

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR STATES ADAPTING THE ISTE STANDARDS



## Why are states adopting, adapting, or endorsing the ISTE Standards?

In the past decade, policymakers have invested heavily into devices and infrastructure with a goal to close the digital divide. However, research shows that many educators do not yet have the skills, knowledge, and competencies to use this technology for effective classroom instruction. As a first step to remedy this gap, state leaders can convene diverse stakeholders and establish a shared vision and language around what effective digital teaching and learning looks like.

Many states are embracing this opportunity by adopting, adapting, or endorsing the newest iteration of the [ISTE Standards](#).<sup>1</sup> As of February 2020, eighteen states have taken this critical step — including **Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming**. All 50 states have used past iterations of the ISTE Standards in an official capacity.

## What are some key considerations as states adapt the language of the ISTE Standards?

### *Localization for Buy-In*

As states plan to use the ISTE Standards, it may be desirable to adapt some of the language used in the standards to flexibility reflect state goals and priorities. ISTE welcomes modifications that align with state-specific nomenclature and maintain the spirit and intent of the ISTE Standards.

For example, as state leaders adapt the language of the ISTE Standards, they can collaborate with diverse stakeholders to generate a title that resonates with educators and communicates that the standards are both foundational and relevant to classroom practice. This process helps ensure that educators will continuously reference the standards as a reliable resource. State leaders can also generate a title that clearly conveys that the standards are meant to support teaching and learning in a variety of content areas, as opposed to strictly computer science or CTE coursework.

In some cases, it may help to generate a title that communicates how a range of practices can be used to meet the standards, thereby avoiding sentiments of a top-down mandate. For example, some states have navigated this issue by foregoing the term “standards” altogether and using the term “competencies” or “guide.” Below are examples of how some states have adapted the title of the ISTE Standards for Students.

State	Title
Alaska	Alaska Digital Literacy Standards
Idaho	Idaho Information and Communication Technology Standards
Michigan	Michigan Integrated Technology Competencies for Students (MITECS)
Mississippi	Mississippi Statewide Educational Technology Guide
Nevada	Nevada Academic Content Standards for Computer Science and Integrated Technology
Washington	Washington Educational Technology Learning Standards
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Standards for Information and Technology Literacy

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iste.org/standards>

## Vision for Practice

For the adapted ISTE Standards to positively impact teaching and learning, the language must provide a clear vision for practice. From multiple conversations with classroom educators and district leaders, ISTE learned that a successful implementation of the ISTE Standards involves alignment to ongoing initiatives and integration with other content standards. The ISTE Standards cannot be perceived as “one more item” on educators’ and district leaders’ list of to-dos.

### Alignment of ISTE Standards with Ongoing Initiatives

- **Michigan** is a #GoOpen state, which aims to increase access to high-quality open educational resources (OER). MITECS — the state’s adapted version of the ISTE Standards — provides a framework by which the Michigan’s [OER hub](#)<sup>2</sup> are organized, providing an on-ramp that educators can use to incorporate MITECS into practice.
- In 2017, **Connecticut** became the first state to endorse the ISTE Standards for Educators. The language of the standards provided a framework by which the state’s [commission on educational technology](#)<sup>3</sup> could execute its plans to improve teacher preparation programs and professional learning opportunities.

### Integration of ISTE Standards with Content & Performance Standards

- The **Wyoming** Department of Education conducted a [crosswalk](#)<sup>4</sup> of its 2018 Mathematics Content and Performance Standards with the ISTE Standards for Students. Each grade-level standard is clearly marked with the corresponding ISTE Standard reference number and letter.
- **Washington** adapted the ISTE Standards for Students into its own [Educational Technology Learning Standards](#).<sup>5</sup> Each element of these technology standards is cross-referenced with the state’s own academic content standards.

To help integration of the ISTE Standards with states’ content standards, ISTE provides an [age band articulation](#)<sup>6</sup> resource, modifying the standards for distinct age groups.

## Elaboration of Elements

The final consideration for state leaders as they adapt the language of the ISTE Standards is identifying which elements of the standards are state priorities and thus should be explored more deeply. In identifying elements well-suited for elaboration, states can consider input from diverse stakeholders and refer to current research on specific student skills — such as those outlined in ISTE’s [Redefining Learning in a Technology-Driven World](#)<sup>7</sup> report.

**North Dakota** recognizes that a majority of their stakeholders, including parents, want students to learn about computer science concepts. The state also recognizes that digital citizenship and computational thinking are directly tied to computer science. Therefore, the [North Dakota Computer Science and Cybersecurity Standards](#)<sup>8</sup>, expands on the digital citizen and computational thinker strands of the ISTE Standards to include other related skills that students must develop (e.g. “debate laws and regulations that impact the development and use of software” or “demonstrate ways a given algorithm applies to problems across disciplines and explain the benefits and drawbacks of choices made”).

## About ISTE

The International Society for Technology in Education is a nonprofit organization that works with the education community to accelerate the use of technology to solve tough problems and inspire innovation. Our worldwide network believes in the potential technology holds to transform teaching and learning. ISTE inspires the creation of solutions and connections that improve opportunities for all learners by delivering: practical courses and guidance, the ISTE Certification for Educators, virtual networks, thought-provoking events and the ISTE Standards, a framework for rethinking education and creating innovative learning environments. The ISTE Annual Conference & Expo is one of the world’s most influential edtech events, attracting over 20,000 participants each year. States with additional questions or seeking additional guidance can reach out to ISTE anytime for free assistance at [standards@iste.org](mailto:standards@iste.org).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://goopenmichigan.org/hubs/mitecs>

<sup>3</sup> [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DAS/CTEdTech/publications/2018/2018\\_CET\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DAS/CTEdTech/publications/2018/2018_CET_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://edu.wyoming.gov/downloads/standards/2018/Math-Standards.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/edtech/standards/pubdocs/k-12-edtech-standards-complete-2018.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://bit.ly/ISTEAgeBand>

<sup>7</sup> <http://bit.ly/ISTEStandardsReport>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/Academic%20Support/CSCS2019.pdf>