



## Meridian Educational Technology Initiative

### MERIDIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION

Each student will succeed through quality, inspirational and innovative education.

In Winter 2019, an Educational Technology Advisory Committee met to determine if there existed a need to improve student learning that could be achieved through expanding or access and use of technology. Participating in this committee were:

- Adrienne Somera, IRE Vice Principal
- Cyndi Tennyson, Data Systems Support Specialist
- Cynthia Richardson, MMS English Language Arts Teacher
- Dave Brannon, MHS Math/CTE Teacher
- Derek Forbes, MHS Principal
- James Everett, Superintendent
- Joe O'Brien, Director of Technology and Assessment
- Kathy Greshock, MMS Counselor
- Kirk Rensink, IRE 3rd Grade Teacher
- Molly Zinkle, Family Services Coordinator
- Sara Kurashige, MP3 Math Teacher

The Meridian Educational Technology Advisory Committee concluded with a consensus that there are identifiable student learning needs that could be met through expanding students' access to technology. An Educational Technology Planning Committee was created to determine how to close the gap between where the district is currently and where we need to be with regards to effective instruction, equity, and the essential conditions necessary to effectively leverage technology for learning.

Following the work our Educational Technology Advisory Committee did, we called for volunteers to explore how to meet that need. Participating in the Educational Technology Planning Committee were:

- Aaron Jacoby, Director of Special Services
- Adrienne Somera, IRE Vice Principal
- Anne Post, IRE LAP Reading Coordinator
- Benjamin Mathew, MHS Student
- Carol Stromberg, MMS Paraeducator
- Cyndi Tennyson, Data Systems Support Specialist
- Dave Brannon, MHS Math/CTE Teacher
- Derek Forbes, MHS Principal/CTE Director
- Emma Binderup, IRE 4th Grade Teacher
- Glenn DePeralta, IRE 3rd Grade Teacher
- James Everett, Superintendent
- Jenni Brown, IRE Technology Teacher
- Joe O'Brien, Director of Technology, Data, and Assessment
- Kathy Greshock, MMS Counselor
- Kelcey Funk, MHS Special Education Paraeducator
- Landon Rische, MHS Student
- Sara Kurashige, MP3 Math Teacher

Through both committees we explored the Washington State K-12 Learning Standards, National Educational Technology Plan, International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, SAMR and Triple-E frameworks for classroom technology integration and met with our neighboring districts: Burlington-Edison, Ferndale and Bellingham; all with a lens on how to address the goals within the Meridian School District 2018-23 Strategic Plan.

The Meridian Educational Technology Planning Committee concluded that technology serves as an essential tool to engage, extend, and enhance learning. When implemented to support learning, students are able to develop skills for future careers, understand the digital citizenship needed to use technology correctly and responsibly, become active participants in their learning, create opportunities to extend the learning beyond the classroom and provide equitable access by engaging all students to meet their physical, intellectual and communication needs. Whether our students are striving for college or workforce readiness, this initiative is geared at preparing all our learners for whatever they choose for their futures.

One of the most important tenants from this committee's process is the vital importance of leading with a strong instructional approach, leveraging technology within the context of student learning. The committee also felt that each of the four strategic plan goals of **(1) Increasing Student Achievement, (2) Closing Achievement and Opportunity Gaps, (3) Providing Quality Staff and Professional Development, (4) Enhancing Community Relations** should remain central to our focus moving forward.

