2024 – 28 State Educational Technology Plan

Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology

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Executive Summary

About

The Commission for Educational Technology is empowered by the General Assembly to envision, coordinate, and oversee the successful integration of technology in Connecticut's schools, libraries, colleges and universities. As part of its responsibilities as the state's principal educational technology adviser, it designs and stewards the State Educational Technology Goals and Plan that helps ensure equity of access to technology-based learning solutions.

Process

The 2024 – 28 State Plan reflects the collective input and guidance of the Commission's 24 members, as well as the priorities of their appointing agencies and organizations. The 20+ subject-matter experts who serve on the Commission's Advisory Councils also proved invaluable in developing this Plan.

Priorities

The current five-year Plan includes work across five inter-related categories:
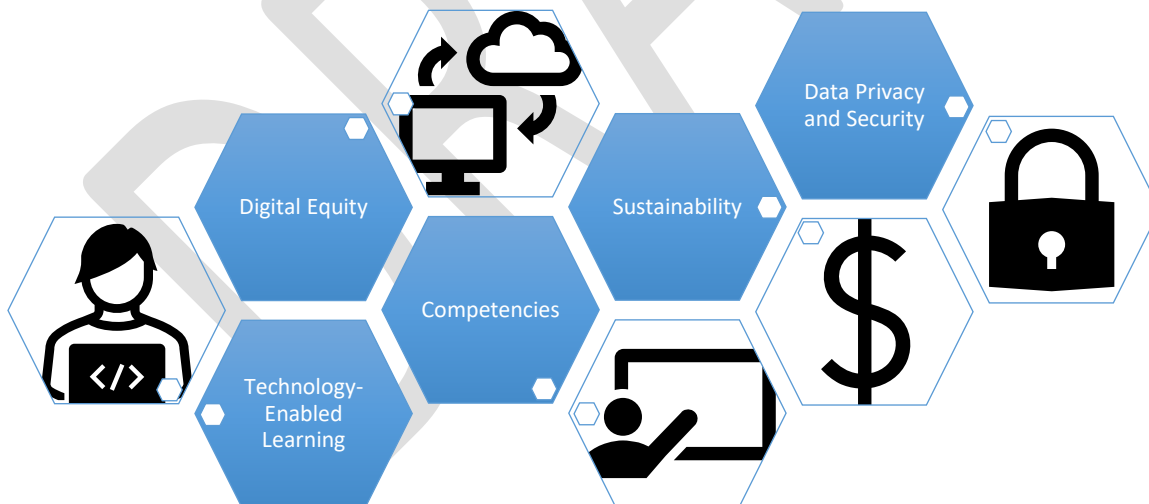
About the Commission

The Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology ("the Commission") serves as the State's principal educational technology policy advisor, as defined under CGS § 4d-80. That statute calls on the Commission to develop and steward a strategic educational technology plan for the state. Its 24 appointed members as well as the dozens of experts who serve on its Advisory Councils help design and implement that plan. Guiding this work are the Commission's vision statement:

THAT EVERY LEARNER AND EDUCATOR IN CONNECTICUT BENEFITS FROM THE FULL POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT PERSONALIZED AND IMPACTFUL TEACHING, LEARNING, RESEARCH, AND ADVANCEMENT.

To support that vision, the following Mission Statement defines the strategies and activities of the Commission:

DESIGN, STEWARD, AND PROMOTE POLICY, PROGRAMS, INSIGHTS, AND RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT THE EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL LEARNERS AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CONNECTICUT.

At almost the precise halfway point of the Commission's previous strategic plan, the world faced a global health crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools closed, and learning went virtual, with students engaging in online classes and independent learning activities through the use of personal computers, broadband connections, and educational software. The pandemic — and the ensuing, rapid adoption and investments in technology to support learning — both disrupted and accelerated the State Educational Technology Plan. Governor Lamont made investments to ensure all students would have the tools they needed to learn, and schools continue to leverage the power of technology after reopening.

Strategic Planning Process

At the time of this writing, many areas of concern in the previous strategic plan continue to remain relevant to teaching and learning, while emerging areas such as artificial intelligence have emerged as both potential threats and powerful tools to support education. This new plan reflects the best thinking of our Commission and Advisory Council members and reflects the priorities of their appointing organizations.

