



April 2026

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# Accelerating Innovation

A Guide to Leveraging the Driving K-12 Innovation Report

*Version 2 Published April 2026*

*Version 1 Published April 2024*

# About CoSN

## 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 K-12 education technology leaders with the community, knowledge, and professional development they need to create and grow engaging learning environments.

## CoSN's EdTech Innovation

**Committee** develops primary resources on the Driving K-12 Topics, and other timely subjects as they arise, that have the potential to significantly impact K-12 education.

## CoSN's Driving K-12 Innovation

**initiative** convenes an Advisory Board of international educators, technologists, changemakers, and industry partners to identify key opportunities for innovation in K-12 spaces and enable awareness and action around them.

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# Contents

<a href="#">About CoSN</a>	1
<a href="#">Sponsors</a>	1
<a href="#">Introduction &amp; Objectives</a>	3
<a href="#">Process</a>	4
<a href="#">1. Center: Define Your Purpose</a>	5
<a href="#">2. Include: Identify Stakeholders</a>	6
<a href="#">3. Diverge &amp; Converge: Determine Topics for Consideration</a>	8
<a href="#">4. Discuss: Explore &amp; Analyze Each of Your Team’s Selected Topics</a>	10
<a href="#">5. Prioritize: Choose the Most Important 1–3 Topics in Each Category</a>	12
<a href="#">6. Strategize: Explore Intersections Between the Most Important Topics</a>	13
<a href="#">7. Communicate: Update Stakeholders on Your Process, Progress &amp; Next Steps</a>	22
<a href="#">More Case Studies &amp; Examples: Driving K-12 Innovation Report</a>	29
<a href="#">Authors &amp; Acknowledgements</a>	30

## Introduction & Objectives

This is a “grab and go” guide for thinking through the [Driving K-12 Innovation](#) initiative’s Hurdles (barriers), Accelerators (catalysts or megatrends), and Tech Enablers (tools) that are the most important for your school or district, and designing ways to make progress around one or more of them.

More specifically, this protocol will help you:

- Identify the most important Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers in your context right now, with stakeholder input.
- Use this information to think through and strategize around possible action(s).
- Have important conversations with stakeholders in your district/organization to implement change.
- Explore the intersections of the Top Topics to assist your team in identifying strategies and an action plan to drive innovation.

This work is meant to be a launchpad vs. documentation with all the answers....to spark conversations.

## Framework Overview

This protocol worksheet leverages the annual [Driving K-12 Innovation report](#) report and mirrors, for the most part, the Driving K-12 Innovation process used to collaboratively identify the most important topics for innovation in K-12 each year.



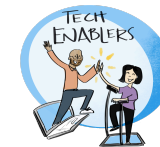
### Hurdles

Barriers to innovation and student success that require considered effort to overcome.



### Accelerators

Megatrends or catalysts that help motivate and increase the momentum of innovation.



### Tech Enablers

Tools that make new learning approaches possible, enable schools to surmount Hurdles, and empower them to leverage Accelerators.

# Process

This guide provides a systematic framework for establishing the core focus and objectives of an initiative. By following these steps, you'll gain clarity and alignment, while ensuring key stakeholders are collaborating toward shared goals.

1. Center: Define Your Purpose
2. Include: Identify Stakeholders
3. Diverge & Converge: Determine Topics for Consideration
4. Discuss: Explore & Analyze Each of Your Selected Topics
5. Prioritize: Choose the Most Important 1-3 Topics in Each Category
6. Strategize: Explore Intersections Between the Most Important Topics
7. Communicate: Update Stakeholders on Your Process, Progress & Next Steps

# 1. Center: Define Your Purpose

A helpful starting point is to reflect on why you want to engage in this innovation process. Establishing a clear, shared purpose can provide a strong foundation for meaningful and sustainable change. If it's helpful, you might consider connecting your efforts to your school or district's mission, vision, or strategic priorities.

<p><b>What do you hope to accomplish?</b></p> <p><i>For example: Gain a better understanding of what our teachers are really struggling with; prioritize professional development efforts; look for ways to merge efforts informed by this process; implement a system for more effective communication between teachers and parents to support student success.</i></p>	<p><b>Why does this matter? To you? To specific stakeholders?</b></p> <p><i>For example: Understanding the challenges our teachers face allows us to provide targeted support and resources; too many change efforts are not sustainable – this process could help avoid the “disappearing pilot” phenomenon; strengthening connections within our school community creates a more inclusive and supportive environment.</i></p>
Empty space for user input	Empty space for user input

## 2. Include: Identify Stakeholders

Stakeholder inclusion is essential to any successful, value-led change effort. This tool can be used at the school, district, or other levels.

