

Groups issue new technology standards for school administrators

By Elizabeth B. Guerard, Associate Editor, eSchool News

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A collaborative team of national school leaders assembled by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has released a first-of-its-kind set of standards defining what K-12 school administrators should know about, and be able to do with, technology.

The first draft of the Technology Standards for School Administrators (TSSA), issued March 2, is intended to reflect a national consensus on the role school administrators should play in ensuring the effective use of technology in their schools.

The draft provides a base set of standards, appropriate for all K-12 administrators, in six categories: leadership and vision; learning and teaching; productivity and professional practice; support, management, and operations; assessment and evaluation; and social, legal, and ethical issues.

Each category includes a list of specific performance indicators; for example, under "leadership and vision," school administrators should be able to use data to drive their decision-making.

TSSA's creators hope to follow the success of ISTE's year-old National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for students and teachers. These standards were developed by a group of educators to help integrate technology at the classroom level.

The TSSA standards take the focus off the classroom and place it on the school as a whole. That's important, the standards' creators say, because school- and district-wide leadership is needed to ensure the success of technology programs.

The standards mark a significant step toward "breaking down the barriers that prevent school administrators from taking the most active and educated role possible in evaluating school technology policies and supporting efforts of their teachers," said Don Knezek, project director of TSSA and co-director of ISTE's NETS project.

Members of the TSSA Collaborative, which developed the draft, include the National School Boards Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Consortium for School Networking, North Central Regional Technology Consortium, Southern Regional Education Board, Kentucky Department of Education, Mississippi Department of Education, Principals' Executive Program at the University of North Carolina, and Western Michigan University College of Education.

"We tried to hit the right organizations and people who'd been very active in the technology standards movement, and we're really concentrated on getting feedback from K-12 administrators," said Knezek.

The group used wireless computing to share changes on the document instantly and work collaboratively, he added.

The draft is available for public comment until June 30. Using feedback from educators and policy makers, the TSSA Collaborative will refine its standards and release them again formally after October 1.

Ultimately, the group intends to create additional sets of role-specific standards for superintendents and cabinet-level leaders, building-level leaders, and district-level leaders for curriculum and special programs.

"TSSA is really intended to inform a variety of standards. By creating these, we wanted to seed a lot of other standards efforts," said Knezek.

For more information about TSSA, NETS, and other ISTE projects, call (541) 302-0952.

TECH STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

The Technology Standards for School Administrators "define neither the minimum nor maximum level of knowledge and skills required of a leader, and are neither a comprehensive laundry list nor a guaranteed recipe for effective technology leadership," according to ISTE.

Instead, these standards "represent a national consensus among educational stakeholders of what best indicates effective school leadership for comprehensive and effective use of technology in schools."

Leadership and vision

- * Facilitate the development of a shared vision for technology use and communicate this vision widely among stakeholders.
- * Develop, implement, and monitor a dynamic, long-range, and systemic technology plan that supports the vision.
- * Maintain cohesion and momentum within the school community to reach the vision.
- * Foster and nurture a culture of responsible risk-taking that promotes continuous innovation in technology.
- * Use data to drive leadership decisions.
- * Advocate for research-based best practices in all uses of technology.

Learning and teaching

- * Identify, use, and evaluate appropriate technologies to enhance and support curriculum and instruction.
- * Facilitate and support collaborative, technology-enriched learning environments that encourage innovation.
- * Provide for the use of technology to meet the individual needs of learners in a student-centered environment.
- * Facilitate the use of technologies to guide and support instructional methods that promote higher-level thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.
- * Assure that quality professional development opportunities exist for learning and teaching with technology.

Productivity and professional practice

- * Use technology to facilitate change for organizational improvement.
- * Model the routine, intentional, and effective use of technology.
- * Use technology resources to engage in sustained, job-related professional development.
- * Employ technology for communication and collaboration among peers, staff, parents, and the larger community.

Support, management, and operations

- * Develop, implement, and monitor policies and guidelines to ensure compatibility of technologies.
- * Allocate financial and human resources to ensure full implementation of the technology plan.
- * Integrate strategic plans, technology plans, other improvement plans, and policies to align efforts and leverage resources.
- * Design policies and procedures to drive continuous system improvements and to support technology replacement cycles.

Assessment and evaluation

- * Use technology to collect and analyze data, interpret results, and communicate findings to improve instructional practice and student learning.
- * Assess staff knowledge, skills, and performance in using technology, and use results to facilitate quality professional development and inform personnel decisions.
- * Use technology to assess and evaluate managerial and operational systems.
- * Using multiple methods, assess and evaluate appropriate uses of technology resources for learning, communication, and productivity.

Social, legal, and ethical issues

- * Ensure equity of access to technology resources that empower all learners.

- * Identify, communicate, model, and enforce social, legal, and ethical practices related to technology use.
 - * Promote and enforce security and online safety related to the use of technology.
 - * Promote and enforce environmentally safe and healthy practices in the use of technology.
- This material was originally developed as a project of the Technology Standards for School Administrators Collaborative.

Links:

Technology Standards for School Administrators
<http://cnets.iste.org/tssa>

International Society for Technology in Education
<http://www.iste.org>

National School Boards Association
<http://www.nsba.org>

National Association of Elementary School Principals
<http://www.naesp.org>

National Association of Secondary School Principals
<http://www.principals.org>

Consortium for School Networking
<http://www.cosn.org>

North Central Regional Technology Consortium
<http://www.ncrel.org>

Southern Regional Educational Board
<http://www.sreb.org>

Kentucky Department of Education
<http://www.kde.state.ky.us>

Mississippi Department of Education
<http://www.mdek12.state.ms.us>

University of North Carolina Principal's Executive Program
<http://www.ga.unc.edu/pep>

Western Michigan University College of Education
<http://www.wmich.edu/coe>