The strategic planning process began in 2021, with a statewide survey designed to identify the promising educational technology tools and practices adopted during the pandemic that should continue. Advisory Council members assessed the results of this study and made further recommendations to the Commission. In June 2022, the Commission adopted **a resolution** setting priorities in the following areas: leadership, the

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essential conditions for digital learning, equity of technology access, and support for educators.

With these priorities in place, Commission members enlisted input from members of their appointing agencies and organizations on the next State Educational Technology Plan. The resulting **report** identified the following priority areas:

- Data Privacy: Protection of student and school data
- Digital Equity: Access to broadband, devices, training, and support
- Digital Literacy: Effective use of technology, especially social media
- Online Learning: Use of digital tools for remote and hybrid learning
- Open Education: Access to free, high-quality courses and materials
- Sustainability: Post-pandemic support of devices and software
- Use of Artificial Intelligence: In instruction and decision-making

In late summer 2023, more than 20 Advisory Council members attended a planning retreat to define the goals and intended outcomes of work against the above priority areas. The Commission reviewed these suggestions at the September 2023 quarterly meeting and provided input on which initiatives from the previous strategic plan should continue. This assessment of ongoing and new initiatives would help balance limited Commission resources to invest in executing the new plan.

Strategic Plan Continuity Map

The following diagram illustrates the connections between the past and future strategic plans:

Strategic Priorities

2017 – 22
- Competency Standards
- Data Privacy
- Digital Equity
- E-rate
- Personalized Learning
- Open Education

2024 – 29
- Artificial Intelligence
- Data Privacy
- Digital Literacy
- Digital Equity
- Online Learning
- Open Education
- Technology Sustainability

Goals

As a means of ordering and prioritizing the above areas of activity and concern, the 2024 – 28 strategic plan maps these initiatives under five categories:

1) Technology-Enabled Learning: The tools and processes to accelerate, scale, and personalize learning
2) Digital Equity: Affordable devices, connections, training, support, and services to provide learning and advancement opportunities
3) Competencies: The skills and mindsets that students, educators, and leaders need to use technology effectively in education
4) Sustainability: The programs and policies necessary to ensure that institutions can maintain the technology-related costs of education
5) Data Privacy and Security: The infrastructure, tools, and behaviors necessary to protect against the misuse of personal and educational data and information

For each initiative, the Commission has the following guiding considerations:

- Why: Relevance to the Commission's vision and mission
- How: The steps we need to take to bring about impact
- Barriers: Obstacles including laws, policies, or resource deficits
- Resources: People, policies, funding, etc.
- Priority: The long-term importance of the initiative
- Urgency: Time-sensitivity, now and in the future

The sections that follow describe overarching goals and likely activities to advance these initiatives. Each reflects the priority assigned by the Commission members. Making progress against these goals will come from dedicated Commission as well as partner resources. This approach speaks to the need for collaboration with other agencies and organizations to accomplish these goals.

1: Technology-Enabled Learning

Digital systems and pedagogy can accelerate, scale, and personalize learning at all levels. These initiatives will maximize the potential impact of such systems to benefit students, educators, and families.

Goal 1.1 Facilitate the adoption of best practices in the design and delivery of online learning opportunities that expand student choice and access to courses.

- Priority: 2
- Potential Partners: CSDE, CT General Assembly, institutions of higher education
- Progress Measures: Curation and promotion of best practices in structured online learning; downloads and other indicators of use

Goal 1.2: Highlight existing and promising programs among Connecticut schools that expand student learning opportunities.

- Priority: 2
- Potential Partners: Connecticut districts, national leadership organizations
- Progress Measures: Inventory of online learning usage in schools and universities; spotlight on promising practices

Goal 1.3: Encourage the use of open education resources (OER) as well as low or no-cost commercial materials at all grade levels to reduce financial barriers to high-quality instructional and learning materials.

- Priority: 3
- Potential Partners: CSDE, CT General Assembly, local and school libraries, institutions of higher education
- Related Goals: 2.3 (Digital Equity)
- Progress Measures: Outreach campaign, partnerships with Commission member agencies and organizations to encourage adoption; cost-saving indicators

Goal 1.4: Host the GoOpenCT.org OER repository to allow schools, universities, libraries, and other institutions the ability to co-create and use OER.