The recommendation of this committee is to implement a technology initiative that restructures how we utilize technology to enhance teaching and learning and to transform learning in Meridian by providing technology devices to students. Therefore, the committee proposes that the Meridian School District will:

- 1) Implement a dedicated Director of Teaching and Learning who will partner with our Director of Technology, Data, and Assessment. They will ensure this work is approached in a proactive, integrated and thoughtful manner with an emphasis on effective instruction and equitable access. (Strategic Plan Goal Areas 1, 2, & 3)
- 2) Hire Instructional Coaches to support core instruction that integrates technology with strong professional development and collaboration time for all staff to provide high-quality instruction. (Strategic Plan Goal Areas 1 & 3)
- 3) Provide consistent, reliable funding to enable a technology initiative of one device per student for middle and high school students; a minimum of one device per two students in each classroom for elementary to encourage collaboration; a cohesive plan of implementation integrating staff training with instructional materials; and reliable infrastructure and devices for all learning spaces. (Strategic Plan Goal Areas 1, 2, & 3)
- 4) Create a system for ongoing communication with our community about the use and impact of technology in the district. Monitor and share the success of this initiative through an annual review of student and staff technical competency, equipment inventories, and community surveys. (Strategic Plan Goal Areas 4)

Additionally, the committee reasserts Meridian's commitment to school safety, security, and emergency preparedness. Our technology infrastructure incorporates campus safety, secure single entry points and security cameras as well as ensuring lines of communication and emergency power are uninterrupted. We commit to continued improvements to remain updated and operational.

In order to achieve these goals, the Educational Technology Planning Committee recommends establishing a technology levy request to the Meridian community. For decades, technology has been a necessary tool to support staff and students. We have a strong history of being good stewards of our funds. Meridian has always been able to provide a measure of technology by making the most of a limited annual budget, grant opportunities, cost-saving measures, and sporadic one-time funding. This funding has been inconsistent and insufficient to realize the full potential technology has to positively impact student learning. Our inability to provide sufficient student devices to transform learning, adequate professional development, a modern curriculum that leverages technology and a reliable infrastructure that supports technology integration must be addressed moving forward.

With the Meridian community's support of a technology levy, Meridian would be able to proactively develop and implement a cohesive long-range plan that addresses all of the essential conditions needed to support technology integration.

We would like to thank members of both committees for volunteering their time and their enthusiasm toward creating opportunities for our students. We would also like to thank Burlington-Edison School District, Ferndale School District and Bellingham Public Schools for sharing their time and wisdom.

Key resources that guided our recommendation are:

- Meridian School District Strategic Plan 2018-2023  
[http://www.meridian.wednet.edu/sites/default/files/Strategic%20Plan%202018-2023\\_1.pdf](http://www.meridian.wednet.edu/sites/default/files/Strategic%20Plan%202018-2023_1.pdf)
- Washington State K-12 Learning Standards
- <http://www.k12.wa.us/EdTech/Standards/default.aspx>
  - Washington State K-12 Educational Technology Learning Standards
  - <http://www.k12.wa.us/EdTech/Standards/default.aspx>
- Kathy Schrock's Guide to Everything SAMR and Blooms model
- <https://www.schrockguide.net/samr.html>
- Triple E Framework
- <https://www.tripleeframework.com/>
- Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, National Education Technology Plan
- <https://tech.ed.gov/netp/>
- International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE)
- <https://www.iste.org/>
  - ISTE Standards for Educators
  - <https://www.iste.org/standards/for-educators>
  - ISTE Essential Conditions
  - <https://www.iste.org/standards/essential-conditions>

The International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) is a globally recognized community of educators who believe in the power of technology to transform teaching and learning, accelerate innovation and solve tough problems in education. ISTE provides practical guidance and evidence-based professional learning. We recommend that we align with ISTE Educational Technology Standards, including the Standards for Students as adopted by Washington State as K-12 Educational Technology Learning Standards, Standards for Educators and the 14 Essential Conditions.

With regards to the 14 Essential Conditions, they are included here to provide a guide and framework to monitor our progress moving forward. This committee has extended these critical elements to include priorities specific to Meridian.

## ISTE Essential Conditions

The ISTE Essential Conditions are the 14 critical elements necessary to effectively leverage technology for learning. They offer educators and school leaders a research-backed framework to guide implementation of the ISTE Standards, tech planning and systemwide change.