<p><b>Who are your stakeholders?</b> Who will be impacted by change work in your school/district? Who has influence in this work? Who is leading this effort? Who is the audience for this work and how can they be included?</p>	<p>Not sure? Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers</li> <li>● Teaching assistants/Support staff</li> <li>● Administrators</li> <li>● Students</li> <li>● Parents/Guardians</li> <li>● EdTech staff</li> <li>● Community members &amp; partners</li> <li>● Grants organizations</li> <li>● Local employers hiring high school graduates</li> <li>● School Board</li> <li>● Grandparents / senior citizen groups*</li> <li>● Outside organizations &amp; government departments</li> <li>● Vendor partners</li> <li>● Local colleges</li> </ul> <p><i>*Including those in the community without school-aged children helps them to feel connected and see the value of investing in the school through volunteering or supporting tax levies.</i></p>
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<p><b>What will your process be to include stakeholders?</b></p> <p>For example, consider how you will engage stakeholder groups that may be impacted by potential actions. Will you involve all stakeholders at once, or would it be more effective to engage different groups at different times? Will you use virtual or in-person meetings, surveys, or a combination of methods? Each situation will likely require a thoughtful mix of approaches tailored to your context.</p>	<p><b>Who can help you organize and implement stakeholder engagement?</b></p>
<p><b>Who will be a part of the “final decision-maker” group?</b></p>	<p><b>Who do you need to circle back to, update, inform at the end of the project?</b></p>

### 3. Diverge & Converge: Determine Topics for Consideration

While each topic in your initial list may be important, it can be helpful to prioritize those with the greatest immediate impact and relevance for action. Focusing your efforts in this way can make the work feel more manageable and lead to meaningful early progress.

<p><b>Diverge: Cast a Wide Net</b> Review the topic lists (below) from the 2026 Driving K-12 Innovation Advisory Board and create your own list of topics relevant to your school/district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hurdles</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Accelerators</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tech Enablers</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>→ Diverge: Seek Input</b> Consider a survey or town hall style meetings to include your identified stakeholders in the process.</p> <p>Ask this question for Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers: <i>“Which topics do you see most impacting our school or school system now and in the next five years?”</i></p>	<p><b>→ Converge: Analyze stakeholder input</b> and curate a list of topics for discussion in each category (Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers). Consider 6–9 in each category. At this stage, it’s beneficial to keep your focus broad rather than narrowing too quickly. Your team will have additional opportunities later in the process to prioritize and refine the topics further.</p>
<p>What topics are missing from the list? Revise your list (it’s okay if it’s long).</p>	<p>My plan for gathering stakeholder input:</p>	<p>Which topics do you think are top priority to discuss (in the next step)? Do your stakeholders see something different? Consider topics in each category: Hurdles, Accelerators, &amp; Tech Enablers.</p>

## Example: Assessing Topic Relevance

*Shared by Ryan Cox, Co-Chair of the EdTech Innovation Committee*

“What topics are missing from the list?”

Something we did locally was ask how the topics align with or support the work with other departments. Looking to better align. For example — we had our department leads (Instruction, Special Education, and Equity departments) look at the larger list and narrow it down to ensure that all topics aligned with the work. Hoping this would minimize or eliminate any competing initiatives.

Look for more on the CoSN blog in late Spring 2026 about the process Ryan’s district (Osseo Area Schools, District 279, Minnesota) used to examine and design action around key topics for innovation in their district.

## 4. Discuss: Explore & Analyze Each of Your Team’s Selected Topics

With your team’s shorter (and hopefully more manageable!) list of topics to consider, it’s time to dig deeper into each one. How is each appearing (or not) in your school/district? What are the related nuances? What makes it important? What’s getting in the way of moving forward?

This discussion and exploration lays the groundwork for identifying the *most* important few topics for your school/district to address right now or in the near future.

<p><b>How will you discuss these topics?</b></p>	<p><i>The Advisory Board discussion for the Driving K-12 Innovation initiative involves a combination of asynchronous forum conversation (using the discussion questions below) and facilitated live video calls.</i></p>
<p><b>Which stakeholders will you involve in the discussion?</b></p>	<p><b>Who will structure, facilitate, and monitor conversations?</b></p>