- Priority: 3
- Potential Partners: CSDE, CT General Assembly, institutions of higher education, libraries
- Related Goals: Goals: 2.3 (Digital Equity)
- Progress Measures: Commitment to hosting (with CSDE); usage metrics over time

Goal 1.5: Pursue resources to enable pilot or statewide training on the effective use of OER.

- Priority: 3
- Potential Partners: CSDE, CT General Assembly, institutions of higher education
- Progress Measures: Funding and staff to support training; district and university adoption of OER materials and platform tools

Goal 1.6: Encourage use of research-based educational software through the design and implementation of rapid-cycle evaluations.

- Priority: 2
- Potential Partners: CSDE, CT General Assembly, institutions of higher education
- Related Goals: 5.2 (Data Privacy and Security)

- Progress Measures: School and university commitment to engage in rapid-cycle evaluations (RCEs); funding, if necessary, to support RCE design and implementation; institutions participating in independent or collaborative RCE pilots

2: Digital Equity

The Commission is leading the design and development of the State Digital Equity Plan to empower all residents to leverage the potential of technology to improve their lives. The following goals summarize the initiatives included in that plan.

Goal 2.1: Expand access to affordable, high-speed broadband and devices.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: DEEP, RESCs, CSDE, CT General Assembly, schools, institutions of higher education, local libraries
- Related Goals: 4.2 (Sustainability)
- Progress Measures: Increase in Digital Connection Benchmark (fixed and mobile connections, plus devices)

Goal 2:2: Identify, promote, and provide investments into digital navigation and other training to support resident learning and support needs.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: Local libraries, RESCs, DEEP, OCC, CSL, CSDE (adult learning)
- Related Goals: 3.1 (Competencies)
- Progress Measures: Increase in Digital Literacy Benchmark and Digital Security Benchmark, expansion of digital navigation programs, creation of regional digital equity collaboratives, increased awareness of digital navigation resources

Goal 2.3: Provide best practices and resources that assist agencies and providers to serve residents online.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: RESCs, Executive Branch Agencies
- Progress Measures: Assessment of municipal Web sites, completed review of all State agency Web sites, release and promotion of accessibility best practices

3: Competencies

Preparing students of all ages to participate fully in the workforce and broader society requires them to possess the competencies to learn and use digital tools effectively and

safely. These goals help define and support the development of such skills and mindsets among learners, educators, leaders, and the broader public.

Goal 3.1: Advance student preparation for higher education and the workforce through championing the adoption of digital literacy skills, including the effective use of artificial intelligence and cybersecurity skills.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: institutions of higher education, CSDE, OWS
- Related Goals: 2.2 (Digital Equity)
- Performance Measures: Contribution to updated national (ISTE) standards, outreach to promote formal adoption of digital literacy standards

Goal 3.2: Advocate that local and state "portrait of the graduate" statements include assurances of student digital literacy.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: CABE, CAPSS, General Assembly
- Performance Measures: Assessment of district portraits of the graduate, increase in digital skills as part of portraits of the graduate, consideration as part of core course of study (CGA statute)

Goal 3.3: Explore opportunities to expand teacher access to high-quality professional development in the use of digital tools and pedagogies to support personalized learning through in-service professional development as well as pre-service instruction and certification.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: institutions of higher education, RESCs, CSDE, SERC, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
- Performance Measures: Assessment and increase of digital skill development in common pre-service programs, integration of digital skills into teaching practice offerings through RESCs and local school districts

Goal 3.4: Assess current K – 12 digital literacy instruction and assessment and explore the creation or adoption of common digital literacy curriculum and micro-credentials (badges).

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: RESCs, CAPSS (EDLR), institutions of higher education
- Related Goals: 2.2 (Digital Literacy)

- Performance Measures: Expanded definition of digital literacy credentials, identification of digital literacy credentials or badge, adoption of standard credentials by schools and universities

4: Sustainability

Increases in technology spending across physical devices and networks as well as software, training, and support have increased and continue to climb in order to support educational institutions and lifelong learning. The following goals expand on previous strategies — including high-speed, education-specific broadband and services via CEN — to address the challenge of ensuring sustainable technology resources.

