
Indicators of Digital Readiness

Indicator	Established Budgeting Process for Digital Learning Formerly “Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) / Budget Team”
Theme	Leadership
Priority Level	P2
Organizational Level	District

Description of the Indicator

Innovative funding for digital learning technologies can improve teaching and learning, as well increase efficiency and cost savings. Every district should have a clear process for budgeting for educational technology tools and resources to ensure equitable access. A digital tools and resources matrix/database should be available to all stakeholders to make effective budgeting decisions.

Why is this indicator important?

An effective budget development and review process is guided by a deep understanding of school finance at the District, State and Federal levels. Funding a digital learning environment requires strategic, short-term and long-term budgeting that leverages the use of learning-enabling technology and resources to optimize student learning. All budgets at the district and the school level are aligned in order to prioritize student learning and cost-efficiency, with consistent funding streams for both recurring and non-recurring costs. The District’s financial model includes the metrics and processes to establish a clear budgeting process for developing and sustaining the digital learning environment.

Indicator Rubric

<p>Insufficient Evidence of Implementation</p> <p>(0 Points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A cross-functional District/school leadership and budget development team has done a review of current District, State, and Federal financial processes ● The team has identified current barriers to budgeting for digital learning
<p>Foundational Stage of Implementation</p> <p>(2 Points)</p>	<p>Evidence is provided for all previous rubric levels, as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigated innovative, proven practice examples, funding structures, and budget scenarios that inform District/school leadership and budget development efforts ● The District/school has created a vision for transformational and sustainable funding for equitable access to educational technology tools and resources
<p>Achieving Success in Implementation</p> <p>(4 Points)</p>	<p>Evidence is provided for all previous rubric levels, as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District/school leaders and budget development teams have defined strategies, processes and metrics for determining the budget process ● A digital tools/resources matrix/database has been created and made available to all stakeholders ● The district has developed sound policies and procedures for the ongoing review and analysis of cost variables for equitable funding of digital learning
<p>Exemplary Success in Implementation</p> <p>(6 Points)</p>	<p>Evidence is provided for all previous rubric levels, as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District/school leaders and budget development teams conduct timely reviews of the analysis of efficiencies, effectiveness, and costs of implementing and sustaining a digital learning environment ● The District/school communicates actual costs, efficiencies, and effectiveness of implementing and sustaining a digital learning environment

Who in the school/district should lead and be involved with this indicator?

- The school/district team may include:
- District/School administrators
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- Technology
- Finance

How to execute the indicator

- Create a cross-functional District/school leadership and budget development team
- Conduct a high-level review of current District, State, and Federal financial processes
- Identify current barriers to budgeting for digital learning
- Create an educational technology tools/resources matrix or database
- Create a vision for transformational and sustainable funding for a high performing and effective digital learning environment
- Develop sound policies and procedures for the ongoing review and analysis of cost variables for equitable funding of digital learning
- Review and analysis of efficiencies, effectiveness, and costs of implementing and sustaining a digital learning environment
- Publicly communicate actual costs, efficiencies, and effectiveness of implementing and sustaining a digital learning environment
- Creation or review of Five-Year Technology Plan

Recommended evidence to submit for successful execution of this action

- District Technology Plan
- Educational Technology Tools/Resources Matrix includes:
 - all educational technology tools/resources available at the school and district level
 - all direct costs associated with digital learning (i.e., acquisition and upgrades of technologies and networks, licenses, and bandwidth)
 - all indirect costs associated with the implementation of digital learning (i.e., costs of implementation, professional learning, technical support, and operations)
- Evidence (meeting minutes, sign-in sheets, shared documents, etc.) of multiple departments' (leadership team, information technology, curriculum, staff development, educational technology, assessment, finance, etc.) involvement in the technology budgeting process
- Evidence (survey results, reports, data analysis, etc.) of integrated system for data collection, analysis, and reporting across all departments in the district, including instructional and the business operations
- Evidence that district has achieved or is working towards cost savings, i.e.:
 - Transition from print to more digital, online resources
 - Online professional learning for educators
 - No snow day make-ups. Students attend from home through the network
 - Online courses offered for credit recovery and/or advancement

- District-run cyber schools, which retains student funding in the district
- Evidence (newsletter, announcements, board minutes, presentations, etc.) of public communication of actual costs, efficiencies, and effectiveness of implementing and sustaining a digital learning environment

Resources schools can use to complete this action successfully

[Resources & Recommendations for School Leaders: Finance](#)

Financial planning for blended learning requires understanding the key cost drivers, identifying strategies to offset some costs, and developing a multi-year plan to support scaling blended learning models to ensure equitable access. The Learning Accelerator

[The Guide to Implementing Digital Learning \(GIDL\)](#)

The Guide to Implementing Digital Learning (GIDL) is a free web-based resource to support school and district leaders as they work to ensure that investments in digital learning spark positive results. GIDL includes six topic areas: planning, professional learning, content and software, broadband, devices and tech support. Each topic's section includes background information, key considerations for implementation, resources and exemplars of digital learning in action.