## Discussion Prompts

<b>Hurdles:</b> What's the biggest stressor/challenge on your mind today?	<b>Accelerators:</b> What's the biggest trend/catalyst on your mind today?	<b>Tech Enablers:</b> What tool or technology are you grateful for or excited about (or deeply annoyed with) in the work you do?
<p>Additional optional ideas to jump start conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is this Hurdle materializing at your school/district/region? Share concrete examples. (PERSONALIZE)</li> <li>• How can we surmount this Hurdle? What would you recommend to others? Consider what is currently working, has promise, or is not working. (STRATEGIZE)</li> <li>• How does this Hurdle interact with other Hurdles, Accelerators, or Tech Enablers? (THINK SYSTEMICALLY)</li> </ul>	<p>Additional optional ideas to jump start conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is this Accelerator materializing at your school/district/region? Share concrete examples. (PERSONALIZE)</li> <li>• How can we leverage this Accelerator? What would you recommend to others? Consider what is currently working, has promise, or is not working. (STRATEGIZE)</li> <li>• How does this Accelerator interact with other Accelerators, Hurdles, or Tech Enablers? (THINK SYSTEMICALLY)</li> </ul>	<p>Additional optional ideas to jump start conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is this Tech Enabler materializing at your school/district/region? Share concrete examples. (PERSONALIZE)</li> <li>• How can we leverage this Tech Enabler? What would you recommend to others? Consider what is currently working, has promise, or is not working. (STRATEGIZE)</li> <li>• How does this Tech Enabler interact with other Tech Enablers, Hurdles, or Accelerators? Consider how it can be used to surmount specific Hurdles or take advantage of specific Tech Enablers. (THINK SYSTEMICALLY)</li> </ul>

## 5. Prioritize: Choose the Most Important 1-3 Topics in Each Category

Considering your stakeholders' input and your district's strategic plan and vision, what are the one to three most important topics that your team would like to address? Depending on the size of your stakeholder group, you could send a survey or hold a discussion and shared decision-making time. If applicable, consider a collaborative decision-making approach.

After discussing all the topics, select the three most important Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers.

<p><b>Seek Input to Prioritize</b> After the discussion phase, consider a survey to capture your colleagues' and stakeholders' input.</p> <p>Example Survey Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please select the three [Hurdles/Accelerators] you believe are the <i>*most important*</i> for schools to address in 2026 in order to pave the way for teaching and learning innovation and extraordinary student outcomes.</li> <li>• Please select the three Tech Enablers you believe are the <i>*most important*</i> for schools to leverage in 2026 in order to surmount Hurdles and embrace Accelerators.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our Top Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers:</b></p> <p>Hurdles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p>Accelerators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p>Tech Enablers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>
<p>My plan for gathering stakeholder input:</p>    	

## 6. Strategize: Explore Intersections Between the Most Important Topics

Now that you have your Top Topics, reflect on how each of them may relate to the others. Recognizing the connections between Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers is important to understanding the challenges facing education today. This interconnected view empowers school districts to leverage innovation to propel themselves forward. If we examine each topic in isolation, we're likely to miss nuances, synergies, and opportunities.

There are three resources in the subsequent pages.

