

The background of the cover is a composite image. On the right side, there is a blue-tinted photograph of a young child with dark hair, wearing a striped shirt, sitting at a desk and writing on a piece of paper with a pencil. The child's head is bowed, and their hands are focused on the task. On the left side, there is a green-tinted area that overlaps with the blue one. This green area contains faint, technical-style graphics, including a gear, a wrench, and some abstract lines and shapes, suggesting a focus on engineering or technology.

TOOLKIT 2020

Driving K–12 Innovation

COSN
LEADING EDUCATION INNOVATION

CHALLENGE

Technology is an essential element of learning, yet the use and application of it is inequitable.

VISION

CoSN is a community of visionary technology leaders empowering every learner to achieve their unique potential in a changing world.

MISSION

CoSN provides current and aspiring education technology leaders for PreK-12 with the community, knowledge, and professional development they need to create and grow engaging learning environments.



CoSN is vendor-neutral and does not endorse specific products, services or solutions.

Welcome!

Dear Colleagues,
I hope this note finds you safe and well.

Innovation and adaptation is more essential than ever as we collectively face the global COVID-19 health crisis. This Toolkit, part of CoSN's [Driving K-12 Innovation](#) initiative, offers actionable information and recommendations for leading change during and beyond this current moment in education. Specifically, the Toolkit suggests ways to take advantage of opportunities for innovation around Data, Teaching & Learning, Digital & Online Tools, and other Top Topics for 2020 identified by a global Advisory Board of ~100 education experts. This resource builds on the 2019 Toolkit and provides updated information on Engaging the Community.



Though this resource was crafted to be applicable beyond the current health crisis, many of the suggestions are highly applicable to education continuity and adaptation today. For edtech guidance around the coronavirus specifically, I invite you to visit [CoSN's COVID-19 resource page](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Krueger".

Keith R. Krueger
Chief Executive Officer

A large, stylized, light green graphic of an opening quotation mark.

INNOVATION AND
ADAPTATION IS
MORE ESSENTIAL
THAN EVER.”



About Driving K-12 Innovation

The Consortium for School Networking's (CoSN) Driving K-12 Innovation initiative brings together educational leaders, researchers, technologists, and changemakers to discuss and determine the key Hurdles (barriers), Accelerators (mega-trends), and Tech Enablers (tools) for advancing K-12 innovation in 2020.

This Toolkit is designed to help you lead innovation in your school, district, or organization—during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Building upon the 2019 Toolkit, this resource provides practical guidance and resources for educational leaders to spark discussion and action in their communities around surmounting Hurdles to innovation, propelling innovation with Accelerators, and supporting innovation with Tech Enablers.

Hurdles + Accelerators

Hurdles are more than pesky obstacles. They are significant organizational and human capacity challenges that force educators to slow down, prepare themselves and—with sufficient practice, knowhow and tools—make the leap to innovation.

Accelerators are megatrends that drive the needs and skills expected of students and educators. Some disruptive shifts are moving rapidly (even suddenly), while others are happening so gradually that their effects may not be felt for years.

[Driving K-12 Innovation / 2020 Hurdles + Accelerators Report](#)

Tech Enablers

Tech Enablers are supporting tools that smooth the way to more expansive opportunities and solutions in education.

[Driving K-12 Innovation / 2020 Tech Enablers Report](#) (coming soon)

THIS TOOLKIT IS DESIGNED
TO HELP YOU LEAD
INNOVATION... DURING
AND BEYOND THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC.



TOOLKIT 2020

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At A Glance

2020 TOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR DRIVING K-12 INNOVATION



Top 5 Hurdles

Top 5 most important Hurdles for schools to address in 2020 in order to pave the way for teaching and learning innovation and extraordinary student outcomes.

1. Scaling and Sustaining Innovation
2. Data Privacy*
3. Evolution of Teaching and Learning*
4. Pedagogy vs. Technology Gap†
5. Digital Equity



Top 5 Accelerators

Top 5 most important Accelerators for schools to address in 2020 in order to pave the way for teaching and learning innovation and extraordinary student outcomes.

1. Learners as Creator†
2. Data-Driven Practices*
3. Personalization†
4. Social and Emotional Learning*
5. Building the Human Capacity of Leaders



Top 5 Tech Enablers

Top 5 most important Tech Enablers for schools leverage in 2020 in order to surmount Hurdles and embrace Accelerators.

1. Digital Collaboration Platforms*
2. Tools for Privacy & Safety Online*
3. Analytics and Adaptive Technologies†
4. Cloud Infrastructure
5. Mobile Devices

*Featured in the 2020 reports

†Featured in 2019 reports.

Leveraging Opportunities for Driving K-12 Innovation

THE NEXT SECTION OF THE REPORT PROVIDES TIPS AND RESOURCES

The Top Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers for 2020 illuminate opportunities for innovation. The next section of this report provides recommendations and resources around the three areas that are highlighted in the 2020 Driving K-12 Innovation reports: Data, Teaching & Learning, and Digital & Online Tools. These three themes represent six of the Top Topics for 2020—two Hurdles, two Accelerators, and two Tech Enablers. This section also includes tips from the Advisory Board around the nine remaining Top Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers.



FOCUS ON DATA

Data can be a powerful tool for teaching, learning, and student support, yet these opportunities are complicated by challenges of data privacy and meaningful use of data. Below are a few tips and resources to help surmount the Hurdle of Data Privacy and leverage the Accelerator of Data-Driven Practices.

