

IMPROVING STUDENT OUTCOMES THROUGH K-12 EDTECH POLICY



How state education leaders can lead on effective edtech use to prepare tomorrow's workforce

Over the last decade, state education leaders have poured millions of dollars into developing infrastructure and purchasing devices for K-12 classrooms in hopes of keeping pace with a world that is being rapidly transformed by technology. Yet, many of these efforts have fallen short of their initial aspirations to personalize learning experiences and improve student outcomes. As the leading organization supporting educators in the effective use of technology, ISTE has identified three core policies that state leaders can pursue to support such efforts. ISTE can serve as a resource to help state leaders navigate these recommendations within their unique policy environments.

Policy 1: Adopt, adapt or endorse the ISTE Standards.

State leaders can convene a diverse group of edtech experts and district stakeholders — such as students, teachers, administrators and parents — to establish a shared vision around what effective digital teaching and learning should look like. Adopting, adapting or endorsing the **ISTE Standards**¹ not only helps guide states in developing this shared vision, but also ensures that state edtech initiatives are grounded in a research-based framework.

ISTE's K-12 edtech policy recommendations

1. Adopt, adapt or endorse the ISTE Standards.
2. Design state credentialing systems to build pre- and in-service educators' capacities to use technology effectively.
3. Advocate for budgets that adequately support edtech priorities, particularly educator capacity building efforts.

Digital citizenship is an example of a critical student skill found in the ISTE Standards. As students live, learn and work in an interconnected digital world, they must demonstrate and model positive, safe, legal and ethical behaviors. State leaders can align their definitions of digital citizenship to the five core competencies identified by ISTE's **DigCitCommit**² initiative — inclusive, informed, engaged, balanced and alert.

ISTE Standards adoption exemplars

Eighteen states — Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming — have adopted, adapted or endorsed the newest iteration of the ISTE Standards as a first step to reimagine what education enriched by technology can look like. All 50 states have used past iterations of the ISTE Standards in an official capacity. With the ISTE Standards in place, **Vermont**³ students are already demonstrating their capabilities as creative design thinkers.

Policy 2: Design state credentialing systems to build pre- and in-service educators' capacities to use technology effectively.

Modernizing a state's education system starts with modernizing the teacher workforce. Many investments in edtech have fallen short because they were not matched by similar investments in teacher development and training. State education leaders can reimagine what qualifications they are seeking from teachers by aligning the state's educator certification and re-licensure policies with competencies outlined in the ISTE Standards.

¹ <https://www.iste.org/standards>

² <https://digcitcommit.org/>

³ <https://www.iste.org/explore/Press-Releases/Vermont-State-Board-of-Education-Adopts-Updated-ISTE-Standards-for-Students>

State boards and education agencies can establish incentivized pathways for in-service teachers to earn a state-recognized edtech endorsement. ISTE created its **ISTE Certification program**⁴ so states can offer its educators an opportunity to understand how to best leverage edtech in the classroom. The program is competency-based and device-neutral, and content is applicable across all subject areas and grade levels.

Finally, the **ISTE Higher Education Recognition program**⁵ evaluates whether a particular teacher preparation program demonstrates alignment to the ISTE Standards. Various Master of Educational Technology programs, such as those at California State University Fullerton, Johns Hopkins University and the American College of Education have undergone this evaluation, earning their marks as ISTE-recognized higher education programs that prepare pre-service educators to use technology effectively.

Educator capacity development exemplars

Utah⁶ incentivizes educators to build their proficiency in the effective use of edtech by providing a state endorsement tied to salary increases. The state also permits educators to meet the requirements for this endorsement by earning an ISTE Certification.

Wisconsin⁷ is training 200 library media specialists in the Future Ready Librarianship Framework through a partnership with ISTE, re-developing school libraries into hubs of innovative learning opportunities.

Connecticut⁸ will partner with Fairfield University and several regional education service agencies to provide the ISTE Certification program to state educators. Fairfield University has also earned the ISTE Higher Education Recognition.

Policy 3: Advocate for budgets that adequately support edtech priorities, particularly educator capacity building efforts.

State education agencies can collaborate with board members, state legislators and governors to influence the budget process around strategic deployment of federal, state and local funds, with a focus on helping educators build their capacity to use technology in the classroom. ISTE assists state leaders to develop appropriate allocation strategies that support the needs of their district stakeholders. ISTE's policy guide, **Using ESSA to Fund Edtech**⁹, is an ideal starter resource on best ways to leverage ESSA Title IV-A funds.

State edtech funding exemplars

Utah¹⁰, with the establishment of its Digital Teaching and Learning Grant, is a model for best practices when it comes to the strategic use of state funds. Among other uses, grant dollars can be used by districts to fund teacher participation in the state's Education Technology Endorsement Program.

Wyoming¹¹ will leverage ESSA Title IV-A funds to enroll 100 educators in the ISTE Certification program. The state's Professional Teaching Standards Board voted to qualify ISTE-certified educators for the state's instructional technology endorsement.

⁴ <https://www.iste.org/learn/iste-certification>

⁵ <https://www.iste.org/learn/highered-recognition>

⁶ <https://www.uen.org/development/etep/>

⁷ <https://dpi.wi.gov/wilibrariesforeveryone/exciting-opportunity-school-librarians>

⁸ https://www.ct.gov/ctedtech/lib/ctedtech/2018_CET_Annual_Report.pdf

⁹ <http://bit.ly/ISTETitleIVA>

¹⁰ <https://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/digital>

¹¹ <https://edu.wyoming.gov/blog/2019/11/06/wde-offers-support-for-teachers-to-lead-digital-age-classrooms-inbox/>