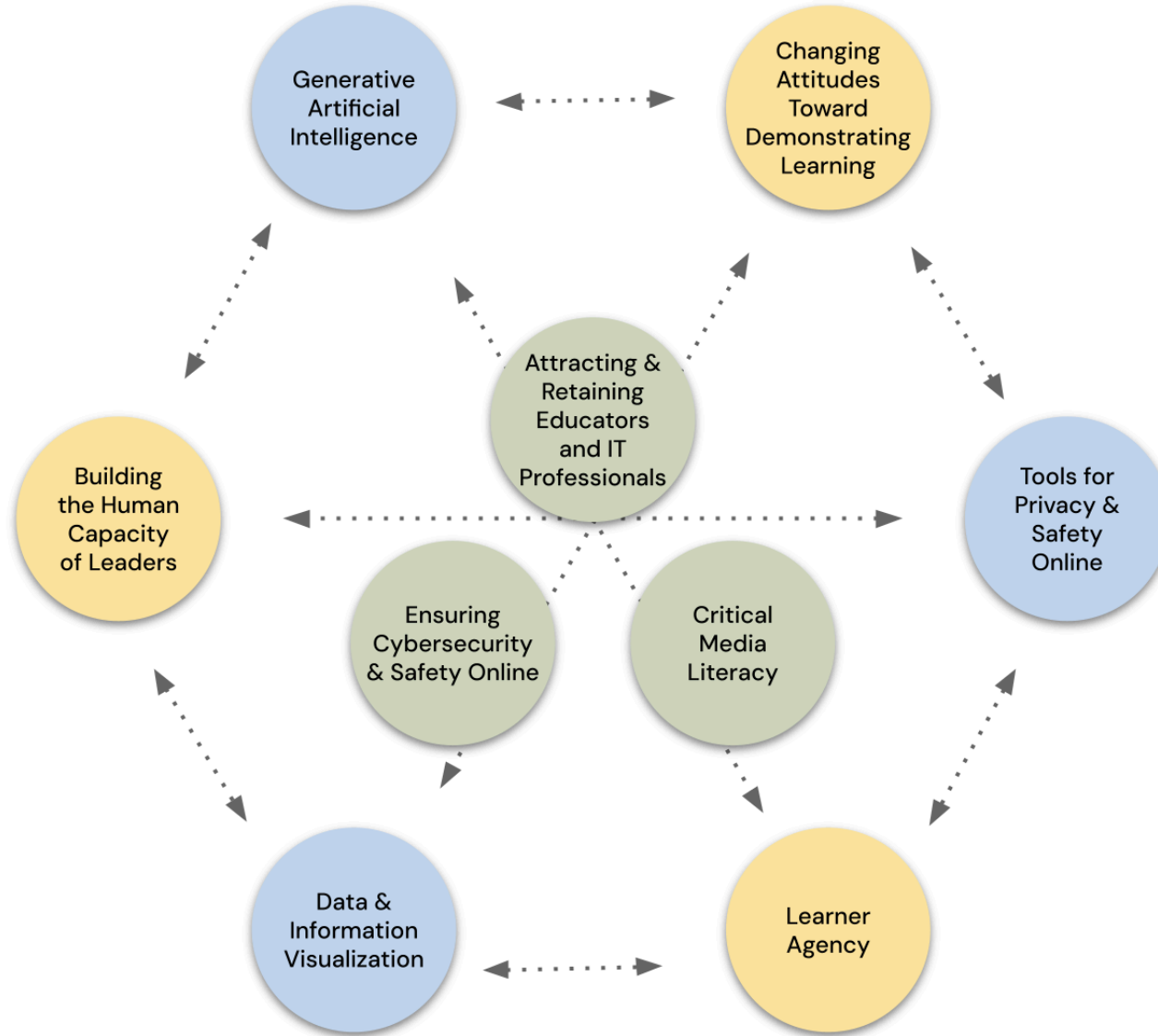
The first resource is a bubble diagram depicting one way to think about the top topics and their relationships to each other.

The second resource is a table showing some of the intersections identified in the free [2026 Driving K-12 Innovation report](#). A blank version is included on subsequent pages for you to consider intersections in your identified topics. As you fill out the chart, consider how pairing related topics could help you. Can you leverage a Tech Enabler to address a Hurdle? Would a Hurdle help define the urgency or importance of investing in an Accelerator or Tech Enabler? Could an Accelerator provide guidance or a testing ground to explore a Tech Enabler?

The third resource is a design exercise.

