Agenda Topic: State Plan for Technology in P-12 Education

Materials: Proposed State Plan
NASBE Powerpoint Presentation
Technology Center Presentation

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Purpose of Agenda Item
• Presentation of proposed State Plan for Technology in P-12 Education.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item
• Direction to staff for next steps.

Background

The state plan for technology in education serves two purposes.

• It provides a template and guide for action to enhance the use of technology for the benefit of Illinois students and schools; and
• It fulfills one of the key eligibility requirements for federal technology in education programs.

The first five-year Illinois State Plan was adopted in 1995. Thanks to its strategic nature and the hard work of thousands of Illinois citizens, it has served as an exceptionally strong platform for state and local actions. Within just five years, Illinois moved from 49th place to 4th place in the nation in the use of digital technology, with progress at the K-12 level ranked 2nd in the nation. This month, we received notice that Illinois is now tied for 1st place in the nation in the use of digital technology in education.

Although this is very gratifying, Illinois has not yet achieved all of the goals of the 1995 Plan. Many challenges remain to assure appropriate use of technology for the benefit of Illinois students and schools.
In 2000, the State Board initiated a statewide planning process intended to result in a second five-year State Plan for Technology in Illinois Education. That process was comparable in many ways to the community-based planning for technology that is required of local school districts, and it eventually involved hundreds of Illinois educators, parents and citizens. The coordinators of that planning process met with the Board several times to describe their progress, and in March 2000, they presented their findings and a draft report. The Board then asked staff to refine the report and link it to the goals for the Illinois education system.

The State Plan being presented for Board action builds on the work of the statewide planning committee and integrates new information from several important sources. These include the Westat evaluation of the use of technology in Illinois schools, the Illinois-specific findings reported in the 2001 issue of *Technology Counts* (published by *Education Week*), the report of the e-learning study committee of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), and a draft white paper on technology developed by the Metropolitan Planning Council in Chicago.

**Overview of the State Plan**

The proposed State Plan for P-12 Education in Illinois is built on several critical assumptions:

- Current and emerging technologies provide a unique and powerful resource that can help Illinois achieve the vision for education in the 21st century.

- Illinois has made extraordinary progress in the use of technology in education, but there are significant gaps between the vision for technology in education and our accomplishments. These gaps are particularly critical in terms of equitable access to technology, sufficient technology knowledge and skills among Illinois educators, and use of technology to redefine the teaching and learning process.

- The Plan for the future must be aligned with the Board’s goal of high achievement for all students and elimination of the achievement gap. That is obviously linked to elimination of the digital divide and equitable funding, but it also requires a comprehensive strategy for ensuring that the benefits of technology are brought to those students who are at risk of academic failure.

- The Plan must also reflect the Board’s commitments to providing school districts with policies, programs and services that support their efforts to ensure student success and working in collaboration with a variety of partners.
To capture the full benefits of technology for all Illinois students and schools, the State Plan must build on the strategies that had been most successful in the past, address identified problems, and establish a commitment to innovation and intrepidity.

**Analysis of Implications for Policy, Legislative and Budget Initiatives and Communications**

The new State Plan for Technology in P-12 Education provides a revised vision for technology in P-12 education, a pyramid of goals, nine key strategies, specific strategies for each of the key areas, and several suggested measures for evaluating progress over time.

The goals of the State Plan have been aligned with the vision for Illinois P-12 education and the State Board mission, and they literally cascade from the goals adopted by the Board in October.

**Board Goal**

The Illinois State Board of Education will support local districts in helping all students meet the Illinois Learning Standards and in closing the achievement gap.

**Technology Goals**

- Technology will support all Illinois students’ attainment of the higher-order knowledge and skills essential for success in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.
- Technology will provide all students with unprecedented and equitable access to rich, diverse and high-quality learning opportunities.
- Technology will be fully integrated in instruction.
- Teachers and other educators will be knowledgeable and technologically-proficient.

**Board Goal**

The Illinois State Board of Education will generate policies, programs, products and services that support local district efforts to ensure student success.

**Technology Goals**
• Students will have high-quality e-learning opportunities

• Technology will be used to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

**Board Goal**

The Illinois State Board of Education will provide advocacy and leadership for adequate and equitable funding of Illinois public schools.

**Technology Goals**

• Sufficient funding will be provided to support continued integration of technology in P-12 education.

• The digital divide will be eliminated and students will have equitable access to technology resources

**Board Goal**

The Illinois State Board of Education will work with partners in all sectors of government, education and private enterprise to support continuous improvement of Illinois education.

**Technology Goals**

• All of the technology goals will involve collaboration

The proposed State Plan incorporates a number of new or refocused policy commitments and sets the stage for subsequent Board action on specific policy issues. Among the new or refocused commitments are the following:

• Priority attention to assuring that the power of technology benefits high-risk, high-poverty students and schools, including but not limited to elimination of the digital divide;

• Professional development for pre-service and in-service teachers and other educators that will enable them to integrate technology into their teaching and other school operations;

• Expansion of high-quality e-learning opportunities for Illinois students and educators, including but not limited to expansion of the Illinois Virtual High School;

• Continued dedicated funding for technology, with desired annual increases at least commensurate with the percentage increase in General State Aid;
• Technology integration in district/school improvement plans, curriculum and instruction in all classrooms, and all state and local initiatives;
• Creation of on-line assessments that will measure 21st century learning goals, including specific knowledge and skills related to technology use; and
• Alignment of planning and action with continuous evaluation, the needs of local school districts, and the insights of technology leaders and innovators.

The background and rationale for these commitments are provided throughout the Plan. When the Board takes final action on the Plan, additional, more specific detail will be provided as follow-up proposals – such as standards for e-learning courses or cyber-charter schools – are brought to the Board for consideration.

Although legislation may be necessary in the future to implement some of the elements in this Plan, that is not critical to the Plan’s success. Much more important will be the quality of leadership, advocacy, and commitment that all players bring to the challenge.

The Plan has obvious implications for the State Board budget, both in form (continuation of the Technology for Success program, creation of a line-item for the Illinois Century Network) and substance (amount of requests, allocation of funds that are provided). The Plan is intended as a conceptual framework within which to make specific decisions over time.

On-going communication about the State Plan goals and strategies will be essential to its successful implementation. The statewide planning process that established the foundation for this Plan created interest and advocacy; the challenge will be to enhance and expand that involvement to assure widespread buy-in and commitment to action.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

Although many of the elements of this Plan have been discussed in various public forums, including earlier Board meetings, the Plan has such long-term importance that the Board should seek additional input on this final proposal before it is adopted.

Therefore, the State Board should discuss the proposed State Plan for Technology in P-12 Education with staff and provide direction for any changes that may be necessary. The Board should then authorize distribution of the proposed Plan (with any necessary revisions) for public comment.

Final action should be scheduled at the pleasure of the Board.
Next Steps

- Disseminate the Plan and seek feedback on its provisions.