Resources

- [*EdTech Guidance in the age of COVID-19* \(CoSN\)](#)¹
- [*CoSN's Protecting Privacy in Connected Learning Initiative*](#)²
- [*CoSN's Data-Driven Decision Making Initiative*](#)³
- [*Driving K-12 Innovation: 2020 Hurdles + Accelerators* \(CoSN\)](#)⁴
- [*Data Quality Campaign Resources*](#)⁵
- [*The Trusted Learner Environment Seal Program Resources Page*](#)⁶
- [*Make Data Work for All Students \(Data Quality Campaign\)*](#)⁷
- [*Time to Act 2019: Connecting Policy to Practice to Make Data Work for Students \(Data Quality Campaign\)*](#)⁸
- [*Privacy Risks and Harms: The Common Sense Privacy Program* \(Common Sense\)](#)⁹
- [*The State of Kids' Privacy: Evaluating the Safety and Security of Kids' Tech* \(Common Sense\)](#)¹⁰
- [*FERPA|Sherpa \(The Education Privacy Resource Center\)*](#)¹¹



Tips

- ▶ Partner with stakeholders (educators, staff, parents, students, industry partners, community members) in conversation and action.
- ▶ Provide training, professional development, and support for educators to develop their skills and knowledge of data privacy and data use.
- ▶ Design and iterate policies and processes that enable easy and appropriate data collection, analysis, and use. Stay current and compliant with data privacy laws.
- ▶ Place learners at the heart of data initiatives and data-driven practices. Engage students in understanding and using data.
- ▶ Cultivate ongoing conversation around data privacy and lead data privacy efforts, wherever you are in the organization.
- ▶ Prioritize data privacy and compliance with relevant laws and policies. Leverage resources around data privacy and the shift to remote learning
- ▶ Foster a culture of appropriate data use. To get started, make small pieces of very relevant, actionable data easily accessible to teachers and administrators.
- ▶ Focus on obtaining and leveraging high-quality, relevant, and usable data. In designing or revising data processes, center efforts around what you hope to learn or measure, and make sure to collect data relevant to that question.
- ▶ Be attentive to equity, access, and bias in data collection and use.

FOCUS ON TEACHING & LEARNING

As societies change, technologies evolve, and new insights emerge about how people learn, school systems must adapt. The following tips and resources suggest ways to overcome the challenges presented by the Evolution of Teaching and Learning (a Hurdle) and take advantage of the mega-trend of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL; an Accelerator). These tips are also relevant to urgent adaptation efforts sparked by COVID-19.

Resources

- *Driving K-12 Innovation: 2020 Hurdles + Accelerators* (CoSN)¹²
- Frameworks for Innovation (this publication, page 24, CoSN)
- *RAND Center for Social and Emotional Learning Research*¹³
- *Core SEL Competencies* (CASEL)¹⁴
- *Re-imagining Social-emotional Learning: Findings from a Strategy-based Approach* (Phi Delta Kappan)¹⁵
- *What is RULER?* (RULER Approach)¹⁶
- *Adverse Childhood Experiences* (Child Welfare Information Gateway)¹⁷
- *Using Data to Support and Communicate Effectively About Social-emotional Learning: Help students develop the Skills They Need to Succeed* (Data Quality Campaign)¹⁸



Tips

- ▶ Center innovation efforts around learning. Align processes and technology use with student learning and needs.
- ▶ Actively re-think existing practices, re-image learning processes and classroom norms, and re-evaluate learner needs.
- ▶ Invest in educator training and professional development. Provide support for educators to engage in the evolution of teaching and learning and social emotional learning practices.
- ▶ Build understanding and investment in learning innovation and SEL with educators, parents, students, and community members.
- ▶ Leverage data to support innovation and SEL.
- ▶ Integrate SEL holistically across academic subjects and throughout school activities.
- ▶ Be intentional about engaging in change processes and iterative innovation.

FOCUS ON DIGITAL & ONLINE TOOLS

Digital and online technologies can connect learners, educators, and communities across time and space, expanding the classroom and opening unique opportunities for learning. The tips and resources below can help schools and districts leverage the Tech Enablers of Digital Collaboration Platforms and Tools for Privacy and Safety Online. These tools are also powerful enablers of educational adaptation and continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

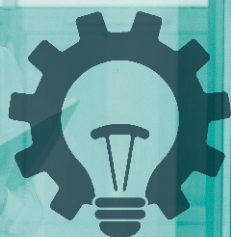
Resources

- *EdTech Guidance in the age of COVID-19* (CoSN)¹⁹
- *Driving K-12 Innovation: 2020 Tech Enablers* (CoSN; coming soon)²⁰
- *The Trusted Learner Environment Seal Program Resources Page*²¹
- *Leadership for Digital Learning Initiative* (CoSN)²²
- *Digital Equity* (CoSN)²³
- *Digital Learning Innovation Trends* (OLC / Everylearner Everywhere)²⁴
- *DigCitCommit* (digital citizenship competencies)²⁵



Tips

- ▶ Integrate digital and online privacy and safety across the organization as a regular, ongoing priority for educators, staff, and students. Teach responsible, proactive behaviors for digital and online privacy and safety.
- ▶ Design and iterate policies to address digital and online tools and learning spaces.
- ▶ Be attentive to issues of equity, access, and accessibility.
- ▶ Develop stakeholder awareness, understanding, and competency around the issues associated with digital and online tools and, as appropriate, the application of specific technologies. Invest in professional development.
- ▶ Cultivate educator, staff, and student understanding and capabilities around the use of collaborative technologies as well as the behavior and etiquette in these spaces.
- ▶ Partner and build trust with vendors, parents, students, and other stakeholders.
- ▶ Leverage the power of digital collaboration tools for connecting people and crossing barriers/silos.



ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD



Hurdles

Scaling and Sustaining Innovation

- ▶ Identify and share exemplar practices from within your school system and across silos. Video can be a powerful medium for sharing concrete, doable actions for improvement.
- ▶ Recognize educators who are engaged in exemplary teaching practices and effective technology use.
- ▶ Cultivate an ongoing dialogue between administrators and teachers around innovation and effective teaching practice. Develop a culture that values both.
- ▶ Involve stakeholders in decision-making and innovation processes.

- ▶ Before implementing an initiative, determine how its success will be measured and define a process for evaluating and continuing/iterating/abandoning the initiative. Develop a culture where it is okay for a project to fail.
- ▶ Center efforts around the educational purpose and the learner, not the technology itself. Integrate and align innovation with overarching strategies, goals, values, and mission.
- ▶ When scaling innovation, consider to what extent the initiative would/ can be systemic, sustainable, and supportable. Develop processes to speed the diffusion of innovations and the depth of integration of innovations into teachers' practices.
- ▶ Provide training and professional development opportunities.

- ▶ Build cross-departmental buy-in.
- ▶ Agility and flexibility in the organizational structure of the school is crucial to successfully scaling and sustaining innovation.

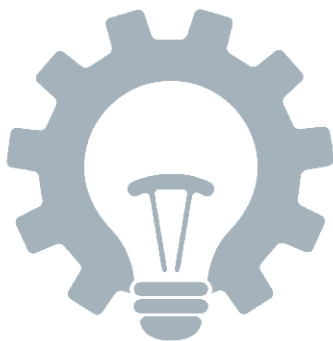
Pedagogy vs. Technology Gap

This Hurdle is also highlighted in the [*Driving K-12 Innovation: 2019 Hurdles*](#) report.

- ▶ Evaluate how technology can contribute to your vision, mission, and goals.
- ▶ Develop a strategic plan that aligns technology with learning expectations and pedagogy.
- ▶ Focus training and professional development more on the opportunities for teaching and learning presented by a tool and strategies for using the technology effectively,

and less on the technology itself.

- ▶ Avoid the “shiny object syndrome” in purchasing technology by bringing cross-cutting expertise, including teachers, to the table.
- ▶ Monitor the effectiveness of technology and make course corrections, if needed.
- ▶ Curate technologies—including sometimes removing them—and consider how each will transform the productivity and learning processes.
- ▶ Budget for professional development with every technology purchase.
- ▶ Champion technology and effective use for teaching and learning with strong leadership in schools.
- ▶ Encourage professional learning communities.
- ▶ Identify and disseminate examples of teachers effectively integrating technology for student learning and success.
- ▶ Scale and sustain effective technology with an intentional system of multiple, reinforcing, aligned connections to the curriculum, professional development, leadership, assessment, and parent engagement.
- ▶ Involve stakeholders including students, parents, educators, administrators, technologists, community members.



INVEST IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING AROUND MEANINGFUL USE OF TECHNOLOGY.

Digital Equity

CoSN's [Digital Equity Initiative](#)²⁶ and blog²⁷ provide additional information and resources on this topic.

- ▶ Invest resources to address digital equity.
- ▶ Cultivate a shared vision for equity and digital equity in education.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for stakeholders to learn how to harness the capacity of digital tools to become expert learners.
- ▶ Include students, parents, educators, administrators, community members, industry partners, and other stakeholders in addressing digital equity. Leverage the community to address connectivity, usage, and digital literacy.
- ▶ Remember that digital equity is part of broader issues of equity in education, issues complicated by systemic inequality and intersectional identities and inequalities.
- ▶ Provide teachers, families, and young people with resources, knowledge, and skills. Engage students in real-world activities to gain authentic life experiences in using digital tools.
- ▶ Invest in professional development and training around meaningful use of technology.
- ▶ Demonstrate and communicate the value of technology for student learning and success.





CULTIVATE A SCHOOL CULTURE THAT EMPOWERS EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS



Accelerators

Learners as Creators

This Accelerator is also highlighted in the [Driving K-12 Innovation: 2019 Accelerators](#) report.

- ▶ Take an expansive view of creativity.
- ▶ Integrate creative learning with the core instructional program.
- ▶ Develop meaningful literacies.
- ▶ Pay attention to rigor.
- ▶ Set challenging parameters to deepen learning.
- ▶ Broaden assessment.
- ▶ Create time for educators and students to engage in learning by making and doing.
- ▶ Recognize student learning in these projects.
- ▶ Build partnerships and collaborations between schools, industry, government, community and cultural organizations, and others.
- ▶ Communicate and share student projects with the community
- ▶ Invest in professional development to help educators guide open-ended and flexible learning projects.

Personalization

This Accelerator is also highlighted in the [Driving K-12 Innovation: 2019 Accelerators](#) report.

- ▶ Build shared understanding around the meaning of personalized learning and the roles of educators in personalized learning.
- ▶ Provide ongoing professional development for educators to better understand personalized learning and develop skills for guiding students in personalized learning. Empower teachers to try new ideas and strategies, and personalize educators' own learning.
- ▶ Use information from the learning sciences to inform why and how to personalize, especially insights around cognition and cognitive load.
- ▶ Provide students with guidance and specific checkpoint markers to complete their project.
- ▶ Create time in the curriculum for experimentation by both teachers and students.
- ▶ Identify and share examples of effective personalized learning.
- ▶ Support teachers in maximizing the tools that are available to positively impact student learning.