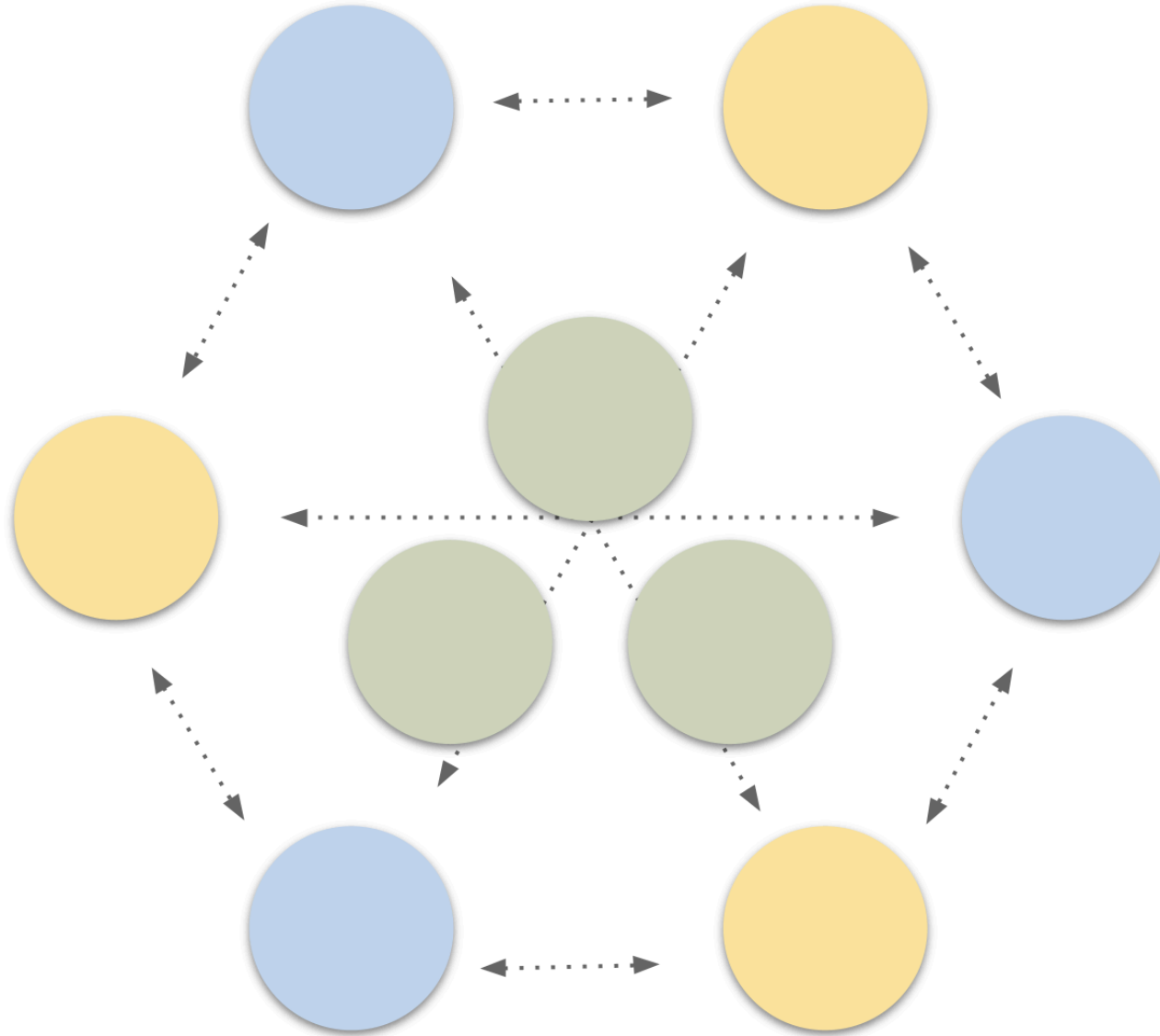
## Example: Intersections Bubble Diagram

*Originally developed by Dr. Ruben Puentedura*



## Template: Intersections Bubble Diagram

*Print and fill out. Put Hurdles in the middle circles. Put Accelerators and Tech Enablers in alternating circles around the edge.*



## Example: Intersections Table

The table contains the same topics along the top and down the side. This means that there are actually two cells for each intersection; be sure to check both of them, especially if you're developing this table collaboratively.

	[Hurdle] Attracting & Retaining Educators and IT Professionals	[Hurdle] Ensuring Cybersecurity & Safety Online	[Hurdle] Critical Media Literacy	[Accelerator] Building the Human Capacity of Leaders	[Accelerator] Changing Attitudes Toward Demonstrating Learning	[Accelerator] Learner Agency	[Tech Enabler] Generative Artificial Intelligence	[Tech Enabler] Data & Information Visualization	[Tech Enabler] Tools for Privacy & Safety Online
Attracting & Retaining Educators and IT Professionals				<p>Growing a team or department by encouraging leadership from all members</p> <p>Well-trained leaders create supportive work environments and professional growth opportunities that improve teacher satisfaction and retention.</p>			<p>This intersection creates an opportunity to reduce teacher workload through AI-supported planning and feedback tools, helping improve retention</p>		
Ensuring Cybersecurity & Safety Online				<p>Leaders who understand cybersecurity risks are more likely to implement strong policies, allocate resources, and promote safe digital practices across the district</p> <p>Leaders must build staff awareness and training so cybersecurity becomes a shared responsibility across the organization</p>					<p>District leaders could address this intersection by implementing stronger privacy tools and training staff to recognize cyber threats</p>
Critical Media Literacy		<p>Students need to be equipped with tools to identify real and malicious information.</p>				<p>Students who take ownership of their learning must also develop the skills to evaluate the reliability of the information they encounter</p>	<p>Generative AI makes it easier to create convincing misinformation, increasing the importance of teaching students how to evaluate digital content</p>		

