



## **NATIONAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE'S TOOLKIT 2005 eLEARNING LEADERSHIP & POLICIES**

### **Step Four: Overcoming the Barriers**

As state leaders begin to initiate and implement eLearning programs within states and districts, new and often unforeseen challenges arise. One subgroup focused their time on identifying these potential challenges and thinking through possible ways for state leaders to overcome such obstacles. These potential barriers fall into an array of different areas including, but not limited to: funding, leadership, effectively making the case, quality and legal issues surrounding eLearning programs and models.

#### **Barrier Identification Matrix: The Building Blocks of a State E-Learning Action Plan**

These conditions affecting eLearning programs vary from state to state, as do the state governing structures and entities with authority over education, generally, and eLearning issues specifically. Therefore, with an awareness of this, the group developed this interactive action planning tool to be used by state leaders across states to apply issues specific to their own situation and, through a four-step process, identify the potential options that exist within their respective states to overcome these challenges.

This interactive tool has been developed to assist state leaders as well as a variety of stakeholders identifying the challenges in implementing eLearning by leading the stakeholder to:

1. Determine whether specific conditions are favorable or unfavorable for implementing eLearning;
2. If the conditions are judged unfavorable, to precisely define *why* the conditions are unfavorable;
3. Specifically articulate one or more solutions to the unfavorable existing practice; and
4. Identify the authority able to enact the desired solution.

The user-entered text then serves as an action plan as it identifies specific problems, desirable solutions, and authorities that must be involved in implementing the solution. Examples of unfavorable conditions with accompanying possible solutions and authorities are included within the matrix.

**Directions:** In using this action plan matrix, if you answer “yes” to a question, simply move on; if you answer “no,” fill in the subsequent cells with information specific to your state.

Policy	Yes	No	If “no,” clearly explain the problem	Outline a solution	Identify the authority	Examples
EXAMPLE: Does state eLearning policy comply with Federal policy regarding issues such as choice, safe schools, supplementary services, or access to highly qualified faculty?		X	Out-of-state eLearning providers have not passed our state’s teacher assessment and therefore are not “highly qualified” by our state’s definition.	Recognize teaching credentials earned in other jurisdictions.	The State Board of Education could recognize certification earned by eLearning providers under other jurisdictions.	35 states have approved processes to recognize National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.
Does state eLearning policy comply with Federal policy regarding issues such as choice, safe schools, supplementary services, or access to highly qualified faculty?						
Are the state’s existing practices for defining school districts supportive of eLearning?						
Do current policies and regulations facilitate the growth and development of eLearning programs?						
Is the state requirement for seat time still appropriate?						

Policy	Yes	No	If “no,” clearly explain the problem	Outline a solution	Identify the authority	Examples
Is the student/teacher ratio appropriate for and supportive of effective teaching and learning?						
Is there appropriate administrative oversight of teaching and learning activities?						
Does the existing state data system and authority support eLearning demand for data driven decision-making?						
Is the existing policy and development of new policies broad enough to accommodate different models of eLearning?						
Do state eLearning policies comply with Federal policies such as choice, safe schools, supplementary services, or access to highly qualified faculty?						

Quality	Yes	No	If “no,” clearly explain the problem	Outline a solution	Identify the authority	Examples
EXAMPLE: Are the existing licensure and certification requirements appropriate for eLearning teachers?		X	Current regulations do not require the completion of technology courses for licensure.	Identify content and number of courses and how they could be delivered.	The State Board of Education establishes licensure requirements; the legislature may require the State Board to take specific actions	Idaho requires a technology certificate for all certified teachers.
Are the existing licensure and certification requirements appropriate for eLearning teachers?						
Does the eLearning model meet the needs of different learners, including those with special needs?						
Are the existing licensure and certification requirements appropriate for eLearning teachers?						
Does professional development adequately prepare faculty and staff for their eLearning responsibilities?						
Is the accreditation of schools affected by eLearning?						
Is there adequate technical support with qualified staff and appropriate materials?						
Is the authentic presentation of student work verifiable?						
Is there an adequate monitoring system for the supervision of student work?						

