

Ashley McBride

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CETL? Yes

Detailed overview of your professional experience in education technology, including specific roles, responsibilities, and accomplishments. I have spent my career advancing the thoughtful integration of technology to improve teaching and learning at the classroom, district, state, and higher education levels. My journey began as an English teacher, where I quickly recognized the power of instructional technology to engage students and differentiate learning. This experience sparked my transition into instructional technology facilitation and district leadership.

As Director of Technology for Dare County Schools, I developed and implemented a district-wide technology strategy that emphasized instructional technology facilitators and librarians as key partners in personalized learning. I oversaw network infrastructure improvements, leveraged E-rate funds for sustainability, and designed professional learning programs that shifted these roles toward coaching and digital-age instructional support.

Currently, as Section Chief for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Digital Learning Initiative, I lead the implementation of the state's Digital Learning Plan. My responsibilities include developing competency-based micro-credentials for educators, managing statewide professional learning collaboratives, and overseeing the redesign of the Digital Learning Initiative Grants to prioritize interoperability and equity. I also maintain a multimillion-dollar budget and report findings to the State Board of Education and General Assembly.

In higher education, I served as an adjunct professor at Central Michigan University, teaching in the Master's in Learning Design and Technology program, where I designed and facilitated online graduate-level courses. My contributions have been recognized with the ISTE + ASCD Global Making IT Happen Award (2025) and the ISTE 20 to Watch Award (2022), reflecting my impact on digital learning innovation.

Identify the top two priorities that you believe CoSN should prioritize over the next three years.

Over the next three years, I believe CoSN should focus on two priorities that will strengthen its impact and ensure equitable access to educational technology.

The first priority is advocacy for funding. CoSN has already made an impressive impact at the federal level, but expanding this work to state-level advocacy would amplify its influence. By tracking and sharing state education technology funding proposals, legislation, and emerging trends, CoSN could equip district leaders with the knowledge they need to anticipate changes and advocate effectively in their local contexts. This kind of proactive communication would help protect and sustain school and district technology budgets at a time when funding streams are becoming increasingly uncertain.

The second priority is expanding access to CoSN programs through scholarships. Rural and low socioeconomic districts often lack the resources to attend the annual conference, enroll in professional learning courses, or pursue certifications such as CETL or TLE. Establishing scholarship opportunities, potentially through partnerships with philanthropic organizations or corporate sponsors, would help offset these barriers. With ESSER funds no longer available and budget cuts occurring at federal, state, and local levels, this type of support would ensure that all districts can benefit from the training and leadership development CoSN offers.

By combining a stronger advocacy presence at the state level with intentional efforts to expand access, CoSN can ensure that districts of every size and resource level are equipped to innovate and support their students in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.



Outline your pertinent leadership experience within nonprofit entities (e.g. board involvement, event management, and fundraising). Highlight any notable engagement with state or national education and/or educational technology associations.

I have extensive leadership experience in nonprofit and association settings that advance educational technology and professional learning. I currently serve as a Board Member of the North Carolina Technology in Education Society (NCTIES), where I contribute to governance, strategic planning, and support for statewide professional learning events that connect educators with innovative practices. In addition, I am a member of the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) Driving K-12 Innovation Advisory Board, collaborating with national leaders to identify priorities and publish resources that guide district-level technology adoption. My national and state engagement has been recognized through awards such as the 2025 ISTE+ASCD Global Making IT Happen Award and the 2022 ISTE “20 to Watch” Award. I am also the author of The Edtech Coaching Primer (ISTE, 2021) and a contributor to ASCD Educational Leadership. These roles and recognitions highlight my sustained commitment to advancing digital learning, supporting educators, and strengthening organizational impact through board service, collaboration, and strategic leadership.

Detail your prior engagement with CoSN and/or our state chapters.

My engagement with the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) reflects both national and state-level contributions to advancing digital learning and innovation. Nationally, I serve as a member of the Driving K-12 Innovation Advisory Board, where I collaborate with education technology leaders across the country to identify key trends, challenges, and accelerators impacting school systems. Through this role, I have contributed to the development of influential reports and resources that guide district leaders in making informed decisions about technology implementation and instructional innovation.

At the state level, I have partnered with CoSN-aligned initiatives through my role as Section Chief for the North Carolina Digital Learning Initiative at the Department of Public Instruction. In this capacity, I oversee statewide programs and grants that strengthen district technology infrastructure and professional learning. This work has included curating and sharing CoSN resources with district leaders, aligning state policy with national best practices, and ensuring that school systems are equipped with the guidance and support needed to leverage technology effectively.

I have also been actively involved in professional development efforts that connect CoSN’s priorities to practice, including designing and leading statewide collaboratives for instructional technology coaches and school library media coordinators. These networks provide educators with access to tools, research, and strategies that often originate from CoSN’s thought leadership.

My engagement with CoSN has consistently emphasized bridging national-level innovation with local implementation, ensuring that educators and students benefit from equitable, forward-looking digital learning opportunities.