Shared Vision	Technical Support
Empowered Leaders	Curriculum Framework
Implementation Planning	Student-Centered Learning
Consistent and Adequate Funding	Assessment and Evaluation
Equitable Access	Engaged Communities
Skill Personnel	Support Policies
Ongoing Professional Learning	Supportive External Context

## Shared Vision

Proactive leadership in developing a shared vision for educational technology among all education stakeholders, including teachers and support staff, school and district administrators, teacher educators, students, parents, and the community

### What is it?

A shared vision serves as the driving force behind a technology implementation plan — but it's not formulated and disseminated from the top down. Rather, a shared vision arises from the collaborative voices, goals and values of the educators, support staff, students, parents and community members within the system. All stakeholders provide input for the vision and understand how it impacts them and how to apply it within their individual roles.

### Why is it important?

Effective technology implementation requires a clear vision of where the organization is headed and what it will take to get there. A shared vision becomes the paddle the organization uses to steer toward the future. When a system is guided by a clearly defined vision and leaders actively collect, incorporate and share input from stakeholders at all levels, a community of understanding and collaboration develops to propel the organization forward in its mission.

### What does it look like?

In a standards-ready system, leaders use the following process to establish a shared vision for the organization:

- Define a system-wide vision.
- Identify all stakeholders.
- Create a plan for communicating with stakeholders about the vision.
- Allow stakeholders to provide input about the vision and plan.
- Ensure all stakeholders are able to define the vision and understand how it applies to them in their roles.
- Develop multiple vehicles for communicating the vision (graphics, images, posters, messaging, etc.).
- Leaders can conduct a simple poll to measure the effectiveness of a shared vision: How many people within the organization can explain what the vision is?

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Promote Meridian School District Vision, Purpose and Core Values.
- Ensure the implementation of this initiative is in alignment with our Vision, Purpose and Core Values
- Regular and timely communications to all stakeholders on the progress of this initiative.
- Form an ongoing educational technology committee to promote the district's vision, provide recommendations and oversee this initiative plan for use in the district

## Empowered leaders

Stakeholders at every level empowered to be leaders in effecting consistent system-wide change

### What is it?

True system-wide change requires leaders who are empowered to experiment, make decisions, take risks and adjust their course. While the term leader usually refers to those in traditional management roles, such as superintendents and principals, it can also refer to stakeholders at any level within the system — including teachers, staff, support staff and even students. Empowering stakeholders at all levels creates a system of proactive leaders who are able to make critical decisions about their own learning and teaching, help each other solve problems, and enact change within and across their own spheres of influence.

### Why is it important?

To make and sustain the transition to a standards-ready system, stakeholders will need a tremendous amount of trust, collaboration, communication and responsibility across the board. This requires a shift in culture to a distributed and cooperative model in which leadership is situational and contextual and does not have to rely on traditional structures and formalized approaches to make decisions within the system.

By empowering stakeholders at all levels to make decisions and solve problems, the system becomes better able to leverage existing strengths and expertise while strategically applying current resources in more judicious ways.

### What does it look like?

Instead of a hierarchical governance model that implements change from the top down, a standards-ready system features bottom-up distributed leadership and decision making. Leadership in this case is plural, implying the importance of a shared governance model that enables and motivates the entire organization to shepherd change.

In a culture that empowers leaders at all levels:

- Superintendents support administrators when they take up issues on behalf of teachers.
- Administrators empower teachers to take risks while providing support on critical issues.
- Teachers and stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input on policies and are able to address issues in a supportive environment.

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### Priorities for Meridian

- An environment where all staff freely share instructional strategies and student outcomes
- Provide structures and opportunities for staff to share successes, instructional strategies and student outcomes with colleagues. Build capacity to support staff who need additional mentoring.
- Provide multiple avenues to receive professional learning/coaching/support. Support additional time and training.

## Implementation planning

A systematic plan with a shared vision for school effectiveness and student learning through the infusion of information and communication technology (ICT) and digital learning resources

### What is it?

Implementation planning lays the foundation for technology deployment throughout the system. It guides the manifestation of your shared vision by answering the questions: How will technology be adopted? How will the program be rolled out? How will technology use align with the organization's overall vision and mission?