State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)

[Network Essentials for Superintendents](#)

This resource provides tips for district leaders who are managing network upgrades and helps ensure that district broadband infrastructure is digital learning ready.

Education Superhighway

[Tech Funding Letter](#) This resource, a letter from the U.S Department of Education, is a letter providing examples of how to leverage ESEA and IDEA Funds for Digital Teaching and Learning.

US Department of Education

[Improving EdTech Purchasing](#) "Improving Ed-Tech Purchasing" is a new report from Digital Promise and the Education Industry Association that identifies the key obstacles and potential solutions for the procurement of K-12 personalized learning tools. The Johns Hopkins University Center for Research and Reform in Education surveyed district leaders, educators, and learning technology developers from across the country for this study, with a subset participating in in-depth interviews.

Digital Promise

[K-12 Total Cost of Ownership \(TCO\)](#) These case studies examine four school districts of varying sizes and settings from California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Utah. Users can also request access to the TCO tool to determine their own district's data.

CoSN

[SmartIT: Strategic Technology Planning and Management](#) CoSN's leadership initiative, SmartIT, assists technology leaders who are constantly working to strategically plan and manage IT investments. This strategy paper focuses on demonstrating a return on investment (ROI), saving money through sustainable practices, and connecting and aligning financial leadership.

CoSN

[Transformative Budgeting for Digital Learning](#) *In order to successfully make the shift to digital learning, districts need to provide reliable student and educator access to technological resources. The challenge for many districts is how to make additional devices and infrastructure available in order to fill any technology gaps. Yet with this challenge comes tremendous opportunity.*

New Jersey Department of Education

[Smart Ways Schools Can Save](#) *As state and federal funds continue on their downward spiral, districts are forced to come up with alternative ways to pay for staff, supplies, and programs. Watch out for ideas you may not have considered.*

Tech & Learning Magazine

[\[Webinar\] Show Me the Money: Making the Leap to Digital Learning Without Going Broke](#) *This webinar gives insight into the number one question associated with digital learning: How in the world do I pay for this?*

Alliance for Excellent Education

[The Principal's Guide to School Budgeting \(Second Edition\)](#) *Developing budgets that keep up with economic changes and instructional expectations is a challenge. This bestseller walks school leaders through the budgeting process, focusing on vision and strategic planning as firm guides to resource allocation. and provides a budgeting model that helps align organizational goals with a sound fiscal accountability system.*

Richard D. Sorenson; Lloyd M. Goldsmith

[Digital Instructional Materials: Acquisition Policies for States](#) *The Digital Instructional Materials Acquisition Policies for States (DMAPS) is an online database providing state and territory policies and practices related to the acquisition of digital instructional materials in K12 education. Resource includes policies, procurement, funding, and digital learning resources.*

State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)

[Project RED Cost Comparison Tool](#) *The Cost Comparison Tool provides an analysis of the specific technology expenses related to implementing education technology. Implementation costs for student to device ratios of 3:1 and 1:1 are compared.*

One-to-One Institute/Project RED

[Project RED Cost Savings Calculator](#) *Project RED provides a free Cost Savings Calculator that districts can use to estimate the saving they can redeploy by undergoing a full digital conversion. The calculator identifies 14 categories of potential savings and provides gross savings and savings per student, based on the district's financial metrics.*

One-to-One Institute/Project RED

[Innovative Financial Solutions](#) *One of the greatest challenges when implementing a 1:1 computing program is finding the funds to sustain the program over the long-term. The research is clear that these programs are not sustainable unless the district allocates ongoing operating funds to the project. Districts can use OTO's Dynamic*

Technology Planning Program (DTPP) to analyze current district expenditures and redeploy assets to fund their education technology program.

One-to-One Institute

[Financing to Scale Blended Learning](#) Districts looking to implement blended learning often ask, “What does it cost?” We like to take a step back and frame the discussion around “What does it cost to scale?” This question is universally important, but to provide a comprehensive answer, it’s necessary to explore why smart financing is key to scaling blended learning.

The Learning Accelerator (TLA)

Certified Schools Exemplars: See links for school evidence

No certified schools are available at this time. Check back next year!