

RECOMMENDATION 1: Work as a Team

Overall summary

Effective district and/or school-wide implementation of technology begins with strong leadership and grows through ongoing collaboration, developing partnerships, and facilitating professional learning. School- and district-level leadership teams are encouraged to make a plan for implementing technology and to develop an ongoing process for monitoring and evaluating systemic change. This plan should be grounded in building the collective capacity of all school staff and engaging multiple stakeholders to work collaboratively.

Recommendations from the literature and practice

Leaders at all levels of the school system can play an instrumental and effective role. Principals, lead teachers, specialist personnel, school board members, superintendents, assistant superintendents for curriculum and instruction, technology personnel, special education and special program staff, parents, and community members all have a role to play in transforming the learning environment to realize the full potential of technology to enhance best practice instruction and advance student learning.

In the school building, the principal plays a critical role in guiding staff through the process of

implementing change. The principal can set the tone in the school by embracing change and establishing expectations that will enable staff to realize their goals. For example, a principal who expects students and teachers to make use of technology tools to advance student learning will establish ways to support teachers and foster a culture of professional learning. As a result, he or she will have more success implementing technology throughout the school and within each classroom.

As a first step, the principal should define a core leadership team to support the work of enhancing technology use throughout the building and creating sustainable school change. This team will be responsible for gathering data to drive decisions, shaping the vision and establishing short- and long-term goals, ensuring teachers have the support and professional learning opportunities that are needed to successfully integrate technology into the classroom, and developing a process for evaluating progress. The team will need to develop a plan for communicating among themselves and for reaching out to other stakeholders who can help them to achieve their goals.

Research suggests that leadership teams that engage stakeholders early in order to establish “buy-in” are more successful. Cast your net widely to include as many individuals as possible, and take steps to involve both internal stakeholders (such as teachers, librarians, students, technology

support personnel, curriculum directors, school board members, and support staff) and external stakeholders (such as parents/guardians, the media, businesses, colleges, and universities). This will ensure that you have a solid foundation of support for the initiative and will build a demand for—and a commitment to—using technology to support inclusive instruction.

The leadership team can get organized and begin to mobilize people and resources by developing an outreach and marketing plan to engage external stakeholders, as well as a communication plan to facilitate ongoing progress updates to all stakeholders. Working as a team may sound simple but time restrictions and competing demands on school personnel mean that many schools struggle with finding opportunities to collaborate and ensuring that all members of the team are aware of team activities and decisions. Strategies that can aid you and your team in working together include posting announcements on the district and school websites, maintaining continuous communication with school staff through regular e-mails, scheduling face-to-face meetings with core leadership team members to monitor progress and assign tasks, and providing regular updates to parents and community stakeholders through the school newsletter.



ACTION STEPS FOR RECOMMENDATION 1

Work as a Team

- ▶ Identify your core leadership team
- ▶ Plan your outreach and build a community
- ▶ Establish a schedule and routine to ensure effective communication

For additional ideas and support, refer to **Module 1: Get Ready** in the Support Modules.

A CASE STORY Richland School District II, a nationally recognized district in technology implementation and use of technology to enhance classroom instruction, built their success through collaborative team planning. Planning and implementation of their one-to-one technology initiative is an ongoing, comprehensive process that has included multiple stakeholders and collaboration among the various teams working to plan, implement, and sustain their technology initiative. To begin, a steering committee was formed to learn more about one-to-one technology models. The steering committee conducted site visits and researched one-to-one technology models to lay the groundwork for project planning. Based on the work from this committee, numerous teams were formed to support the planning and implementation of the technology initiative. Teams and committees range from district and school personnel, to parent and technical advisory groups. Their steering committee, comprised of representatives from all schools, helps to ensure collaboration across schools with the district, and the parent advisory committee works to support communication between the school and parents. At the school level, the leadership team is comprised of the principal, tech specialists, special education staff, and teachers. At the district level, committees work to support:

- ▶ Comprehensive planning, change management, and budgeting
- ▶ Curriculum, instruction, and resources
- ▶ Public outreach and communication with parents
- ▶ Procedures, policies, and practices to design and implement support structures
- ▶ Professional development
- ▶ Evaluation of implementation and revisions to project planning and implementation

Appendix A: School Readiness Tools and Checklists to Inform Your Planning

EdTech Locator. This tool provides free access to an online self-assessment of readiness for technology implementation school-wide (consisting of five questions), as well as a planning worksheet to advance the process. There are separate sections for teachers, administrators, tech coordinators, and PD coordinators, which also include descriptors/markers of individual stages (early, development, and target) of task completion.

<http://www.edtechlocator.org/#assess>

Digital Learning Day: Self-Assessment, Project 24. This online survey allows for self-assessment of readiness to implement digital learning (in Project 24's seven areas: Professional Learning, Budget and Resources, Curriculum and Instruction, Academic Supports, Use of Time, Data and Assessment, Technology and Infrastructure). The end product is a PDF report that includes analysis and recommendations for each of the mentioned areas and links to additional resources. The survey takes less than two hours to complete.

<http://digitallearningday.org/news-and-events/project-24/self-assessment/>

Massachusetts School Technology and Readiness Chart (STaR Chart). This document is a rubric-like chart that allows for self-assessment on readiness progress toward the implementation of best practices on the technology continuum. It includes four areas for assessment (Teaching and Learning, Educator Preparation and Development, Administration and Support Services, and Infrastructure for Technology), with descriptors for individual levels of progress (early, developing, proficient, and advanced).

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/edtech/STaR.pdf>

Texas STaR Chart. This document is a rubric-like chart that allows for self-assessment on readiness progress toward the implementation of best practices on the technology continuum. It includes five areas for assessment (Teaching and Learning, Educator Preparation and Development, Leadership, Administration and Support Services, and Infrastructure for Technology), with personalized descriptors for individual levels of progress (early, developing, proficient, and advanced).

<http://starchart.epsilen.com/docs/TxTSC.pdf>