Building the Human Capacity of Leaders

- ▶ Prioritize building the human capacity of leaders. Provide educators with support (including access to and time for professional development opportunities) and encouragement.
- ▶ Cultivate a school culture that empowers educators (and students), welcomes feedback, values collaboration and community growth, and encourages ongoing learning. Remember to invest in relationships.
- ▶ This Accelerators goes beyond teacher development, instead speaking to the formal and informal leadership and inclusion of all community members.
- ▶ School system leaders and administrators need to “walk the walk” – model the behaviors, practices, development activities, and attitudes they expect their community members engage in.
- ▶ Celebrate success.
- ▶ Help new ideas be heard.
- ▶ Align around the “why” — the learners at the heart of education. Connect everyone to the classroom. Lead with a strategic vision.
- ▶ Engage technology leaders (formal and informal) in this effort.



Tech Enablers

Analytics and Adaptive Technologies

This Tech Enabler is also highlighted in the [Driving K-12 Innovation: 2019 Tech Enablers](#) report. Ideas and recommendations for leveraging a related Accelerator, Data-Driven Practices, are highlighted in this Toolkit and in the [Driving K-12 Innovation: 2020 Hurdles + Accelerators](#) report.

- ▶ Integrate and implement analytics into teaching practice.
- ▶ Improve pedagogical fluency to use these technologies effectively.
- ▶ Engage in in-depth dialogue about how to capture meaningful learning using data.
- ▶ Use student data thoughtfully. Prescriptive analytics can identify multiple strategies and options that have worked with others and allow students to choose a path, but make sure students have access to the full scope of paths, if they are interested.
- ▶ Invest in building the human capacity of leaders and professional development around effective data-driven practices.
- ▶ Clearly define use cases for analytics and adaptive technologies and foster understanding around their implementation.

Cloud Infrastructure

CoSN's [Smart Education Networks by Design](#)²⁸ initiative (SEND) provides additional resources. Ideas and recommendations for leveraging a related Tech Enabler, Digital Collaboration Platforms, are included in this Toolkit and in the [Driving K-12 Innovation: 2020 Hurdles + Accelerators](#) report.

- ▶ Partner with vendors and industry leaders.
- ▶ Be attentive to related challenges of digital equity and data privacy.
- ▶ Strive for integration and unification of systems.
- ▶ Provide training and professional development around the value and use of cloud infrastructure.
- ▶ Educate stakeholders to build trust and confidence in cloud infrastruc-



CREATE AN ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH PARENTS, STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS

ture and understanding of effective practices.

- ▶ Invest in broadband access and foster awareness among legislators around broadband needs.

Mobile Devices

CoSN's [Leadership for Digital Learning Initiative](#)²⁹ provides additional information and resources on this topic.

- ▶ Proactively create a plan to address the complications of mobile devices for learning including technical support, wireless connectivity and access, and screen time concerns.
- ▶ Create an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders (parents, students, educators, community members) around the benefits and complexities of using mobile devices for learning. Include stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- ▶ Invest in professional development and support teachers in facilitating digital learning environments and navigating the presence of devices in educational spaces.
- ▶ Educate students and parents on responsible device use and digital citizenship.
- ▶ Focus on the educational purpose of technology use.

Engaging the Community

CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUILD BUY-IN + DRIVE ACTION

Where should you start with the 2020 Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers that are ranked by the Advisory Board as important to address? How can you develop priorities and a shared vision for K–12 education that lifts all students to new heights in learning achievements? How can you involve stakeholders in designing and implementing education continuity in times of crisis? How do you turn your ideas into a plan for action—and implement it strategically?

Starting the Conversation

- ▶ Leverage CoSN's Driving K–12 Innovation series to launch conversations about innovation in K–12 learning in your own education institutions and organizations and with your community. <https://www.cosn.org/k12innovation>
- ▶ Invite educators, parents, students and community members to participate in conversations about K–12 innovation.
- ▶ Use the discussion prompts on page 16 to focus the conversation and generate ideas.

Going Deeper

- ▶ Consider the strengths, vulnerabilities, and opportunities in your school system in brainstorming and planning sessions with educators, parents, students, and community members.
- ▶ Workshop your priorities and develop a shared vision with structured frameworks and activities.

Implementing Best Practices: CETL™

- ▶ Learn how certified education technology leaders (CETL™s) recommend implementing innovations with near-term and longer-term actions.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Where

Conversations can happen anywhere. Town hall meetings, advisory sessions, parent-teacher association and school board meetings, and classroom meetups are all opportunities to talk face to face. These options may not be possible given the COVID-19 health crisis, making virtual conversations all the more powerful. Zoom, Skype, WebEx, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, and other platforms give you the opportunity to step beyond face to face.

Who

Engage the community in dialogue and be sure to invite new stakeholder groups. Consider session(s) with and for students, representatives from your neighboring higher education communities, local business leaders, and government representatives. Broadening the discussion will help you gather a variety of perspectives and can help establish important new connections and leverage relationships in the future.

How

Develop core messages that you want to get across. Keep them simple and

snappy. Think of your stakeholders and remember they are not living K-12 innovation daily (at least directly).

There are limitless ways to communicate and share this information. We've provided some samples beginning on page 18. Decide on two to three conversations you want to have in your community—don't try to do too much at once. Use the discussion questions and prompts that follow for the three aspects of Driving K-12 innovation.

NOTE: Be attentive to data privacy and only engage in 2-way communication with students through appropriately vetted and approved mediums. Your school or district should have rules in place to protect student data and direct appropriate communication with students.

What Happens Afterward?

Think of how many emails, tweets, texts and conversations make up your daily work and our personal lives. Innovation discussions can't be one-and-done; they must be ongoing.

To keep people engaged in the conversation and inspire more ideas

in your community, consider sharing some stories of how other school systems and organizations are innovating in education.

Discussion Questions & Prompts

Hurdles + Accelerators

After reviewing the top five Hurdles identified by experts in the Driving K-12 Innovation report, which Hurdle do you think is the most important in our school system? Which Accelerator do you believe is most important? Feel free to add additional Hurdles and Accelerators not identified in the report.