Quality	Yes	No	If “no,” clearly explain the problem	Outline a solution	Identify the authority	Examples
Is there effective monitoring of the quality of instruction?						

Making the Case	Yes	No	If “no,” clearly explain the problem	Outline a solution	Identify the authority	Examples
EXAMPLE: Is there community acceptance that eLearning options assist students in learning information technology and distance learning skills?		X	Information about the proven relationships between eLearning and IT skills has not been provided to the general public.	Data about the progress demonstrated by our eLearning students with regard to information technology knowledge needs to be shared with the general public in an appropriate and effective format.	The public relations office or team should lead this effort in finding ways to demonstrate the benefits and utility of eLearning to the general public.	In one Virginia county, the school district loaned computers to parents of children participating in eLearning courses so that could witness for themselves the ways in which eLearning participation improves general technology skills.
Is there community acceptance that eLearning options assist students in learning information technology and distance learning skills?						
Is there resistance to a new system of delivering instruction?						
Are there social repercussions associated with eLearning opportunities?						
Do eLearning options assist students in acquiring information technology (IT) and distance learning skills?						
Is eLearning a cost effective benefit to the community?						
Have key political figures who are likely to support sustainable eLearning programs been adequately partnered with?						

Leadership	Yes	No	If “no,” clearly explain the problem	Outline a solution	Identify the authority	Examples
EXAMPLE: Have education and policy leaders taken the necessary steps to ensure access to eLearning programs?		X	Education and policy leaders have accepted that without additional funding, some children will not be provided with the technology tools needed to participate in eLearning opportunities.	The State Legislature could fully fund the school technology initiative.	State Legislature	Minnesota law allows cyberstudents access to hardware and software in the school districts where they reside.
Have education and policy leaders taken the necessary steps to ensure access to eLearning programs?						
Is it evident that the current leadership is knowledgeable about eLearning?						
Have education and policy leaders taken the necessary steps to ensure access to eLearning programs?						
Is the leadership committed to using NCLB as an incentive to increasing the eLearning options?						

Funding	Yes	No	If “no,” clearly explain the problem	Outline a solution	Identify the authority	Examples
EXAMPLE: Do federal, state, and private grant procedures enable eLearning schools to participate equitably?		X	Some state and federal grant programs require data that are not accessible to all eLearning providers within our state.	Grant criteria need to reflect and accommodate the needs and circumstances of the eLearning community.	State grant program offices can be directly approached about this issue; federal and private grant programs can be asked to consider this need.	The State Departments of Education who administers state grants are flexible in defining the nature of “school.”
Do federal, state, and private grant procedures enable eLearning schools to participate equitably?						
Are current funding opportunities suited to support eLearning?						
Is there adequate funding available at the state level to support eLearning?						
Do federal, state, and private granting agencies support equitable eLearning opportunities?						

Legal	Yes	No	If “no,” clearly explain the problem	Outline a solution	Identify the authority	Examples
EXAMPLE: Is your eLearning program compliant with 504 and IDEA education laws?		X	Special needs students who do not physically attend a school in a school district require services that are non-academic.	Mobile therapists or local special education specialists provide in-home support to special needs students.	A cyber charter school or local school district may be the entity responsible to provide services.	The Idaho Virtual Academy, a K12 cyber charter school, provides special education services to special needs students who “attend” their charter school.
Is your eLearning program compliant with 504 and IDEA education laws?						
Is there freedom to implement public/private partnerships in eLearning?						
Is copyright law adhered to when implementing eLearning solutions?						
Does content and delivery of educational services meet 508 compliancy?						
Is your program compliant with 504 and IDEA laws?						
Do state labor practices facilitate the employment of highly qualified faculty and staff?						
Are applicable Internet safety issues and policies, such as Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), met when implementing programs?						