An effective implementation plan addresses every aspect of the program, from infrastructure to professional development, and includes an ongoing process for measuring the program's effectiveness and making necessary adjustments.

### Why is it important?

The implementation plan provides a detailed roadmap for reaching critical milestones within the initiative. With it, the shared vision becomes concrete. Without it, the ability to maximize available resources and meet learning goals decreases.

The implementation planning process provides a critical opportunity for schools and districts to evaluate their long-term and short-term objectives for technology and standards integration. It is important to not mistake infrastructure decisions for implementation planning, which may cause the system-wide transition to fall short of student engagement and achievement goals.

### What does it look like?

An implementation plan should be explicit in its description of how technology will be deployed to meet educational goals. It should address:

- Short-term and long-term goals
- A detailed roadmap for how these goals will be accomplished
- Important milestones and timelines
- Division of responsibilities and resources, including human, financial and time

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Phased cohort model or implementation. Begin work developing a 6-year road map for meeting the goals outlined in this initiative.
- Ensure community and staff are aware of the stages of implementation and have opportunities for input. Build an understanding of why the stages are logically staggered and professional learning, infrastructure and curriculum must be part of a successful device adoption.
- A designated position and person to head Teaching and Learning for the district
- Form an ongoing educational technology committee to promote the district's vision, provide recommendations and oversee this initiative plan for use in the district annual review and update
- Annually use ISTE's Lead & Transformation Diagnostic Tool to generate a custom report that will guide our tech integration planning. (based on the ISTE Essential Conditions)

## Consistent and adequate funding

Ongoing funding to support technology infrastructure, personnel, digital resources and staff development

### What is it?

To ensure consistent and adequate funding for a technology initiative, administrators need to develop a strategic plan for acquiring funding and using it to support all aspects of the program. It's not enough to merely purchase hardware and software. The budget should also allow for ongoing maintenance, updates, system support and professional development to support the implementation and use of the technology — an area that's often overlooked during budget planning.

### Why is it important?

An insufficiently funded technology initiative will eventually fizzle and fail. While it may be tempting to seize the latest tool or device, strategic budgeting prompts leaders to carefully weigh all available options and select the most cost-effective tool for achieving the program's goals — whether that means, for example, purchasing digital books or allowing students to use their own devices. When leaders carefully consider costs during the planning stage, they are in a better position to launch and sustain a robust integration plan that meets the ISTE Standards and fully harness the power of technology to enhance learning.

### What does it look like?

Most schools or districts face tremendous budget challenges. Moving to a standards-ready system requires vision and planning tempered by the realities of a limited budget.

What constitutes consistent and adequate funding can vary depending on the system. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Many districts receive local support from their communities or seek public or private grants, sponsorships, or public-private collaborations. Regardless of the source, consistent and adequate funding allows leaders to maintain the technology and infrastructure while ensuring teachers are trained to use it to its fullest capacity for learning and teaching.

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Develop a 6-year budget to meet the needs for this initiative
- Market Meridian successes to the community to build strong awareness and promote ongoing and cyclical funding
- Meridian Educational Technology Planning Committee recommends establishing a technology levy request to the Meridian community.

## Equitable access

Robust and reliable access to current and emerging technologies and digital resources, with connectivity for all students, including those with special needs, teachers, staff and school leaders

### What is it?

To bridge socioeconomic gaps and truly support digital learning for all students, an initiative must ensure sufficient bandwidth and connection speeds to allow learning and teaching to occur anytime, with limited interruptions resulting from infrastructure problems. But equitable access means more than simply providing devices and connectivity. It also means giving every student the opportunity to learn from teachers who understand how to use technology to both enhance learning and create quality learning experiences for students with special needs.

### Why is it important?

Technology offers the potential to improve education for disadvantaged students, regardless of at-home availability — but only if all students are able to fully participate. When planning for technology implementation, it's imperative to consider not only the number of technology devices you need but also how you can leverage available digital resources to meet learning and teaching goals.