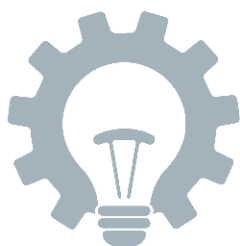
Tech Enablers

Reflecting on the Hurdle and Accelerator you selected, are any of the five Tech Enablers in the Driving K-12 Innovation report appropriate for our school system to consider?

Educational Continuity & Adaptation

Which Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers are most important as we adapt? What challenges does COVID-19 present? How can we leverage Accelerators and Tech Enablers to address these Hurdles?





UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE WILL HELP YOU DIFFERENTIATE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

Activity: *Identify Key Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers for Your Community Using the Driving K-12 Innovation Methodology*

The Driving K-12 Innovation methodology guides an Advisory Board of approximately 100 global education and technology leaders in discussing and selecting the top Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers for the year. Your school or district can use a shortened version of this process to identify and spark conversation around the key topics for your innovation context.

Focus the Conversation (Initial Voting)

- ▶ Which Hurdles and Accelerators are most important, impactful, and under-examined in our school/district?

Discussion:

- ▶ **PERSONALIZE** — How is this topic materializing at our school/district/municipality?
- ▶ **EXPAND** — What are some of the nuances that complicate this Hurdle/Accelerator?
- ▶ **STRATEGIZE** — How can we surmount this Hurdle? How can we leverage this Accelerator?

Prioritize Areas for Action (Final Voting):

- ▶ Which Hurdle do you believe is the most important for us to address in order to pave the way for teaching and learning innovation and extraordinary student outcomes?
- ▶ Which Accelerator do you believe is the most important for us to address in order to pave the way for teaching and learning innovation and extraordinary student outcomes?

Follow-up/Ongoing Discussion:

- ▶ Which Tech Enablers can best help us overcome these Hurdles and take advantage of these Accelerators?



Communication **Tips and Samples**

Tip: Know Your Audience

Press releases, emails, and social media platforms are tools you can use to build awareness, interest, and engagement in Driving K-12 Innovation events and initiatives with your stakeholders. If you have data analytics tools for your communications, use them to develop a plan to reach

all of your stakeholders, such as local media, educators, parents, students, and the wider community, including businesspeople and postsecondary educators. The key is to know your audience. How do different stakeholders prefer to receive communications from you? Which social media platforms do they use most? What types of posts get the most reaction? Where do you see the most engagement? Understanding your audience will help you differentiate your communications to different segments of your audience and achieve the greatest impact.

Press Releases

Use press releases to local media to spread the word about your Driving K-12 Innovation event, encourage stakeholder attendance, and promote media coverage. Follow up with media contacts to welcome their reporting and ask if they need logistical support for equipment. Offer interviews to amplify your message. If you do not have media contacts, reach out to the editor of your local paper.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE FOR A DRIVING K-12 INNOVATION EVENT

SCHOOL SYSTEM



OR SCHOOL LOGO

**** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ****

[School system or school name] to Host Community Event to Discuss How Technology Can Transform K-12 Education
For information, contact: *[School system or school public relations contact and contact information]*

[Date]—*[School system or school name]* is hosting a community discussion to learn more about the major themes driving, hindering, and enabling teaching and learning innovation at schools, and consider strategies for *[School system or school name]*. This discussion will leverage publications created by global experts about key issues, trends, and technologies for driving K-12 innovation in 2020.

A group of approximately than 100 internationally known educational technology leaders collaborated to develop publications addressing:

- **Hurdles.** Obstacles that make participants slow down, evaluate, practice, and then make the leap to better support teaching and learning.
- **Accelerators.** Megatrends that drive change—sometimes suddenly, over time, or so gradually the implications aren't apparent.
- **Tech Enablers.** Tools that support smoother leaps over the Hurdles and expansive changes in global K-12 education.

The event will be held at [location] at [date and time]. Educators, staff, parents, and all school stakeholders are invited to attend. [Include registration link or RSVP email address].

"These reports, compiled over a yearlong discourse, will serve as a technology planning guide for educators, school leaders, administrators, and technologists," said [School system or school leader]. "We hope that the community, including parents, policymakers, and businesspeople, will take the time to attend this discussion and share their perspectives."

About *[School system or school]*
[Insert boilerplate]

EMAILS

Use emails for people who aren't active on social media or prefer this communication channel. Emails can be used to help you share the [Driving K-12 Innovation reports](#), or sections of the reports, and to communicate about a Driving K-12 Innovation event.

Tips for Writing Emails

Email Subject Lines.

Subject lines should pique the interest of the intended recipients. There are a number of theories about what words to use in subject lines, the use of personalization, and subject line length. Integrating questions in subject lines generally works well. Bottom line: write a subject line that is meaningful to your audience.

Text Pointers

- ▶ Remember that emails are often read on mobile devices.
- ▶ Keep it brief.
- ▶ Keep it focused. Use one core message per email.
- ▶ Stage your message. Important information goes at the beginning.
- ▶ You don't need a salutation and closing. Provide a clear signature block, preferably with a phone number and email to contact.

- ▶ Don't include an attachment; that gets the attention of spam filters.
- ▶ Do embed links to event registration and to the Driving K-12 Innovation report, or sections of the report:

[Driving K-12 Innovation 2020](#)

[Driving K-12 Innovation 2020 Hurdles + Accelerators](#)

[Driving K-12 Innovation 2020 Tech Enablers](#) (report coming soon)

Core Messages for Emails

If you want to draft your own emails, here are some key points:

- ▶ It's important to create a dialogue among teachers, administrators, parents, businesspeople, and the community at large. Why? Today's K-12 students are tomorrow's higher education students, job seekers, and employees.
- ▶ Using technology for the sake of technology is not effective. Enhancing the learning experience for individual learners is.
- ▶ The pace of change is increasing exponentially in part due to technological advancement.
- ▶ The data you are sharing is vetted by an international Advisory Board of approximately 100 school leaders and educators.

