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**TEACHER COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT**

This toolkit describes the role of teachers in effectively integrating technology for learning to help ensure that students are best prepared for college and careers. Teachers are at the center of student learning and maximizing digital learning opportunities is only possible when teachers have the support and access to the tools necessary to transform learning experiences in the digital age. This toolkit includes a communications packet with sample documents that are customizable for you to use as you support teachers.

**LEARNING IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

Technology is an essential component of learning today. With digital applications, tools and resources, students can create content, interact with experts, collaborate with peers and participate in simulation activities. Personalized experiences put students at the center of learning and empowers students to take control of their own learning through flexibility and choice. The [Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)](https://www.ed.gov/essa) acknowledges technology’s role in revolutionizing learning and includes definitions for digital learning and blended learning, and references technology throughout the legislation. In the [Non-Regulatory Guidance Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essassaegrantguid10212016.pdf) publication provides an overview of activities LEAs may consider as they prepare for implementation of the effective use of technology (ESEA Section 4109). Specific activities include: supporting high-quality professional development for educators, school leaders, and administrators to personalize learning and improve academic achievement; building technological capacity and infrastructure; carrying out innovative blended learning projects; providing students in rural, remote, and underserved areas with the resources to benefit from high-quality digital learning opportunities; and delivering specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula using technology, including digital learning technologies. Similarly, the [National Education Technology Plan (NETP)](https://tech.ed.gov/files/2017/01/NETP17.pdf) calls for a “revolutionary transformation rather than evolutionary tinkering” in education and recognizes that we must leverage technology to provide engaging and powerful learning experiences for all students. Technology offers all students – urban, rural, low-income, ESL, special needs, high achieving – the opportunity to engage in dynamic learning activities. Education leaders at the federal, state, and local levels have the opportunity to provide leadership to ensure that all students have personalized, engaging learning experiences.

**ROLE TO SUPPORT LEARNING IN A DIGITAL AGE**

Teachers are the linchpin to implementing effective learning environments. Many teacher leaders have embraced technology tools and resources in the classroom similar to how they have adopted these tools in their personal lives and professional learning opportunities. These teachers recognize that leveraging technology tools and resources is essential for all careers from clerks to mechanics to artists to engineers to physicians – all professions are expected to understand and implement technology tools and resources. As teachers transition to digital learning, there is a need to re-establish classroom routines, change lesson planning and student activities and shift expectations to best meet the needs of all students.

**KEY AREAS FOR TEACHERS**

This section highlights some of the key areas of interest that teachers may have as they implement digital learning in their schools. Concerns include timely and consistent professional learning, coaching to effectively utilize digital instructional materials and resources; the ability to select quality instructional materials from a vast array of choices; and exploring methods for teaching digital citizenship.

**Professional Learning**

**What resources can help teachers implement digital learning in their classrooms?**

In addition to the benefits of having opportunities to explore topics, locations and activities beyond a school campus via virtual and online tools, teaching and learning in the digital age includes new challenges including digital citizenship, equity of access and the interoperability of tools. It is imperative to provide professional learning opportunities for navigating shifts in learning models, reviewing digital content, programs and applications, as well as ongoing, sustained onsite support for teachers. With effective professional learning strategies, educators can choose the digital instructional materials and technology tools most appropriate for their instructional practices that best meet the needs of students. In addition to district and school resources, teachers have access to many different professional learning organizations.

The [Office of Education Technology (OET)](https://tech.ed.gov/) recognizes the power technology offers for teachers to become more collaborative and extend learning beyond the classroom. Educators can create learning communities composed of students; fellow educators in schools, museums, libraries, and after-school programs; experts in various disciplines around the world; members of community organizations; and families. This enhanced collaboration, enabled by technology offers access to instructional materials as well as the resources and tools to create, manage, and assess their quality and usefulness.

OET encourages educators to:

* Foster online and connected learning as part of the day-to-day activities.
* Integrate online and connected learning with ongoing face-to-face and formal professional learning, aligned with improvement goals.
* Connect with other networks and online communities of practice nationally and globally.

