RECOMMENDATION 2:
Enhance Your Vision and Set Goals

Overall summary

In order to meet student learning needs and achieve high levels of student academic achievement, it is important to enhance and communicate a school vision that includes the use of technology. Develop concrete short- and long-term goals that specify the action steps that are critical to supporting the implementation of technology within the school and the integration of technology throughout classroom instruction. Schools that drive the implementation of technology through the vision and goals of its leaders are much more likely to be successful than those in which implementation is driven by the sudden availability of funds.

Recommendations from the literature and practice

Generating and communicating a shared vision is a critical step in creating your technology implementation plan. The leadership team will need to reflect on the current vision for the school and/or district and work to adapt that vision to include the use of evidence-based strategies, supported by technology, that can enhance academic achievement and advance learning in the building. The vision statement should be clear and concise, and it should address the learning outcomes for all student subgroups in the district and/or school, including students with disabilities.

Without a clear vision of what you aim to achieve, it is difficult to plan short- and long-term goals, and the absence of a clear vision is one of the main reasons that technology initiatives fail. You may want to gather ideas from teachers, school board members, and parents throughout the process of refining the school's vision in order to build "buy-in," and to ensure that the ideals of key stakeholders are represented. Once your vision is established, the leadership team will need to develop a plan for communicating this vision to staff, parents, and students in order to foster a shared commitment to achieving the vision.

Although the vision statement outlines the overall direction for maximizing student outcomes in your district and/or school, the leadership team will need to set a focus and establish long- and short-term goals and milestones to achieve the vision. These goals provide the framework for building specific action steps to successfully integrate technology and transform your school environment and instruction in the classroom. When setting your goals, use data-driven decision making (see Recommendation 3) to identify areas of student need, the focus of your initial implementation efforts, areas of teacher need to drive future professional learning workshops, potential barriers and ways to address them, and strengths in the system that you can draw upon.

Leadership teams that focus on concrete, short-term goals and strive for small, early successes are able to build excitement for the initiative and enjoy greater long-term success throughout the

implementation process. Fostering change is a multiyear process that can feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar because you are learning new ways of "doing business." Building feelings of success early in the process can increase confidence and generate momentum for moving forward.

Use the results of your data analysis to help define specific areas of focus for the initial implementation phase. Consider student achievement scores and identify which content areas students appear to be struggling with the most, and consider the professional learning needs of the teachers (relating to the initial implementation) and the workshops or other activities that could be hosted throughout the year, for grade-level and/or targeted groups of teachers. How you plan to focus your initial implementation, roll out the new technology, and integrate that technology into the classroom will depend on your context. Some districts and schools integrated technology in high schools during the first year and middle schools during the second year, and only then moved to equip students and teachers in elementary schools with technology. Some districts started with the schools that had the lowest student achievement test scores (in the hope of increasing student scores), and others required schools to complete an application that demonstrated their readiness for

integrating technology. School-level engagement during initial implementation also varies. In some instances, the leadership team might engage with a specific grade level, handpicking teacher leaders who are already using technology in their classrooms and can serve as champions to foster buy-in from other teachers. In others, the leadership team might engage with all reading specialists in the building in order to foster school-wide integration with all teachers involved.

Once you have chosen your focus, it is time to identify your goals. When defining your goals, it is important to establish both short- and long-term goals for your students, teachers, and the school building as a whole. Professional learning goals will likely include building a collective capacity for teaching with technology, transforming the classroom and

learning experience for students through the use of evidence-based strategies supported by technology, and holding technical workshops on using the new technology devices. In addition, the leadership team will need to set goals related to identifying funding sources, procuring devices, establishing policies and procedures, and so on. For each goal, leadership teams should identify the person who will be responsible for leading

the task, produce detailed action steps to accomplish the goal, establish processes for monitoring implementation and making revisions (when appropriate), and institute systems for evaluating progress. The ongoing collection of evaluation data can help you to reset your goals as you learn and implement change to improve outcomes, and it can increase your success during the sustaining phase of your implementation plan.

A CASE STORY Team Academy is an elementary school serving students from Grades 1 through 6. Upon joining PowerUp WHAT WORKS as a field site, the school formed a leadership team that included the Team Academy director, three elementary school teachers, a special education teacher, and an IT media specialist. The main focus of the leadership team was to support school staff to integrate technology throughout instruction. The leadership team met monthly to discuss technology-related issues and plan inservice days for staff to develop knowledge and skills in emerging technology and educational resources. The Support Modules and educational resources of the PowerUp WHAT WORKS website continue to be a great asset to the leadership team to implement technology aligned with the other initiatives already under way in the school. Other school functions such as statewide assessments and unexpected snow days make it challenging to meet monthly, but the team makes every effort to meet regularly.

