

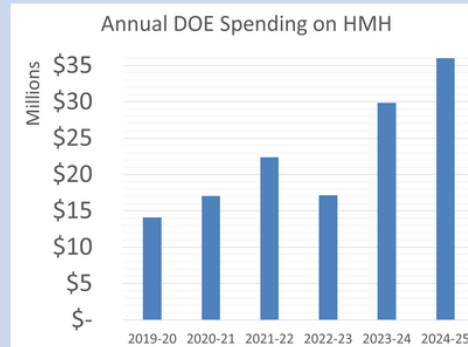
HMH: A Trojan Horse for AI in NYCPS

Collaborative
Research
Center for
Resilience



Former NYC Mayor Eric Adams's literacy education reforms began in the fall of 2023 as a competition among three vendors: **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH)**, Great Minds, and EL Education.

In 2026, HMH Into Reading is the mandated curriculum in 22 of the 32 districts that make up New York City Public Schools (NYCPS). As the DOE pauses on delivering coherent AI policy, HMH is still flooding NYCPS with AI for student use.



HMH cost NYCPS over \$35,000,000 in FY 2025, and costs go up each year

The increasing costs implicit to the Software-as-a-Service business model make dependence on these services increasingly unsustainable.

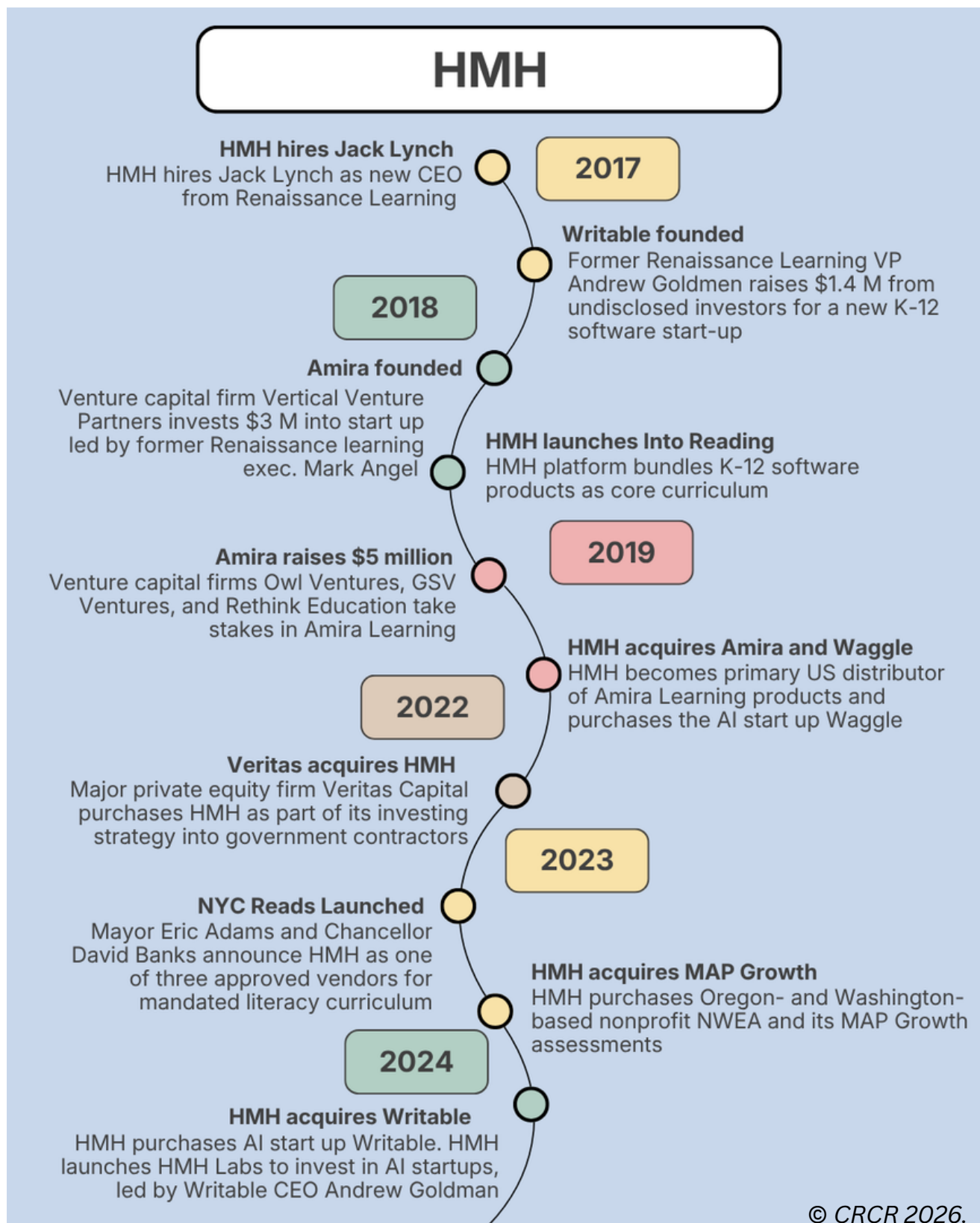
Veritas Capital bought HMH in 2022 after buying Cambium Learning in 2018, and is currently exploring options to merge the two companies, which *each* service over 90% of US school districts. Cambium's AI-enabled Lexia product is actively used in NYCPS. Vendor consolidation risks creating an ecosystem of dependency on their products, enabling them to circumvent public oversight while maximizing profits.

HMH's AI Gambit

In 2021, HMH sold its books and media division under the leadership of CEO Jack Lynch, who previously served as CEO of both Pearson Technology Group and Renaissance Learning, completing the publisher's transformation into a digital-first company with a subscription-based business model.

The Trump administration named HMH in its AI pledge because of its many AI products such as Waggle, Writable, and Amira, all of which are included in its Into Reading curriculum. Writable and Amira collect student writing samples and voice recordings, respectively, to train their models, despite the DOE prohibiting this practice in its preliminary AI guidelines. HMH's AI add-ons also subvert the DOE's vetting process for the safety and security of AI tools, called ERMA, as curriculum vendors approved through master contracts apparently dodge DOE AI oversight.

The explosion of ed tech procurement after the Covid-19 pandemic renders the jobs of Data Protection Officers virtually impossible and functionally symbolic. HMH's decision to quietly slip AI integration into a curriculum that the DOE is mandating schools to adopt is aggressively undemocratic, and takes advantage of parents, educators, and children who have had no choice but to accept it.



In late 2025, former NYC Schools Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos became HMH's Executive in Residence for Innovation and Analytics. She supervised the launch of the program in the DOE, and joins the list of former chancellors who joined the private sector.

In May, the Mayor's office announced that "NYC Reads will expand to middle schools in 11 additional districts and, for the first time, to high schools in four districts, bringing high-quality, academically rigorous literacy instruction to more than 104,000 new students."