



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE'S TOOLKIT 2005 INFRASTRUCTURE & TECHNOLOGY

Chapter Summary

Objectives

- To develop tools to assist state education technology leaders in creating and/or updating a statewide network; and
- To develop a common vision of a statewide network that focuses on how infrastructure and technology relates to eLearning and learning as a whole.

Key Questions

- What are the driving forces for eLearning within your state?
- What are some of the models of statewide networks?
- What factors are important to consider when building or updating a statewide network?
 - ◆ What are the key technology components?
 - ◆ What are the top infrastructure policy issues?
 - ◆ Who are the possible partners in such statewide networks?

NLI Work Group Process

Prior to the 2004 National Leadership Institute (NLI), members of the Infrastructure and Technology (IT) Work Group participated in pre-conference planning calls to discuss the infrastructure and technology issues that states are currently facing. Based upon these planning calls, the IT Work Group identified a set of initial resources and developed a list of five guiding questions and six proposed deliverables. Upon arriving at the NLI, the Work Group had a clear idea of the issues that were going to be discussed at the conference.

Members of the group started their discussions by acknowledging that issues surrounding infrastructure and technology of statewide networks are broad and that states are at very different points in terms of expertise, implementation, leadership, and legislative policies. As a result, the group decided to focus on the strategies, policies and procedures related to building a state wide network, and not on the specific technologies necessary such as computers, software and bandwidth.

Initial discussions focused on identifying the driving forces for eLearning within the states. The answers to this question provides guidance on whether a state may be in a position to implement a statewide network to deliver content and connectivity to school districts and individual schools. The Work Group members compiled this list and shared it with the Leadership and Policies Work Group as they began to develop policy and leadership tools around each driving factor.

As a result of group discussions about these driving forces, the Work Group members were unanimous in their opinion that each state must develop a strong vision of a statewide network within each state. The Work Group members decided to take their own advice and craft a vision for state directors to consider when building or updating a network. The Work Group's vision focuses on how infrastructure and technology relates to both eLearning and student learning as a whole.

The IT Work Group members identified current models of statewide networks and decided to develop a survey to collect information that would allow them to delve more deeply into the strategies, policies and infrastructure in the model states of Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Ohio, Utah and Washington.

The Work Group members discussed what issues are important to consider when building a statewide network. Discussions included components, content, policies, partnerships, and funding issues. Based upon these broad discussions, the Work Group members divided into four subgroups to address the following topics:

- Models of statewide networks,
- Technology components to consider for a statewide network,

- Policy issues around state infrastructure,
- Partnership needs and challenges.

The goal of each subgroup was to develop a tool to assist state educational technology directors in building or updating a statewide network. Members of the Work Group rotated through all of the subgroups to provide input and insight for that particular area. Throughout this process, the subgroups reported to the entire group on their progress, solicited questions and comments from each member, and refined the output.

SETDA Tools Developed to Assist States

The IT Work Group developed the following tools to assist states in creating or updating a statewide network:

- **Vision for a Statewide Network:** A collaborative vision statement of a statewide network that focuses on the purpose of a network and its relationship to learning.
- **Various Models of Statewide Networks:** A survey to collect information from select states about their network infrastructure.
- **Components to Consider for a Statewide Network:** A matrix of technology components listing the key considerations, benefits, and justification for each component by service and function.
- **Key Infrastructure Policy Questions:** A matrix of policy questions and links to resources.
- **Partnership Talking Points:** A list of talking points, with both questions and answers that may be used as a guide during conversations with various stakeholder groups.

Next Steps

- Expand the survey of statewide educational networks to collect data from all states.