With a mission of helping all students achieve their potential, the leadership team at a K–6 charter school in Minnesota met to hone their vision for the school and develop short- and long-term goals to increase the use of technology to support classroom instruction. The team assessed the technology available in the building by completing the PowerUp inventory checklist and surveying their teachers on how they used the various technologies available.

The team set a short-term goal to increase use of the interactive whiteboards present in each classroom. They reviewed the research and information briefs on the PowerUp website to learn more about the Universal Design for Learning framework, using the interactive whiteboards to provide multiple means of representation, and support teacher use of the interactive whiteboards to implement evidence-based strategies in reading, writing, and mathematics. To accomplish their goal, the team identified the professional learning needs of their teachers, used the PowerUp website to plan workshops, and worked with teachers in the classroom to plan instruction that targeted the needs of the struggling learners in their classrooms.

Appendix E: Example Goals and Vision Statements Written by Districts and Schools Across the Country

Below are several example goal and mission statements. We have added *emphasis* to key words.

▸ **Henrico Public Schools.** "The mission of the Henrico County Public Schools is to "inspire, empower and educate every student to be prepared for success in the 21st century." This is accomplished by creating *21st century learning environments* in which the instructor is a content expert, provides engaging, student-centered 21st century instruction, and where 21st century *technology* tools are available for instruction. When all three pieces are in place, 21st century instruction exists."

▸ **Leland School District Technology Department.** "It is the vision of the Leland School District to develop highly educated, well-rounded students who are excited about learning and who will, as a result, become lifelong, self-directed learners. Through the use of current and cutting edge *technology* we strive to prepare today's students for tomorrow's advanced technological opportunities and challenges."

"The *technology mission* of the Leland School District is to assure that learners can adapt to the challenges of the 21st century through the access and utilization of technology in gathering, using, and communicating information in order to make responsible decisions as global citizens."

▸ **Geary Public Schools.** "*Technology* shall be implemented to enhance, improve, engage and stimulate the learning environment for all students to advance their educational experience and skills in order to prepare them to live and work in a global community. Therefore, the challenge of educators is to equip students with knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to live effectively, productively, and enjoyably in our continuously changing world. Inherent is the intent to help each student reach his/her full potential as a human being."

▸ **Sussex Wantage Regional School District.** "The Sussex-Wantage Regional School District (SWRD) believes that schools must provide optimum *technology* opportunities for students to learn about the natural world and human global society. To do so means that *technology* must be integrated across the curricula at all grade levels, and support achievement of the NJ Core Content Curriculum Standards. The classroom environment must demonstrate a commitment to and daily use of technology, preparing our students for the digital 21st Century.

The SWRD implements technology as an integrated tool that maximizes work efforts to enhance learning and teaching. Each student and staff member will utilize technology to access and organize information, plan for the attainment of goals, and increase communication. The SWRD strives to provide the latest technology at a level that is serviceable and supported within staff and budgetary means. This is done on an equitable basis across the district."

▸ **Cranston Public Schools.** "*Technology* in the Cranston Public Schools will afford increased opportunities for students to attain challenging educational standards. Through information technology resources, students in the Cranston Public Schools will be empowered to think more critically, communicate more effectively, solve problems more creatively, and be actively engaged in their learning. By creating a technology rich environment, a community of lifelong learners will be provided with the skills to succeed in our constantly changing information age."

Technology Mission Statement:
"In order to prepare our students for their future world, a world of constant change, we must provide technology rich learning environments in which our investment in technology and training is equal to our students' educational needs, supports our curriculum, and prepares our students to be knowledgeable and productive users of technology."

▶ **Tunica County School District.** "The School Board, administration, teachers, support staff, and classified personnel envision working as a team that is committed to guiding our students toward the goal of academic excellence. We will provide an educational environment that utilizes *technology*. We will provide integrated instruction that enables students to become literate to function in the 21st Century."

"The *technology mission* of the Tunica County School District is to incorporate current and emerging technologies into the educational process in order to:

- Enhance the quality of instruction by making technology available to students, parents and teachers, both on and off campus.

- Use technology to improve learning of basic skills, problem solving strategies, and critical thinking.

- Integrate technology into the curriculum by providing computer/Internet access to staff, students and parents.

- Utilize computer-assisted instruction in alternative learning environments.

- Provide opportunities for students to research, create, and publish using a variety of tools in all curricular areas.

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- Use computer-assisted instruction as a supplement to traditional teacher-directed instruction.

- Provide training and support for teachers to utilize technology for classroom management and instruction.

- Promote student centered learning with the teacher acting as a facilitator and manager."