<p><b>Critical Media Literacy (continued)</b></p>							<p>Look at next-generation strategies like Mike Caulfield's SIFT, that have both been applied in the context of AI-generated media, as well as using AI to assist with the process. – Mike Caulfield's Substack, where he discusses both: <a href="https://mikecaulfield.substack.com/">https://mikecaulfield.substack.com/</a></p>		
<p><b>Building the Human Capacity of Leaders</b></p>	<p>Invest in new leaders by providing professional development to help them grow skills and improve job satisfaction. When leaders invest in coaching, mentorship, and professional growth, educators are more likely to stay and feel valued in their roles</p>						<p>Building the capacity of leaders to leverage AI in productive and innovative ways can increase their productivity while allowing for additional time for focusing on relationship building with students, staff, and the community. However, it is important to make sure we don't increase the amount of overall work due to new productivity gains found through the use of AI.</p>	<p>Using data visualization tools/data dashboards help leaders interpret complex information more easily, enabling them to make informed instructional and strategic decisions.</p>	
<p><b>Changing Attitudes Toward Demonstrating Learning</b></p>			<p>Students can demonstrate media literacy by creating podcasts, videos, or digital analyses that evaluate the credibility of sources</p>		<p>Providing new approaches to demonstrating learning requires giving students more control over how they apply and present their knowledge</p>				
<p><b>Learner Agency</b></p>	<p>When classrooms emphasize learner agency, teachers often experience more meaningful engagement with students, increasing job satisfaction</p>		<p>When students are empowered as creators of media, they better understand how information can be manipulated or misrepresented</p>		<p>When students choose how they demonstrate learning, they take greater ownership of their educational journey</p>		<p>AI tools can personalize learning experiences, helping students to explore topics, receive feedback faster, and move through learning at their own pace</p>	<p>Give learners the tools and skills so they can construct their own visualizations and analyses of their learning processes</p>	

<p><b>Generative Artificial Intelligence</b></p>				<p>Leaders who understand AI can guide educators in using it responsibly and ethically in classroom</p>		<p>When learner agency intersects with generative AI, schools need to teach students how to use AI as a thinking partner rather than a shortcut</p>			
<p><b>Data &amp; Information Visualization</b></p>						<p>When students can see visual representations of their progress, they are more empowered to set goals and monitor their own learning</p>			
<p><b>Tools for Privacy &amp; Safety Online</b></p>			<p>Teaching students about digital footprints and online privacy helps them understand why tools that protect their privacy are important</p>						

# Template: Intersections Table

## Design Exercise

Shared by Jill Brown & Carla Wade, CoSN

Here's the design thinking exercise we used at the Large and Small/Rural Districts in our Summit at CoSN2024, and it's still relevant. [You can copy and fill out this digital version](#) or print the image on the next page.

## Design Thinking Process Instructions

### **Part 1: Problem of Practice**

Create a statement that clearly identifies a current need.

### **Part 2: Analyze Root Causes**

Discuss and Identify - Share and Organize - Revisit (Parking Lot)

### **Part 3: Theory of Action**

Create an if...then statement that describes how you will tackle your problem of practice and the desired impact.

### **Part 4: Inputs**

#### Inputs - People


Who are the individuals you need for this project and how will you support them?

#### Inputs - Resources

What resources do you have or need to make your project a success?

### **Part 5: Actions - Outputs - Outcomes**

What steps will you implement to respond to your theory of action?

		<b>Project Title:</b>		
		<b>Project Team:</b>		
<b>Project Topic:</b>				
<b>1. Problem of Practice</b>	<b>2. Analyze Root Causes</b>	<b>3. Theory of Action</b>	<b>4A. Inputs- People 4B. Inputs - Resources</b>	<b>5. Actions</b>
<p>Create a problem of practice statement below that clearly identifies a current need.</p>	<p>1. <b>Discuss and Identify.</b> Brainstorm causes of you problem.</p> <p>2. <b>Share and Organize.</b> Determine the top three causes of the problem. Drill down to the root cause by asking why three times.</p> <p>3. <b>Revisit and finalize.</b> Revisit your problem statement, redefine it if necessary and come up with your final statement.</p> <p>Cause 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why 1:</li> <li>• Why 2:</li> <li>• Why 3:</li> <li>• Why 4:</li> <li>• Why 5:</li> </ul> <p>Cause 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why 1:</li> <li>• Why 2:</li> <li>• Why 3:</li> <li>• Why 4:</li> <li>• Why 5:</li> </ul> <p>Parking Lot:</p>	<p>Create an if...then statement that describes how you will tackle your problem of practice and the desired impact.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>If we increase the professional development on cybersecurity, then we will reduce the risk of successful attacks.</p>	<p>4A. People Who are the individuals you need for this project and how will you support them?</p> <p>4B. Resources What resources do you have or need to make your project a success?</p> <p>Parking Lot:</p>	<p>What steps will you implement to respond to your theory of action? Who is the owner of each of these actions? Who will be impacted?</p>
<b>Success Criteria</b>		<b>Progress Monitoring Plan</b>		
<p>How will we know if we are successful?</p> <p>How will we measure success?</p> <p>What are you going to be monitoring along the way?</p>		<p>How will you measure progress on your theory of action and what time periods are reasonable to expect results?</p> <p>Short term: ( __ days/months)</p> <p>Medium term: ( __ days/months)</p> <p>Long Term: ( __ days/months)</p>		

## 7. Communicate: Update Stakeholders on Your Process, Progress & Next Steps

Communication is key as we integrate the insights from the Driving K-12 Innovation report into our educational practices. Engaging in transparent and consistent communication with all stakeholders ensures that the diverse voices and perspectives within our school community are heard and valued throughout the process. By keeping stakeholders informed of our progress and intentions, we foster a culture of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect.