Technology has proven particularly effective for meeting the needs of students with special needs. The ISTE Standards require teachers to have access to both the tools and the skills to support this population.

### What does it look like?

As part of any system-wide technology plan, leaders should develop a strong foundation of policies addressing the various elements needed for equal access. These policies should:

- Ensure individuals know how to access the technology
- Outline where to go for help getting access
- Be flexible enough to accommodate diverse learners and instructional needs

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Professional development to increase staff understanding of equity
- Provide equitable access by engaging all students to meet their physical, intellectual and communication needs.
- Support established Professional Learning Communities to create equity in instructional practices.
- Address technology needs in all learning spaces.

## Skilled personnel

Educators, support staff and other leaders skilled in the selection and effective use of appropriate ICT resources

### What is it?

To create a technology-rich culture, all educators and staff should model what it means to be a digital age professional. At face value, this means knowing how to use digital tools to both increase productivity and enhance learning. It also implies the need to keep those skills up to date.

Leaders can cultivate a skilled staff by modeling technology use themselves, providing access to resources that help keep skills current, and implementing hiring practices and policies that reflect the significance of technology skills.

### Why is it important?

The success of any technology initiative depends on seeing results. Increased student engagement, for example, can happen only if teachers and staff are also engaged and invested in the transition to a standards-ready system. Skilled individuals who support the initiative can facilitate transitional growth through their innovative application of technology.

### What does it look like?

Skilled personnel are distributed throughout a standards-ready system in a variety of roles, from technology specialists to volunteers to students with technology proficiency. All individuals know whom to turn to for assistance, enabling teachers and students to find answers to their questions and solutions to their problems.

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## Priorities for Meridian

- Provide all staff resources and opportunities to improve their knowledge/skills in using technology to enhance learning
- The district desperately needs leadership in the form of a Director of Teaching and Learning and Instructional Coaches to have consistent, relevant and useful professional learning for all stakeholders
- Building staff (ex: cert librarian, instructional coaches) to provide support, guidance, and leadership in effective implementation of technology

## Ongoing professional learning

Technology-related professional learning plans and opportunities with dedicated time to practice and share ideas

### What is it?

Educators need ongoing training to keep up to date with rapid changes in educational technology. Yet when planning for a systemwide transition, leaders often budget for infrastructure and equipment but overlook the need for professional learning.

To support a systemwide initiative, all educators and staff need professional learning plans that:

- Meet each individual's needs with relevant training
- Are implemented regularly
- Are continually updated to reflect current trends and technologies

Educators also need to carve out time in their busy schedules to assimilate their new knowledge, practice new skills, learn from each other and work together. Each professional learning plan should include policies that allow participants time for planning, creating and reflecting on what they've learned about the teaching process.

### Why is it important?

All the technology in the world won't make a difference if educators don't know how to leverage it for deeper learning. Buying hardware is only the first step. It's what educators do with these tools that will determine a technology initiative's success or failure.

Ongoing professional learning imbues educators with the confidence they need to use technology successfully. When educators have adequate time to build their networks and collaborate with each other, their ability to effectively apply digital tools in the classroom grows exponentially.

### What does it look like?

With so many training options available, professional learning plans can look different for every educator. Online courses, virtual classroom coaching and asynchronous collaborative teams allow professional learning to be relevant, job embedded and just in time.

School or district leaders can support professional learning by:

- Offering regular access to diverse professional learning opportunities
- Providing opportunities based on educators' needs and realities
- Developing incentive structures to encourage participation
- Focusing on both learning to use technology and using technology to learn
- Helping educators implement new knowledge and skills

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Use an instructional framework and professional development to improve instructional strategies used to support learning
- Leverage ISTE Standards for Educator. Assist all staff in identifying and furthering their level of knowledge and comfort with technology.
- Training in technology embedded in professional learning around standards and curriculum-tied to instruction.
- Develop a culture where staff engages in consistent, ongoing professional learning around the instructional and assessment tools available to them.