Sample Email

Subject Lines for a Driving K-12 Innovation Event

For general events:

SUBJECT: Interested in how technology impacts your child's learning experience?

SUBJECT: What trends are driving your child's learning experience?

SUBJECT: You're invited to a [School system or school] event!

SUBJECT: Come learn about how technology and learning intersect in K-12 education

SUBJECT: We want your feedback—[School system or school event and date]

For Hurdles-focused events:

SUBJECT: What are the obstacles to improving learning experiences?

For Accelerators-focused events:

SUBJECT: What societal trends are driving changes at school?

For Tech Enablers-focused events:

SUBJECT: Learn about the technology developments enhancing teaching and learning.

SAMPLE EMAILS FOR A DRIVING K-12 INNOVATION EVENT



For a fall event:

To

Subject What trends are driving your child's learning experience?

Each school year brings new educational practices and tools. Parents and members of the community should be kept up-to-date on classroom trends. We want you to be current on technology developments and challenges, here at [School system or school]. We'll be sharing some data we've received from global experts outlining some of the trends in the world of education technology.

Where:
When:
Register now!

SEND



For a parent event:

To

Subject We want your feedback

Technology has and will continue to change the way we live. It's also changing the way students learn. I'm inviting you to a free event, sponsored by [School system or school] to discuss how trends in technology are impacting your child's learning experience. We'll be sharing information from approximately 100 K-12 educational technology leaders.

Where:
When:
Register now!

SEND



For a community event:

To

Subject Come learn about how technology and learning intersect in K-12 education

Whether you are a parent, policymaker, business, or community member, understanding the intersection between technology and learning is important. That's why I'm inviting you to a free event, sponsored by [School system or school] to discuss how trends in technology are impacting our students' learning experience. We'll be sharing information approximately 100 K-12 educational technology leaders.

Where:
When:
Register now!

SEND



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media channels can help you spread the message about your event, as can the Driving K-12 Innovation series itself. Use social media to maximize parent, educator, and community interest prior to the event, create buzz, and keep the conversation going afterwards. However, it is essential to be mindful of the limitations of these platforms—especially where privacy is concerned. Your school or district should have rules in place to protect student data and direct appropriate communication with students. Remember that social media platforms are often not appropriate to use when communicating with students, and you should not be encouraging students to create social media accounts or engage with your school through unvetted, unapproved platforms.

Tips for Using Twitter

Twitter is widely used in the education technology community. Policymakers and business people are more likely to see your posts here than on Facebook. Use hashtags and your school system's or school's Twitter handles to tag influencers—but don't start posts with your Twitter handle, which will limit your reach to the people who already follow you. Influencers are highly active Twitter users with significant numbers of followers. You can simply ask if you can tag them or if they will retweet your posts. Twitter

posts are limited to 280 characters (including spaces). The most common Twitter length is 33 characters, so keep it concise. Images help tweet visibility, though you should take care not to violate privacy or usage rights. And you should adhere to accessibility standards. Links are also helpful for retweeting purposes. Invest in a tool (like Hootsuite, Sprout Social or Sendible) to schedule posts for optimal times.

Suggested Twitter Hashtags for Driving K-12 Innovation

- ▶ #edtech
- ▶ #edtechleader
- ▶ #parents
- ▶ #students
- ▶ #k12
- ▶ #drivingk12innovation

Suggested Twitter Handles

- ▶ @[yourschoolsystemorschool]
- ▶ @yourschoolsystemPRperson
- ▶ @CoSN

Using Facebook

The tendency on school Facebook pages is to focus on the more social aspects of school life—competitions, band concerts, awards, graduations—that appeal to parents. But Facebook can help you build awareness and interest in a Driving K-12 Innovation event or initiative as well. If you choose to use Facebook, use

the same hashtags you use on Twitter. Be sure that anything you share is in alignment with your school system social media policy and that you have strict controls in place to avoid exposing student data. Images with captions, again following your school system's policies, are most effective on Facebook.

Video Conferencing

Video calls and meetings can be an excellent way to connect with stakeholders. However, there are privacy, security, and safety considerations related to using these platforms, especially with students. It is imperative to use tools that have been vetted and approved by your district and that comply with relevant policies and legal requirements. CoSN's [Video Conferencing Tools in the Age of Remote Learning](#) resource provides additional information.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULE



This schedule includes content and media recommendations. These starter ideas for posts can be adapted for Twitter, Facebook, and other social channels.

WHEN	CONTENT	MEDIA
As soon as you set the date	Content: Save the date for a learning and strategy session on technology and enhancing learning experiences for students: [date/time/location]	Media: Text post, image, and link to event information
One week before event	Content: One week from today, will you be co-designing the future of #K12? Make sure you're registered for our #DrivingK12Innovation #edtech session: [date/time/location]	Media: Text post, image, and link to event information
Day of event (morning)	Content: Reminder! Our #DrivingK12Innovation session is tonight @ [time/location]	Media: Text post, image, and link to event information
Day of event (one hour before)	Content: Time's running out! #DrivingK12Innovation event on #student learning/#edtech tonight: [time/ location]	Media: Text post, image, and link to event information
Day of event (one hour after)	Content: Thank you to all who attended our #DrivingK12Innovation session tonight! [Briefly describe the experience.]	Media: Event photo
Day after event	Content: Great conversation with #parents and #edtechleaders at the #DrivingK12Innovation event last night. [Add brief highlight.]	Media: Event photo
One week after event	Content: It's been a week since [school system or school] #DrivingK12Innovation event. As we plan our priorities, what #edtech topics have stuck with you?	Media: Event photo

