ATLiS360

A TECHNOLOGY SELF-STUDY GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

ATLiS
Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools

The Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools
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INTRODUCTION

The Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools (ATLIS) is pleased to share this guide with the independent school community to assist schools in conducting an internal self-study of the role of technology in school programs and operations. It can be used to analyze school-wide initiatives, to conduct departmental strategic planning, to help manage transitions, or to assist in an accreditation review.

To create the guide, ATLIS convened a committee of technology directors, other school administrators, visiting team chairs, and directors of accreditation from accrediting associations. The committee sought input and held a forum for gathering comments that included a number of independent school administrators and technology leaders, as well as accreditation professionals. Bill Donovan of Cannon School Concord, North Carolina; Amy Grunat of Drew School, San Francisco, California; and Dawn Klus of the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS), headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, chaired the original committee. ATLIS is grateful for the countless hours generously donated by these volunteers.

In the course of their work, the committee drew upon a number of resources, most notably the NAIS Principles of Good Practice: Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The guide is divided into five sections representing major areas of technology's impact throughout independent schools:

1. Academic Programs, Educational Processes, Teaching and Learning
2. Managing Technology for School Operations
3. Leading the Technology Department
4. Best Practices Regarding Technology Resources
5. Long-range and Strategic Planning

Each section of this guide may be used and adapted by individuals overseeing different components of technology in schools, or the review called for in this guide may be completed by one individual, depending on school resources and the nature and purpose of the self-study. Completing the review process provides an important opportunity for reflection and growth for school leaders.

Each section of this guide contains the following:

- **Guiding Questions:** Designed to help foster reflective and productive conversations among all technology leaders and stakeholders
- **Supporting Prompts:** Meant to follow up the guiding questions with more detailed examination
- **Documentation Checklists:** Resources addressing workflow, policies, and procedures

Users of this guide may pursue individually each Guiding Question and its Supporting Prompts, while also collecting related materials mentioned in the Document Checklist, to fully address a particular area of interest or concern. Or users may wish to employ either the guiding questions alone or the Complete Checklist of Supporting Documents (Appendix) to begin the process of examination. The Guiding Questions and Supporting Prompts are not intended as dictates or requirements, but rather are intended as starting points for discussion and reflection. No written responses are required; however, schools may wish to document the self-study process for future review.

Users should adapt the recommendations in this guide to meet their school's particular needs.

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SECTION ONE
Academic Programs, Educational Processes, Teaching and Learning

Guiding Questions

- How does the school implement and innovate technology with respect to the academic programs, educational processes, and teaching and learning?

- How does technology staff communicate, collaborate, and coordinate with other school information specialists (e.g., librarians or media specialists)?

Supporting Prompts

- How are decisions made about choosing and implementing technologies in support of learning?

- How are teachers and students involved in choosing the technologies that best support their growth?

- How does the school define equitable access? How is equitable access to technology assured?

- How do learners acquire basic technology skills, and how are teachers' and students' technological capacities further developed?

- How does the school assess and evaluate users regarding basic technological competencies?

- How are teachers and students empowered to explore meaningful ways to adapt and use evolving technologies in support of learning? In particular, how are they encouraged to explore technologies that enhance personalized instruction and a deeper understanding of content in ways that acknowledge the ubiquity of factual materials, how do they employ technologies to promote critical thinking and sound judgment, and how do they use technology in appropriate ways to promote agency, higher-order thinking, collaboration, and authentic assessment?

- How are learners engaged in ways that promote media, digital, and global literacies, allowing users to create and share content with others outside their immediate classroom, colleagues, or communities?

- How are teachers and students challenged to consider their own safety and the safety of others and to wrestle with ethical challenges and responsibilities of using technology? How are they supported in their growth as digital citizens and encouraged to find a healthy balance in their use of technology in school, work, and personal life?

SECTION ONE *continued*

- How does the school address the necessary orientation, training, and professional development required to support evolving technologies, manage school systems, onboard new community members, and sustain innovation and growth?

- Describe how technology is used to support the following systems or programs:
  - academic administration
  - distance or blended learning
  - student life, athletics, and co-curricular programs
  - library/media services
  - academic support services
  - technology skills instruction

Document Checklist

❒ Digital Ethics Curriculum for Students

❒ Technology Skills Scope and Sequence(s)

❒ Online and Blended Learning Offerings

❒ Professional Development Plans for Employees

SECTION TWO
Managing Technology for School Operations

Guiding Question

- How does the school manage and execute technology with respect to its operating and institutional processes, considering each of these areas, individually or collectively: advancement, enrollment, business/data management, and sustainability?

Supporting Prompts

- What are the processes for choosing, implementing, maintaining, and evaluating the technologies needed by the various programs that support the school's operations?
- What are the mechanisms for training new operations staff in new technologies and updated systems, and for sustaining professional development for ongoing staff as systems evolve?
- Describe the lines of communication among the various constituencies and systems in support of school operations. How does the technology department facilitate communications?
- How are data flow and data integrity managed across departments?
- How is access control implemented in network storage, shared databases, and files?

