

Technology Planning: Questions to Consider

The following questions may be useful as you think about revising or developing your technology plans. Three of the five criteria have been selected for elaboration here, based on SLD's review of technology plans in the course of the Program Integrity Assurance review process. Criteria #1, 2, and 5 have been selected because these areas appear to be the most challenging for applicants engaged in the planning process. These questions are presented as simply one device to facilitate your planning process.

- I. The plan must establish clear goals and a realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology to improve education or library services.
 - a) What goals have you identified in your library service or school improvement plan?
 - b) What accompanying strategies have already been identified to reach those goals?
 - c) What specific telecommunications and information technologies (such as access to the Internet, access to remote databases, distance learning, etc.) are useful in helping you reach those goals?
 - d) What are the specific resources (e.g. trainers, selected curricular software, Internet access, links to subscribed data bases, etc.) that you plan to help you reach your goals for improved teaching and learning or improved library service?

- II. The plan must have a professional development strategy to ensure that staff know how to use these new technologies to improve education or library services;
 - a) What are the specific resources and strategies that you plan to implement to ensure that your staff is ready to use and maintain the telecommunications and information technologies?
 - b) Who will be in charge of coordinating the professional development activities?
 - c) Are there in-service slots set aside for technology-related professional development?
 - d) Will the professional development be required for all that use it, or is it optional? If optional, what incentives exist to encourage teachers and librarians to pick up these new skills?
 - e) What models of professional development would work in your organization to train your staff?
 - f) What professional development opportunities and resources exist for your technical staff?
 - g) Do you have the resources in house to train these staff members or do they need to go to outside courses, or a combination of the two?
 - h) What financial and time resources exist to keep the staff up-to-date in learning about new technologies?
 - i) What professional development opportunities are available from outside sources (such as service providers, courses at institutions of higher education, conferences, courses delivered via distance learning or over the Internet: courses sponsored by your state education or library agency)?
 - j) What professional development opportunities and resources exist for your professional staff (i.e., teachers or librarians) to ensure that they can not only use the new technologies, but use them to deliver improved teaching and learning or improved library service?
 - k) What classes or seminars are available to your staff on an ongoing basis within your organization?
 - l) Can your staff meet with others who are already further along in implementing technology in another school or library?
 - m) What professional development is available from service providers?

- III. The plan must include an assessment of the telecommunication services, hardware, software, and other services that will be needed to improve education or library services.

- IV. The plan must provide for a sufficient budget to acquire and support the non-discounted elements of the plan: the hardware, software, professional development, and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy.

- V. The plan must include an evaluation process that enables the school or library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities as they arise.
 - a) How frequently will you update the plan?
 - b) Who is responsible for updating the plan?
 - c) How will you determine if the technology plan was successful in meeting the goals of your institutional plans, i.e. your school improvement plan or your library service plan? e.g. Interview/survey staff, patrons, other stakeholders; measuring progress made towards the benchmarks you set out in your goals; observations
 - d) What goals and objectives of the Technology Plan were you able to meet? To what extent?
 - e) Were there any unexpected outcomes or benefits to having the technology in place?
 - f) What goals and objectives of the technology plan did you not meet? Why? Are there ways to overcome these barriers?
 - g) What is the plan for meeting unmet goals and objectives?
 - h) Are there other needs that have emerged since you last wrote/revised your plan? Is so, what are they?
 - i) Are there any goals and objectives that are no longer relevant to your situation and should be deleted from the plan?
 - j) What developments in technology have emerged that you can take advantage of to improve education or library service for your school or community? How do you identify potentially useful new technologies (e.g. attending conferences, reading publications, networking with peers)?

E-Rate Central provides a great deal of additional help concerning technology planning at http://www.e-ratecentral.com/us/nys/techPlan_nys/default.asp.