the classroom.

The Franklin Institute is uniquely positioned to provide science and technology education where our audiences are eager and ready to learn.

Integrating programming will increase informal learning opportunities, including:

- Visits to The Franklin Institute
- After-school programs
- Digital science and technology content
- Events at parks and recreation centers
- Public service announcements
- Lectures and adult programs
- Festivals and community gatherings
- Collaborations with cultural and academic partners

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Neuroscience is a key scientific frontier—an area where fascinating science is already quite relevant to our daily lives and continues to be explored at a phenomenal rate. The Institute’s Your Brain exhibit will act as a destination-based anchor for a suite of community and digital projects, all focused on neuroscience.

Your Brain explores a range of cutting-edge topics, including how our brains transmit information, how we process senses and emotions, and the ethics of ongoing and future research on the brain. Housed in the Frank Baldino, Jr. Gallery of the Nicholas and Athena Karabots Pavilion and sponsored by Teva Pharmaceuticals, Your Brain features dozens of interactive activities that populate an exhibit twice as large as traditional Institute offerings.

This illustration of the integrated neuroscience programming that accompanies the exhibit is a model for how the Institute will integrate science and technology learning opportunities across the community, digital, and destination paths to achieve the vision of the strategic plan.

- **Engage** students by launching online K–12 neuroscience resources, in-school curricula, teacher professional development, and activities across Philadelphia and beyond, including destination experiences at the Institute’s Your Brain exhibit.

- **Engage** neuroscience researchers at surrounding academic institutions through participation in events, forums, and science cafes in community centers, restaurants, and schools across the city.

- **Provide** resources for learners near and far with a digital exhibit companion on the human brain, which will include dynamic, interactive elements that bring neuroscience concepts to life.

- **Integrate** activities in Institute youth programs such as Partnerships for Achieving Careers in Technology and Science (PACTS) and STEM Scholars with the Your Brain exhibit, supported by digital and curricular tools.

- **Develop** opportunities for in-depth online learning such as videos about science topics for schools and community partners and through exploring additional educational opportunities with local academic institutions.

- **Connect** people with science topics of public interest, including daily concerns such as sports-related head injuries, by building on long-standing community partnerships to provide workshops onsite and in schools, community centers, and sports arenas across the city.

- **Provide** essential current science information by working with partners to highlight new technological advancements and ongoing science research, as well as national science-based news and events at the Institute and through the Institute’s social media streams.
**PROJECTED IMPACT**

**SCHOOL-AGED YOUTH**

**WHAT:**
Increase the number of students who sustain interest in science between early elementary school and high school and into adulthood, and who are prepared to live in a robust scientific and technological society.

Increase the number of students who study STEM topics in college.

Increase the number of students who choose to pursue careers in STEM fields.

**HOW:**
Create a supportive environment to reinforce student interest in STEM topics. Inspire students through direct interaction, but also work with major influencers, including parents, teachers, and community leaders.

**ADULTS**

**WHAT:**
Improve scientific literacy and engagement in scientific activities.

Increase the proportion of adults who recognize the importance of science in their lives.

Counteract the presence and negative impact of science denialism by increasing the rate and prevalence of science literacy.

**HOW:**
Create opportunities for discussion and debate on current science issues by producing adult-focused science events, such as many that take place during the Philadelphia Science Festival. Maintain a presence in the daily lives of adults and become a resource for their questions about science events as they unfold.

**FAMILIES**

**WHAT:**
Increase the frequency with which families choose to pursue STEM learning activities together. Increase the frequency and discussion among family members on scientific topics. Enhance the support and encouragement given to family members seeking scientific careers or education paths.

**HOW:**
Conduct family workshops with take-home activities and digital components that encourage continuing discussion and engagement. Expand access to the Institute building and to Institute programs across the region for students, families, and adults from underserved communities.
The Franklin Experience

The experience of wonder

Franklin Experiences inspire a sense of wonder. Participants engage both intellectually and emotionally with awe-inspiring phenomena of nature and human achievement. They explore, question, and learn.

The inspiration of Curiosity

Discovery piques participants’ curiosity. Questions arise: Why did that happen? How does that work? Franklin Experiences encourage and inspire participants to ask questions and to find new questions in the answers.

The Encouragement of Dialogue

Questions encourage discovery which leads to more questions. Rather than taking a Q&A approach, Franklin Experiences engage participants in an active dialogue with staff and with each other, a dialogue that continues long after the initial encounter ends.

The Deepening of Relationships

Franklin Experiences are social by design and nature. Whether exploring an exhibition, engaging in a forum, or attending a workshop, the experiences encourage interaction in and among groups, and are constructed to deepen the relationships not just between the participants and science but between participants and the Institute itself.

The Building of Identity

Ultimately Franklin Experiences encourage participants to recognize and embrace science and scientific thinking as part of who they are. Science is not something that others do, but rather is a part of how we think and how we live. Franklin Experiences assist all citizens in recognizing and celebrating that fact.

The integrated programming provided in the community, in digital formats, and at the Institute is all part of The Franklin Experience, which includes the following elements:
The Franklin Institute’s programs extend across Philadelphia. From teacher professional development workshops to astronomy nights for community members to internships in laboratories and research centers for high school students and more, the Institute will build on a foundation of highly successful programming to advance the goals of the strategic plan.

A leader among science centers, The Franklin Institute is an essential science and technology learning resource for the entire East Coast, and provides expertise abroad as well. Special traveling exhibits and planetarium shows that tour nationally and internationally further extend the Institute’s reach.

LEAP into Science operates in 50 branches of the Free Library and in ten states, bringing free afterschool and weekend science programming to students and their families.

The Color of Science program introduces students to minority scientists from a range of fields. The program model has been adopted at several sites in the US and Canada.

To Space and Back, a technologically sophisticated planetarium show co-produced by the Institute, has traveled to many states, as well as to many international planetariums.

Traveling exhibits such as Dead Sea Scrolls: Life and Faith in Ancient Times produced by the Institute and its partners routinely travel to science centers across the country.

Traveling Science Shows, performed by live presenters, reach more than 200,000 students annually in schools from Connecticut to Virginia.

In collaboration with other institutions, The Franklin Institute helps guide the creation of STEM high schools in Egypt.
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The members of the Board of Trustees as of March 11, 2013 approved the Strategic Plan 2013–2018.
“THE DOORS OF WISDOM ARE NEVER SHUT.”

–BENJAMIN FRANKLIN