Goal 4.1: Assess technology increases and costs within schools and districts.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: CABE, CAPSS, CEN, local school districts
- Related Goals: 2.1 (Digital Equity)
- Progress Measures: Completed baseline of cost categories and changes over time

Goal 4.2: Provide guidance on technology investment best practices and efficiencies, including the use of federal and state programs.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: CABE, CAPSS, CSDE, SETDA, CoSN
- Related Goals: 2.1 (Digital Equity)
- Progress Measures: Best practice guidance and promotion, use of and feedback from schools

Goal 4.3: Leverage collective input of schools on ed tech effectiveness to explore cooperative purchasing.

- Priority: 1
- Potential Partners: CAPSS, CASL, CASBO, CEN, CTETL
- Related Goals: 1.6 (Technology-Enabled Learning) and 5.2 (Data Privacy and Security)
- Progress Measures: Design and pilot of collective purchasing and impact studies

5: Data Privacy and Security

The responsible use of data in educational systems holds enormous potential to accelerate and scale learning, especially with the rapid acceleration of new technologies such as artificial intelligence. These goals help provide a balance innovation with personal privacy and security.

Goal 5.1: Provide continued guidance and best practices for institutions to protect and steward student and other sensitive data and avoid bias through the use of instructional, operational, and decision-support systems. Includes best practices in the transparency of machine learning processes and data sets in operational and decision-support systems.

- Priority: 2
- Potential Partners: CABE, CAPSS, institutions of higher education
- Progress Measures: Establishment of best practices in ed tech selection, access of best practices by schools and universities

Goal 5.2: Explore ways to enhance the functionality of the Data Privacy Hub (LearnPlatform) for digital tool selection and research.

- Priority: 2
- Potential Partners: CSDE (sponsor), CAPSS, CAS, district leaders
- Related Goals: 1.2 (Technology-Enabled Learning)
- Progress Measures: List and prioritization of potential enhancements, implementation and use of enhancements

Goal 5.3: Encourage review and potential revisions to Connecticut data privacy legislation based on the Data Privacy Task Force recommendations.

- Priority: 2
- Potential Partners: Connecticut General Assembly, CABE, CAPSS
- Progress Measures: Summary recommendations, draft legislation, passed legislation

Timeline

The following table maps the goals and general deliverable timelines for the 2024 – 28 Connecticut Educational Technology Plan.

Goal	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
1: Technology-Enabled Learning					
1.1: Expand Online Learning Opportunities		▪	▪	▪	▪
1.2: Highlight Best Practices		▪		▪	
1.3: Encourage OER Adoption	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
1.4: Host GoOpenCT.org	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
1.5: Statewide OER Training	▪	▪			
1.6: Research-Based Ed Tech Use		▪	▪	▪	▪
2: Digital Equity					
2.1: Affordable Connections and Devices	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
2.2: Digital Navigation and Training	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
2.3: Online Service Delivery	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
3: Competencies					
3.1: Digital Literacy Standards Adoption		▪			
3.2: Portrait of the Graduate Integration		▪	▪		
3.3: Expand Teacher Training and Skills		▪	▪	▪	
3.4: Digital Literacy Measures and Credentials		▪	▪		
4: Sustainability					
4.1: Ed Tech Cost Assessment	▪		▪		▪
4.2: Ed Tech Investment Guidance	▪			▪	
4.3: Collective Tech Selection and Purchasing		▪	▪	▪	
5: Data Privacy and Security					
5.1: Data and Cyber Best Practices	▪		▪		▪
5.2: Expand LearnPlatform Benefits		▪	▪	▪	▪
5.3: Advocate for Legislative Revisions	▪				

Execution, Evaluation, and Reporting

As opportunities to accelerate progress on specific goals emerge, the Commission may direct resources toward those activities. Such was the case in 2020 – 21, as statewide priorities called for intense support around Digital Equity activities, for example.

Updates on the execution of the plan will come through the Commission's quarterly meetings and annual report, as required by statute (see CGS § 61a). This report informs and provides recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, appropriations, and the budgets of state agencies; the State Board of Education; and the Board of Governors of Higher Education.