

# 山水诗画园



北京大学继续教育学院编

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## McPherson Unified School District 418

Gordon Mohn  
Superintendent of Schools

April 23, 2019

Dear McPherson Parents and Community:

The *New York Times* published an article on Sunday mentioning the rollout of Summit Learning in our schools. We want to address misleading claims made in the article, ensuring you understand our perspective and have answers to any questions you may have.

Here are some basics about Summit Learning:

- There are more than 380 schools across the country - in 39 states, in rural, urban, and suburban districts - where 72,000+ students are thriving, and teachers and parents support the program.
- Summit Learning does not replace the work of teachers with technology. The Summit Learning Platform is designed by educators as a tool to support great teaching and learning - just as books have done for years. Teachers are still teaching.
- Summit Learning does not call for students to be working on a screen all day. Students using Summit spend significant time with hands-on project-based learning, mentorship, and other non-tech learning activities.
- The Summit Learning Program was developed by teachers, for teachers, in partnership with nationally-acclaimed learning scientist [Eric Engle](#) and [Eric Mazur](#). The program was successful with students at Summit Public Schools, a charter school network that first opened in 2003 - before it was ever offered to other public schools.

- Protecting student personal information is a top priority for Summit. In addition to maintaining a transparent student privacy practice, Summit has gone above what is currently required by federal law by voluntarily signing on to the Future of Privacy Forum's Student Privacy Pledge.

In our own schools, we've seen real progress since implementing this approach. As students become more comfortable with the changes, we see greater student engagement and increased interaction between the teacher and student regarding the learning process.

It's vital that we don't allow the media to misrepresent what's going on in our community. McPherson is a great place to live. Our schools have a tradition that reflects the quality of our community and the quality of life throughout Kansas. We appreciate your support as we partner in supporting children and families in our community.

Thank you.

Gordon Mohn  
Superintendent

514 North Main, McPherson, KS 67460 [gmohn.moh@mcpherson.com](mailto:gmohn.moh@mcpherson.com) 620-241-9400

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# WELLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Wellington Superintendent Responds to Inaccurate *New York Times* Article

Wellington, Kan. -- On Sunday, the *New York Times* published an article about school redesign in several Kansas districts, including Wellington Public Schools USD 353. The article misrepresented the implementation of Summit Learning at Kennedy Elementary School and Wellington High School, which launched their redesign initiatives at the beginning of the school year. The following is a statement from Dr. Mark Whitener, Superintendent of Schools.

### Statement from Dr. Mark Whitener, Superintendent of Schools

A recent article in the *New York Times* presented a one-sided portrayal of our school redesign initiatives at Kennedy Elementary School and Wellington High School, which are participating in the Summit Learning Program. By interviewing only a handful of families out of more than 500 and not visiting a classroom or speaking to our educators who are leading this work—the article devalues the amazing work of our teachers and paints an inaccurate picture of our school community.

In addition, the article contained several inaccuracies:

- We have never received complaints about students with adverse side effects due to Summit Learning. Furthermore, the article describes negative health impacts on a 12-year-old in our district, yet there isn't a single 12-year-old in our district in the Summit Learning Program. Wellington Middle School is not participating in the redesign project.
- The sentiment that parents' "dislike" supports this change is untrue. In a survey of our stakeholders, 80 percent had positive comments about Summit Learning - a fact that was shared with the reporter by the High School Principal but she neglected to include in her story.
- Contrary to the claim made in the article, a dozen families have not left district schools because of the redesign project.

Unfortunately, I was not interviewed by the reporter. If I had been, I would have shared what I see when I visit Summit Learning classrooms and what I've heard directly from teachers and parents. I see teachers who are excited about a new curriculum that helps students develop critical thinking skills through project-based learning. I see students who can explain not just what they are learning, but why they are learning it. And I have

Box 648  
221 South Washington  
Wellington, KS 67152

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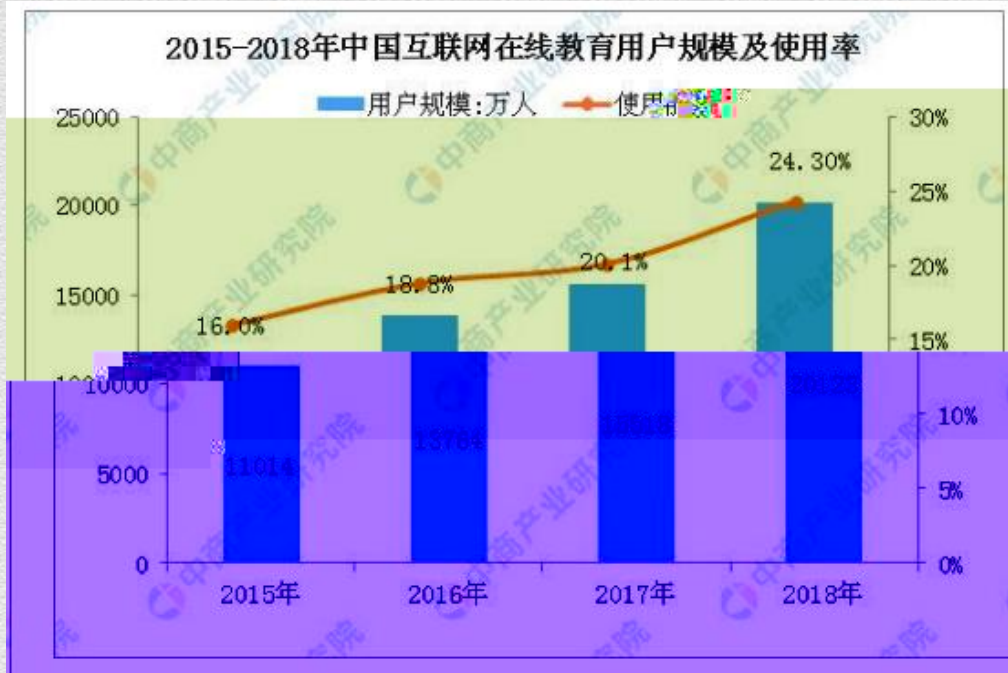
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