## Technical support

Consistent and reliable assistance for maintaining, renewing and using ICT and digital learning resources

### What is it?

Technology needs to be maintained, and teachers need just-in-time help when troubleshooting problems. Whether human or virtual, technical support ensures that the technology continues to function, remains up to date and is fully usable by teachers, staff and students.

From hiring specialists to creating peer networks, technical support can take many forms. For example, in some schools, student leaders help staff with troubleshooting. Developing a system for providing multiple types of support is a key component of any technology integration plan.

### Why is it important?

Technology opens new doors for learning, but students can't walk through them if the technology is unusable or disruptive to the learning and teaching process. Consistent and reliable technical support removes these barriers and makes it possible for educators to better leverage their use of technology as an effective teaching and learning tool. It also minimizes the time and energy they spend on troubleshooting and problem solving.

### What does it look like?

In a standards-ready system, teachers are supported in their technology use — both in learning how to use it and in applying it to their classrooms. They know how to get technical help without significant lags. Key considerations for planning include:

- Sufficient infrastructure to support ideal levels of technology use
- Access to technology specialists
- Diversified responsibility for technology use, implementation and support

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Staff are empowered with tools and training to resolve minor technical issues.
- Clear, timely and regular communication on support requests.
- A service-level agreement defining priorities and expected resolution time.

## Curriculum framework

Content standards and related digital curriculum resources that are aligned with and support digital age learning and work

### What is it?

Technology is best able to enhance learning when educators use it intentionally within the adopted curriculum. As part of any system-wide initiative, a curriculum framework is needed to pair defined content standards with digital curriculum resources that are aligned to the content learning goals.

A curriculum framework guides both how and when technology is used for learning. It ensures that technology is applied:

- In ways that address real-world skill
- To learn the right skills at the right time for the right reasons.
- To meet specific learning objectives

### Why is it important?

Technology is all too often applied as an add-on to existing curriculum. To maximize its potential benefits — such as the development of higher-order thinking skills — educators must weave it into the curriculum in such a way that the tool matches the desired learning outcomes. A curriculum framework bridges the gap between overall curriculum goals and the use of technology for learning and teaching.

### What does it look like?

Technology standards should inform and support the curriculum framework. For example, the Common Core State Standards include technology proficiencies in the array of knowledge and skills students are expected to build. In this way, technology use becomes part of the learning objective itself rather than simply a means of achieving it.

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### Priorities for Meridian

- The district desperately needs leadership in the form of a Director of Teaching and Learning and Instructional Coaches to have consistent, relevant and useful professional learning for all stakeholders
- Provide clarity about district curriculum, scope and sequence, and resources
- Vertically align curriculum and instructional practices.
- Support staff in understanding the technology embedded in adopted curricular materials.

## Student-centered learning

Planning, teaching and assessment centers around the needs and abilities of students

### What is it?

Student-centered learning moves students from passive receivers of information to active participants in their own discovery process. What students learn, how they learn it and how their learning is assessed are all driven by each individual student's needs and abilities.

At the system level, this requires implementing curriculum planning practices, pedagogy and assessment methods that support a student-centric approach. In the classroom, teachers craft instruction and apply technology in a way that best serves each student's learning journey. Technology use is always guided by two primary criteria:

- What's appropriate for the task at hand?
- How can activities be designed to develop higher-order thinking skills?
- How can activities be designed to develop higher-order thinking skills?

### Why is it important?

When students take responsibility for their own learning, they become explorers capable of leveraging their curiosity to solve real-world problems. To that end, the ISTE Standards guide teachers toward designing learning experiences that permit student independence and foster lifelong learning.

Technology allows for an unprecedented level of personalized learning, with valuable opportunities to monitor progress and engagement, follow student thinking, and digitally assess competencies. When schools effectively leverage both technology and pedagogy, both students and teachers become empowered to make decisions about their own learning and teaching.