Document Checklist

- ❒ Employee Onboarding and Offboarding Procedures
- ❒ **NEW** Network and Software Applications Permissions Policy and End-user Security Procedures
- ❒ Network Diagram
- ❒ Map of Data Flow Through the School's Information Systems
- ❒ Site Survey

SECTION THREE
Leading the Technology Department

Guiding Questions

- How is the technology department structured, supported, and led to optimize the contribution of technology to overall school sustainability and success?

- How does the school ensure professional growth of technology personnel?

Supporting Prompts

- Describe and document the technology department structure, indicating its organizational structure, defining team job descriptions, detailing to whom the leadership reports, and underscoring the department's relationship to the mission of the school and supporting initiatives. If the school utilizes a managed service provider, consider including that agreement as well.

- Describe and document school policies regarding technology.

- Describe the school's budgeting process for technology, including how it is managed, by whom, what is included in the technology budget, and how priorities are determined.

- Describe how professional development for technology is budgeted, managed, delivered, and supported.

Document Checklist

- ❒ Technology Department Mission Statement
- ❒ Technology Department(s) Organizational Chart
- ❒ Technology Team Job Descriptions
- ❒ **NEW** Technology Department Budget
- ❒ **NEW** Professional Development Plans for Technology Staff
- ❒ **NEW** Evaluation Process for Technology Staff
- ❒ Document Retention Policies
- ❒ Responsible, Ethical, or Acceptable Use Policies
- ❒ Social Media Policies
- ❒ Privacy Policies
- ❒ Personal Device Policy

SECTION FOUR
Best Practices Regarding Technology Resources

Guiding Questions

- How does the school ensure best practices are followed in building, securing, and supporting technology resources?
- How is long-range or strategic planning accomplished and evaluated for future technology needs? How does such planning support the school's mission? How is success measured? How are key stakeholders involved in decision-making?

Supporting Prompts

- What are the processes for selecting, replacing, or renewing devices, services, or software?
- What is the cycle for replacement of hardware, network systems, and technology infrastructure, and how is this determined?
- What are the systems in place for tracking and evaluating application and device use and for assessing the effect on learning of using technology resources?
- How does the school maintain records of renewals, expirations, vendor relationships, and licensing agreements?
- What tools does the school use to deploy and update software?
- Who assures that all networks systems are up-to-date, and how is this done?
- What is the protocol for ensuring continuous service when there are changes of personnel or other disruptions?
- How is inventory managed and documented?
- How does the school manage helpdesk tickets?
- Does the technology staff follow a Service Level Agreement to ensure priorities are met?
- How does the school manage and evaluate tech support?
- How are backups implemented, managed, and tested?
- What are the school's disaster recovery plans and practices?
- How does the school prevent and address cybersecurity threats?

SECTION FOUR *continued*

Document Checklist

- ❒ Digital Security Policies and Procedures
- ❒ Service Level Agreement
- ❒ PCI Compliance Policy
- ❒ **NEW** General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy
- ❒ Software Adoption and Update Policies
- ❒ Hardware Adoption and Replacement Policies
- ❒ Hardware Inventory
- ❒ Software/App Inventory
- ❒ Digital Subscription Inventory

SECTION FIVE
Long-Range and Strategic Planning

Guiding Questions

- How are long-range planning and strategic planning for future technology needs accomplished and evaluated as mission-appropriate?
- How are key stakeholders involved in the decision-making process?
- What are the methods of assessing success?

Supporting Prompts

- Describe how the technology leadership of the school contributes to the long-range planning process and monitors its implementation.
- How does the technology leadership manage change in relation to the technology needs of the school? What is the process for deciding on and implementing new technologies at the school?
- How is the efficacy of the school's technology use assessed, and how is this data used to inform the school's decisions about technology?

Document Checklist

❒ Long- and Short-Range Technology Plans

❒ Technology Program Assessments

APPENDIX
ATLIS360 Document Checklist

The Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools (ATLIS) is pleased to share this checklist to accompany this edition of *ATLIS360: A Technology Self-Study Guide for Schools.* This checklist is designed for schools to document and streamline processes, address gaps, and implement best practices.

Academic Programs, Educational Processes, Teaching and Learning

- ❒ Digital Ethics Curriculum for Students
- ❒ Technology Skills Scope and Sequence(s)
- ❒ Online and Blended Learning Offerings
- ❒ Professional Development Plans for Employees

Managing Technology for School Operations

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- ❒ Software/App Inventory
- ❒ Digital Subscription Inventory

Long-Range and Strategic Planning

- ❒ Long- and Short-Range Technology Plans
- ❒ Technology Program Assessments