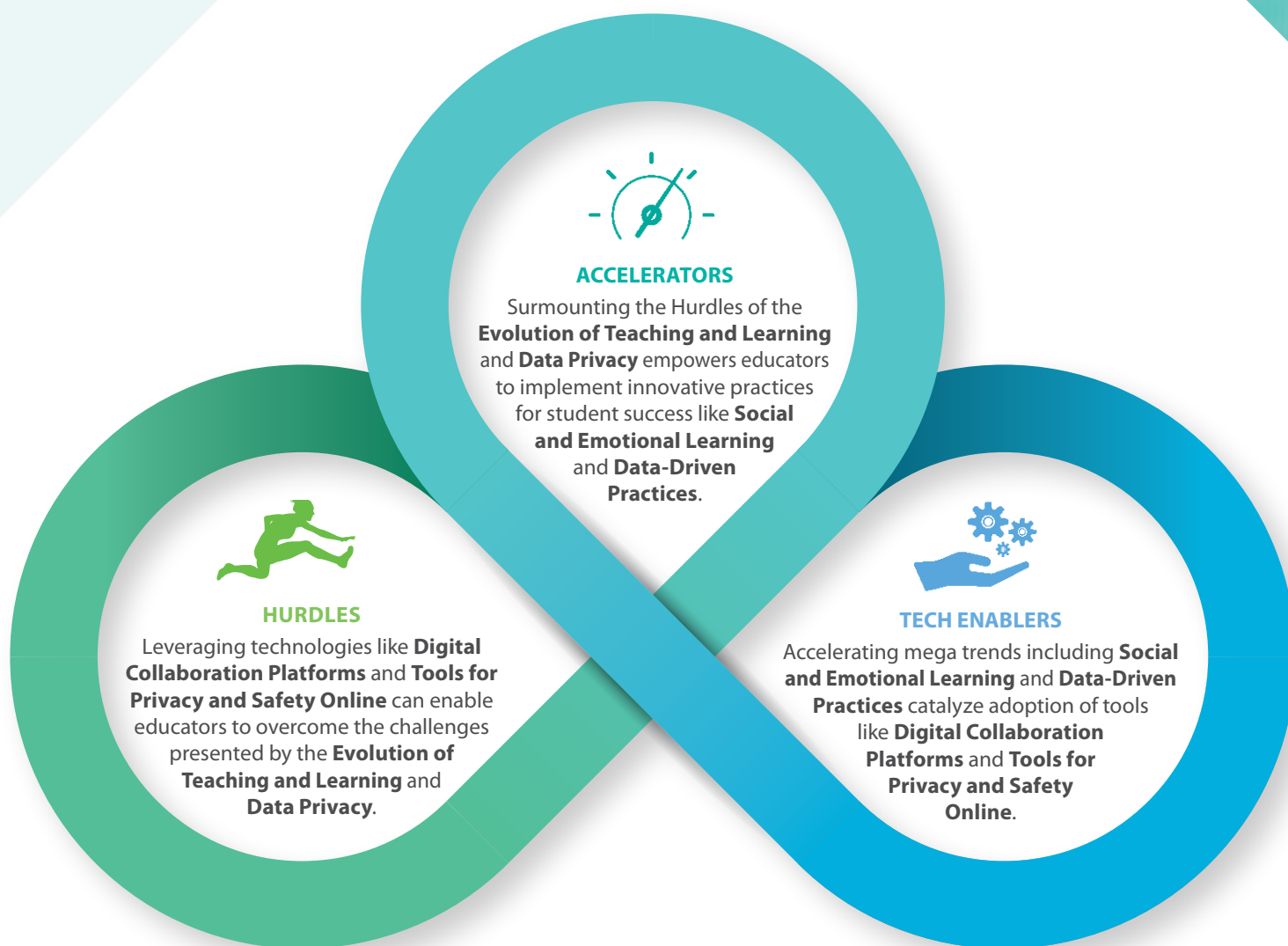
GOING DEEPER:

Using the Driving K-12 Innovation Series for Strategic Planning

- ▶ Leverage CoSN's Driving K-12 Education series to plan for innovation in K-12 learning in your own education institutions, organizations, and community.
- ▶ Consider opening your strategic planning sessions by sharing information, stories, or data from the reports that you find relevant to your school system.
- ▶ Use the discussion prompts on page 16 for strategic planning sessions to identify which top Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers resonate with your school community.
- ▶ Develop a shared vision of innovative education with your school community.

Bringing it All Together

Think about the opportunities for innovation in combination. Explore the connections among Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers during community conversations, workshoping and strategic planning, and preparation to implement your plans. Here's an example:



FRAMEWORKS FOR INNOVATION

Consider using a framework for your strategic planning sessions and for workshopping ideas. Frameworks help people with sensemaking—identifying problems and opportunities and generating and iterating ideas to develop workable solutions. Established frameworks can help you identify and act on opportunities for innovation. As you select a framework to guide you, consider your starting point for innovation, where you hope to go, and who needs to be involved.