True student-centered learning requires more than just an increase in technology implementation. It represents a shift in the educational culture toward a system that supports technology for standards-based learning and real-world problem solving. As a system transitions to a student-centered approach, educators can more effectively apply technology to improve learning outcomes and help students develop the skills for college and career readiness.

### What does it look like?

Successful student-centered teaching emphasizes both creative and effective use of technology to meet students' learning goals. Teachers address content standards in ways that not only support the material, but also help students develop the essential digital skills outlined in the ISTE Standards.

When evaluating how student-centered learning is incorporated into a school or district, it is critical to assess the extent to which:

- Technology-powered pedagogy is applied
- Technology is used to increase access and differentiate teaching approaches
- Teachers know how to differentiate their teaching using technology

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Gather and use data to enhance learning; including reflection and adjustments to instruction to meet the needs of students.
- Ensure students are taught Digital citizenship and know how to and how not to use the technology given to them.
- Staff are supported in building a vision of student-centered learning, higher-level thinking skills, and assessment practices in their content area instruction.
- Instruction supports differentiation to meet the needs of students.
- Ensure that we are teaching Washington State K-12 Educational Technology Learning Standards for students with the same emphasis as we teach all Washington State K-12 Learning Standards.

## Assessment and evaluations

Continuous assessment of teaching, learning, and leadership and evaluation of the use of ICT and digital resources

### What is it?

To gauge the progress and success of technology integration within a system, leaders need to continually assess how effectively the technology is applied at all levels. This includes evaluating the effectiveness of:

- The technology itself:
  - How are digital technologies and resources applied in the classroom?
  - Are they useful for achieving educational goals and learning objectives?
- Those who use the technology:
  - Are teachers successfully applying technology in the classroom?
  - Are students able to use technology to enhance their learning?
  - Are leaders successfully using technology and supporting its use in the classroom?

### Why is it important?

A systemwide technology initiative requires a deep investment of time and resources. Technology evaluation provides a feedback loop to inform course corrections and allows leaders to measure return on investment, while deployed assessments of teachers, students and leaders help track the system's progress toward meeting the ISTE Standards benchmarks. Together, ongoing evaluation and assessments provide a holistic picture of the initiative's success and help administrators pinpoint areas of weakness that need to be addressed.

### What does it look like?

To accurately assess and evaluate technology use within a system, leaders need clearly defined goals and metrics for measuring success as well as a process for applying the findings through a continuous feedback loop. Each measurement should serve a clear purpose and be used to ensure continual improvement and progress toward the program's goals.

When determining whether assessments and evaluations are effective in practice, ask the following guiding questions:

- To what extent has technology impacted student assessment practices and achievement?
- Are metrics for measuring the technology's impact on student learning built into the system?
- Are teachers' needs assessed to uncover skill gaps that prevent effective use of technology?
- Are teachers meeting the expected outcomes outlined in their professional development plans?

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Research systems/ structures/ technology tools that support our ability to gather and do a meaningful analysis of our student learning data. Assessment at all levels is attended to and supported.
- Leverage technology to gather ongoing student performance data related to standards to quickly identify students in need of support and make timely and meaningful interventions

## Engaged communities

Partnerships and collaboration within communities to support and fund the use of ICT and digital learning resources

### What is it?

Technology bridges the gap between school and home, creating a world where students are surrounded by learning opportunities at all times. To truly leverage the power of educational technology, educators need support from families and the community at large.

An engaged community understands the role of technology in education and champions its use in the school or district. Members of the community — including businesses, organizations and higher education institutions — are willing to collaborate and form partnerships with educators to support the many aspects of technology adoption.

### Why is it important?

Educators often overlook the role of the community when planning for systemwide technology integration. Yet community buy-in, and the partnerships that arise from it, are critical to any initiative's long-term success.

An engaged community can provide financial, material or volunteer support at all stages of the planning and implementation process. At the planning stage, aligning the initiative's vision to the community's shared values, policy and support structures can strengthen its ability to take root. At the implementation stage, a school or district can partner with local businesses and other organizations to secure additional funding and resources for executing tangible goals related to the initiative.