Remember that listening can be just as powerful as speaking. Effective communication goes beyond sharing information—it creates meaningful dialogue that sparks action, reflection, and continuous improvement. As you move forward, keeping stakeholders informed and engaged helps build shared understanding and momentum for the possibilities ahead in your K-12 innovation journey.

<p><b>How will you communicate with your stakeholders?</b></p>	<p>Not sure? Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Email Newsletters:</b> Regularly scheduled newsletters can keep stakeholders informed of ongoing developments, upcoming events, and summaries of past activities. (probably similar to emails).</li> <li>● <b>Webinars/Workshops:</b> Hosting informational webinars or interactive workshops can provide stakeholders with in-depth knowledge and hands-on experience with the initiatives being implemented. (Probably the same as live events; could also be delivered via a short video series rather than live.)</li> <li>● <b>Infographics:</b> They can effectively communicate complex information in a digestible and visually appealing format, which is particularly useful for data-heavy messages.)</li> <li>● <b>FAQs:</b> A frequently asked questions document can preemptively address common queries and concerns stakeholders may have.</li> <li>● <b>Social Media:</b> Where are your stakeholders hanging out? Meet them where they are.</li> <li>● <b>“Private” Online Communities</b> like an online forum for your organization.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>What will you share?</b></p>	<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Expressions of Gratitude &amp; Impact:</b> Thank your stakeholders for their involvement in the process and communicate the impact of their time and feedback.</li> <li>● <b>Process Updates:</b> What are you working on now that’s relevant to the stakeholder’s priorities, to your shared values/mission, or to the process they’ve been a part of?</li> <li>● <b>Case Studies:</b> Detailed case studies of successful implementations can serve as motivational tools and guides for stakeholders.</li> <li>● <b>Interactive Dashboards:</b> These allow stakeholders to explore data and insights related to the report’s impact on their own time and can encourage deeper engagement with the material.</li> <li>● <b>Feedback Forms:</b> Besides surveys, dedicated feedback forms can allow stakeholders to provide their input at any time.</li> <li>● <b>Training Sessions:</b> Targeted training sessions on specific tools or strategies from the report can empower stakeholders to more effectively implement these in their own contexts.</li> </ul>
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## Example: Driving K-12 Innovation in Our Districts

This table offers a streamlined way to communicate with decision-makers about the Top Topics. In the example below, members of the EdTech Innovation Committee share examples from their districts. You'll find a blank version in subsequent pages, ready for you to duplicate and customize.

	Top Topics of 2026	Why It's Important to our District	How We're Addressing It	What We Need (Tools, Staff, Etc.)
HURDLES	<b>Attracting &amp; Retaining Educators and IT Professionals</b>	Attracting and retaining highly qualified educators and IT professionals is critical because they directly drive student achievement and maintain the secure, complex digital infrastructure our modern learning environments require.	We are tackling this challenge by modernizing our recruitment strategies, fostering a supportive workplace culture, and building clearer pathways for professional development and leadership.	To remain competitive, we require dedicated funding for salary and benefit enhancements, specialized HR recruiting software, and comprehensive mentorship and wellness programs to prevent staff burnout.
	<b>Ensuring Cybersecurity &amp; Safety Online</b>	Vulnerabilities to our system when people don't know what to look for in email, websites, etc.	Required district training for phishing. Knowledge Base articles on how to look for phishing, etc.	Vector required training every school year (this actually helped prevent some recent threats).
	<b>Critical Media Literacy</b>	Students are constantly interacting with content/information online so they need the skills to question what they see and evaluate sources carefully.	Teachers and media coordinators are incorporating discussions about credible sources, digital footprints, and responsible online behavior into classroom instruction (family nights, community events, etc.).	More instructional resources and professional learning and guidance to help integrate media literacy in lessons and with families and the community.