The [American Federation of Teachers (AFT)](http://www.aft.org/) represents pre-K through 12th grade teachers, amongst other educational groups. AFT supports a well-prepared and supported school staff and provides a variety of resources for teacher professional learning.

*Continuous, high-quality professional development is essential to the nation’s goal of high standards of learning for every child” - AFT*

The [International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)](http://www.iste.org/) offers teachers professional learning communities and an array of resources. In particular, the [ISTE Standards](http://www.iste.org/standards/standards) provide a framework for learning, teaching and leading with technology. The standards are designed to help teachers make decisions about curriculum and instruction, as well as how to transform pedagogy with technology.

 *Ultimately, it’s not about the technology at all. It’s about changing the way learning and teaching take place. - ISTE*

**Learn more about professional learning**

[American Federation of Teachers (AFT)](http://www.aft.org/)

[From Print to Digital Toolkit](http://qualitycontent.setda.org/implementation/#professional-learning-strategies)

[International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)](http://www.iste.org/)

[Professional Learning Toolkit](https://tech.ed.gov/futureready/professional-learning/)

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**Instructional Materials**

**With so many digital instructional materials and resources on the internet, how do teachers select quality materials?**

Districts and schools will often have a list of vetted or approved digital instructional materials that teachers can access. In addition to those vetted materials, teachers may select other instructional materials for learning. When selecting materials, teachers should consider digital tools and resources that focus on the active use of technology that enables learning through creation, production and problem solving. Passive uses of technology such as apps that mimic worksheets or flashcards aren’t the best choices for learning. Digital resources can be purchased, free, or may be open educational resources (OER) with open licenses to provide the opportunity to modify and remix the content.

**Learn more about selecting instructional materials**

[From Print to Digital: Guide to Quality Instructional Materials](http://qualitycontent.setda.org/selection/)

[National Repositories](http://qualitycontent.setda.org/selection/%22%20%5Cl%20%22select-materials)

[State Vetted Digital Learning Repositories](http://dmaps.setda.org/?fwp_dlr=digital-learning-resources-bool.)

[Vetted Apps for Students by Grade Level](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/guide/best-first-kids-apps)

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**Digital Citizenship**

**How can teachers help ensure that students use digital tools safely and responsibly?**

Effective digital citizenship helps create a positive school culture that supports the safe and responsible use of digital tools and resources. Information literacy–the ability to find, evaluate, interpret, and apply information is an important component of teaching in the digital age. Teachers can also help navigate cyberbullying, internet safety, and other digital concerns with their students. Librarians are a valuable resource for teachers to help students learn to use technology safely and responsibly.

**Learn more about digital citizenship**

Common Sense Education [Cyberbullying](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying) and [Digital Footprint](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/connecting-families/digital-footprints-photos)

[U.S Department of Health and Human Services Cyberbullying](https://www.stopbullying.gov/)

**TRANSFORMING DIGITAL LEARNING**

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[**Reimagining Classrooms: Teachers as Learners and Students as Leaders**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6vVXmwYvgs) Kayla Delzer speaks about her mission to revitalize learning and the classroom environment. Kayla explains how to release the power in the classroom by giving students ownership of their learning and making it relevant to them

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**ISTE Standards: Preparing students for the digital age**

This [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Beb45Q4dsig) provides an overview of how and why to implement ISTE Standards to support digital learning.

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**[Teachers Create What They Experience](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcDpDPwRxvU&feature=youtu.be)**

Create a shared vision of teaching and learning. Using learning as a process and not an event. Allow authentic learning through practice, trial, and authentic activities.

**COMMUNICATION PACKET**

The communication packet includes customizable templates. Partners can add logos,

examples or other resources to help engage stakeholders and support this topic. Users are encouraged to leverage these resources to support your work in engaging teachers by providing them with the resources needed to create an ecosystem of support and learning inside and outside of school walls.

* Newsletter/website snapshot
* Presentation slides to support conversations with stakeholders
* Social media promotion examples
* Press outreach
* Outreach email