In addition to fostering extended buy-in, community involvement can also help ensure that real-world values, applied skills and locally available resources are incorporated into the plan's implementation framework to improve the chances of success in the long term.

### What does it look like?

Community engagement requires an ongoing feedback loop in which the school or district keeps the community informed and seeks input from all education stakeholders. To measure a school or district's success in meeting this condition, education leaders can track the channels through which they have communicated with the community, how often the outreach occurs, what types of messaging they have used and how the outreach is handled.

It is also important to determine how to measure the community's awareness of the technology. For example, a school or district can evaluate how involved parents are in technology planning and promoting buy-in. When the community is actively engaged, education leaders should notice a positive difference in the technology integration process.

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Create a system for ongoing communication with our community about the use and impact of technology in the district.
- Ensure equitable representation of the entire community when making decisions, inviting input or sharing information. Connect with community partners who can advise us on the use of technology in their fields (literally and figuratively).

## Support policies

Policies, financial plans, accountability measures and incentive structures to support the use of ICT and other digital resources for learning and district school operations

### What is it?

To keep students safe online and guide the appropriate use of technology, education leaders need to develop support policies that provide a framework for effective operation and application. These should address all aspects of technology use across all stakeholder groups, from high-level policies governing web filtering and access to low-level policies around digital citizenship and acceptable use agreements.

### Why is it important?

Policies help streamline the tech integration process by establishing protocols and focusing technology use on achieving specific learning goals. They guide students and teachers toward more effective uses of technology, which in turn will impact the initiative's success.

Moreover, because policies serve as explicit statements of an organization's vision, culture and attitude toward technology, they play a symbolic role as well as a practical one. By adopting the right support policies, education leaders can initiate positive systemic shifts in digital learning and teaching.

### What does it look like?

Effective support policies take into account the needs and the realities of all stakeholders as well as the practical implications of the digital landscape. Technology integration often requires leaders to review and modify existing policies to maximize the benefits of digital tools and resources. When developing support policies for a technology program, consider:

- How existing policies impact practice and culture
- What policies, forms and incentive structures will support critical elements of technology integration, such as digital responsibility, cyberbullying, the acceptable use policy, professional development and web filtering
- Financial plans, accountability measures and inventory management tools and approaches, such as passwords, Google accounts, and installation procedures.
- Methods for gathering feedback and modifying policies and practices to fit the technology implementation vision

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Develop a realistic timeline that makes sure sufficient supports are in place to make implementation successful.
- Keep teachers updated on changes in the system and new resources and materials
- School Board policies/procedures that communicate expected use of technology in local schools to improve learning and the resources provided to make that happen.

## Supportive external context

Policies and initiatives at the national, regional and local levels to support schools and teacher preparation programs in the effective implementation of technology for achieving curriculum and learning technology standards

### What is it?

A supportive external environment provides fertile ground where a technology initiative can take root. Initiatives and policies that are favorable toward technology implementation — at the local, regional or national level — allow schools and teachers to develop the skills they need to apply technology in ways that address curriculum and learning standards.

### Why is it important?

Education reform at any level, from local to national, has a tremendous impact on what gets implemented within a school or district. For example, the Common Core State Standards have activated a new approach to learning in many states. Similarly, a school or district's access to adequate funding for a technology initiative can depend heavily on whether the state's budget reflects education as a priority.

External influences can either support or challenge a technology integration plan, and education leaders need to be aware of how they can leverage these influences to their advantage.

### What does it look like?

Although the external environment lies outside of a school or district's direct control, education leaders can influence change with enough time, energy and effort. The ISTE Standards for Administrators prioritize proactive advocacy through:

- Building awareness of relevant policies and their impact on local schools
- Positioning the school or system to take advantage of future policies or programs in ways that move the technology vision forward

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### Priorities for Meridian

- Build on established relationships with other districts, regional and state agencies to create a network to support this initiative
- Participate in State and National conferences focusing on education and educational technology