A C C E L E R A T O R S	<b>Building the Human Capacity of Leaders</b>			
	<b>Changing Attitudes Toward Demonstrating Learning</b>	We want students to have the opportunity to show what they know beyond traditional tests and reflect real world skills.	Expanding the use of projects, presentations, portfolios, etc to give students different ways to show what they know.	Professional learning to support redesigned lessons and assessments.
	<b>Learner Agency</b>			
T E C H  E N A B L E R	<b>Generative Artificial Intelligence</b>	There's confusion about how to use and when to use with students.	Committee work to develop guidance through a District Framework.	District Training, District Adopted Framework, Recommended Safe and Secure GenAI tools.
	<b>Data &amp; Information Visualization</b>	When data is easier to understand, teachers and leaders can make better decisions about instruction and support for students.	Combining data from multiple sources into easy to use dashboards so teachers can see trends and track progress.	User-friendly tools and training to help staff interpret and apply the information.
	<b>Tools for Privacy &amp; Safety Online</b>			

# Template: Driving K-12 Innovation in Our Districts

	Top Topics of 2026	Why It's Important to our District	How We're Addressing It	What We Need (Tools, Staff, Etc.)
HURDLES	Attracting & Retaining Educators and IT Professionals			
	Ensuring Cybersecurity & Safety Online			
	Critical Media Literacy			
ACCELERATORS	Building the Human Capacity of Leaders			
	Changing Attitudes Toward Demonstrating Learning			
	Learner Agency			

T E C H  E N A B L E R	<b>Generative Artificial Intelligence</b>			
	<b>Data &amp; Information Visualization</b>			
	<b>Tools for Privacy &amp; Safety Online</b>			

## About CoSN’s Driving K-12 Innovation: Top Topics for 2026

CoSN, the Consortium for School Networking, produces [a free annual trend report](#) to support the purposeful use of edtech to transform learning in K-12. In this initiative, a global 130+ advisory board of K-12 leaders, practitioners, and changemakers engage in discussion and vote on top topics (shown here) hindering (Hurdles), motivating (Accelerators), and enabling (Tech Enablers) teaching and learning innovation at schools around the world.

### Hurdles

Barriers to innovation and student success that require considered effort to overcome.

### Accelerators

Megatrends or catalysts that help motivate and increase the momentum of innovation.

### Tech Enablers

Tools that make new learning approaches possible, enable schools to surmount Hurdles, and empower them to leverage Accelerators.

## How to Use This Template

*Duplicate this page and the previous one. Fill it out, customize it, and share these two pages with colleagues and decision-makers. In filling out the table, you can use the Top Topics from the 2026 Driving K-12 Innovation report or replace them with the topics that are most important to your district.*

## Example: Purposeful EdTech That Works: Reclaiming the Narrative

In January 2026, the EdTech Innovation Committee hosted a webinar to share real-world examples of how intentional, balanced technology use is improving learning outcomes, supporting teachers, and creating healthier digital environments in K-12 systems today.

Read the more about the following examples on CoSN's blog, and access the full webinar recording:

<https://www.cosn.org/purposeful-edtech-that-works-8-ways-to-reclaim-the-edtech-narrative/>

- Streamlining Device Repair to Protect Access and Instruction  
*Johannah Arndt (District 279 Osseo Area Schools, Minnesota)*
- Preparing Students for a Digital Future...With Purpose  
*Cary Fulgham (Lubbock ISD, Texas)*
- High-Impact Tech Use to Increase Student Engagement  
*Theresa McSweeney, CETL (Boise School District, Idaho)*
- Redefining Screen Time Through Quality, Engagement, and Design  
*Micah Miner, CETL (Beach Park School District #3, Illinois)*
- Untethered Teaching: Using EdTech to Engage Every Student  
*Katie Harmon (Westhill CSD, New York)*
- Student-Led Device Repair as a Scalable, Career-Ready Solution  
*Samantha Reid (Jenks Public Schools, Oklahoma)*
- Building Systems for Purposeful, Sustainable EdTech Use  
*Melissa McCalla (Pasadena ISD, Texas)*
- 3 Frameworks for Purposeful, Equitable EdTech Decision Making  
*Nick Stoyas (Elmhurst District 205 Public Schools, Illinois)*

## More Case Studies & Examples: Driving K-12 Innovation Report

Reviewing concrete examples of how districts, schools, and leaders are leading change and leveraging the ideas in the *2026 Driving K-12 Innovation* report can fuel inspiration for your changemaking work ahead. Some of the following examples explore a process that's similar to the suggested protocol. Other stories will show different approaches. Take these examples as both encouragement and inspiration!

Download the report for free:

<https://www.cosn.org/tools-and-resources/resource/2026-driving-k-12-innovation-report-hurdles-accelerators-tech-enablers/>

# Authors & Acknowledgements

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