8-Step Process for Leading Change³² →

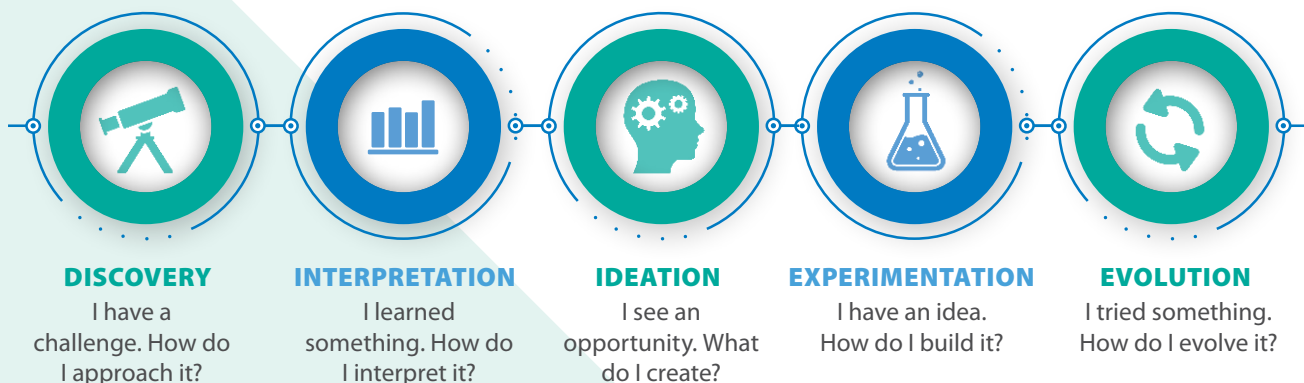
This model can help you create change by getting people to invest in the vision, as well as leveraging effective communication and collective wisdom.



SOURCE: KOTTER, J.P. (2014). ACCELERATE: BUILDING STRATEGIC AGILITY FOR A FASTER-MOVING WORLD. BOSTON: HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PUBLISHING.

Design Thinking (IDEO)³³

This approach recommends adopting an exploratory and experimentation mindset and can help you identify opportunities, design innovation, and iteratively evaluate and improve.



SOURCE: IDEO.(2019). WHAT IS DESIGN THINKING? RETRIVED FROM https://www.ideo.com/blogs/inspiration/what-is-design-thinking?_pos=5&_sid=F5C3C756E&_ss=R
IDEO. (2019). DESIGN THINKING. RETRIEVED FROM https://www.ideo.com/pages/design-thinking?_pos=1&_sid=F5C3C756E&_ss=R



SOURCE: FRAMEWORK FOR STAKEHOLDER INCLUSION IN THE TECHNOLOGY PLANNING PROCESS. (2019). RETRIEVED FROM [HTTPS://COACTION.PSU.EDU/INCLUSION-FRAMEWORK](https://coaction.psu.edu/inclusion-framework)

This approach focuses on identifying and including stakeholders throughout the process of leveraging technology solutions and enacting technology-assisted innovation in education. Phase 1, Defining the Initiative, challenges schools to focus on the transformation they are hoping to achieve, identify stakeholders, and build

bridges and understanding with stakeholders. In the second Phase, Investigating Solutions, changemakers should use an understanding of stakeholder needs and concerns as a foundation for exploring and evaluating potential solutions. Phase 3, Adopting a Solution, involves prioritizing user experience, both of the technology and the process through

which it is implemented. Training, professional development, support, and clear expectations are key. In the fourth and final Phase, Reviewing and Iterating, technology leaders, educators, and other stakeholders compare the initiative's outcomes to the success criteria developed earlier and seek opportunities for continued improvement.

IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICES: CETL™

At the 2019 CoSN Annual Conference in Portland, OR, about 50 school and school system technology leaders convened for the CETL™ (Certified Education Technology Leaders) Summit. Leveraging the findings from the 2019 Driving K-12 Innovation series, the CETL™s engaged in design thinking and consensus-building activities aimed at establishing a set of best practices for advancing technology-enabled innovation in the near term (one year out) and more distant future (five years out). A similar exercise will take place at the CoSN2020 Virtual Global Symposium (May 2020) to link global trends to local needs.

Near-Term (Year One)

1. Define an innovation context.

The CETL™s believe that nuanced approaches are needed to address the fact that schools and school systems

vary in size, demographics and even mission. Ensuring that the strategic goals for technology integration align with an organizational culture that is conducive to change is vital. School leaders must ask: What challenges are we trying to address? What opportunities are we looking to leverage? What cultural conditions do we need to change to embrace innovation? Technology use must be tied to specific desired outcomes for student success.

2. Create an “awareness and buy-in” campaign. Top-down approaches to technology mandates that do not incorporate stakeholder voices (read: teachers, parents, students) do not acknowledge the people they impact. Strategic plans must be collaboratively generated, and school leaders must make them transparent before they are implemented. Innovation efforts will be more effective

when all stakeholders are aligned around mission, desired outcomes and concrete measures of success. Data-capturing processes must be established for these measures.

Mid-Term (By Year Three)

3. Perform a self-assessment and realign priorities. Using the measures established in the strategic plan, school leaders must benchmark their progress towards outcomes. Not “measuring up” in certain areas is not automatically a sign of failure—it’s an indication that schools need to iterate and revise their strategies and/or tactics. Agility is a vital component of spurring innovation.

4. Demonstrate how the school/system mindset has shifted. The CETL™s believe that by year three schools should be able to pinpoint and articulate the ways in which the culture has positively changed as a result of the strategic innovation efforts. Revisit the awareness campaign from year one and pick up the story with a new arc. Convene school stakeholders to share the kinds of stories that not even rigorous data collection can illuminate.

Far-Term (By Year Five)

5. Leveraging data, evaluate the strategic plan and set new goals. Innovation is not necessarily a fixed point. After several years, the original goals may have been accomplished or have become obsolete. Revisiting and building upon the original vision is important so that schools can evolve to keep pace with societal changes, emerging pedagogies, and shifting student needs. School leaders must adopt evidence-based approaches but also be open to defining new best practices.



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