

Alabama Technology Planning Assist Guide

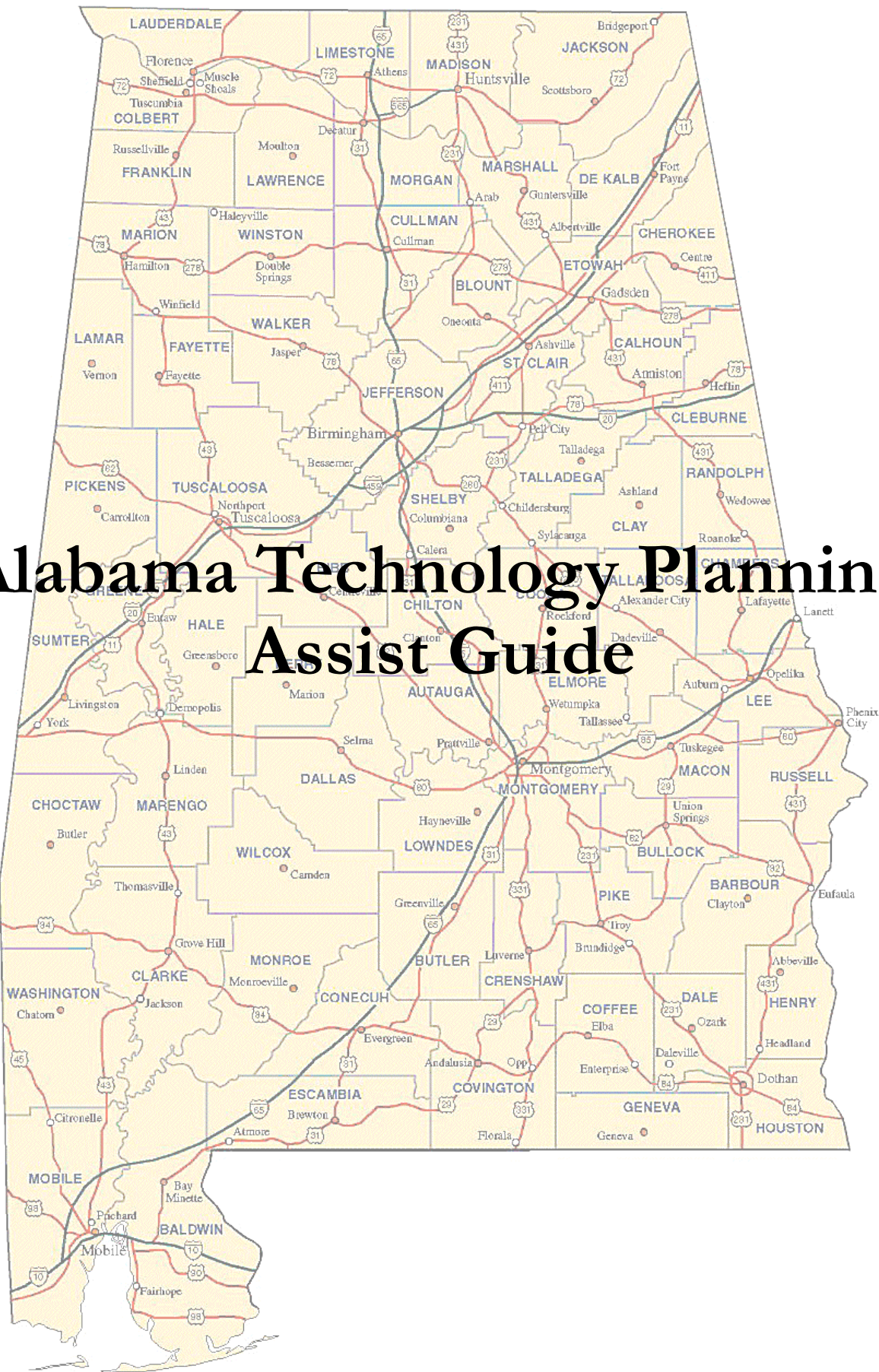


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4/2/07

Introduction -- Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help local Alabama systems develop strategic technology plans which are rooted in local visions and concerns and which reflect the general priorities set forth in IMPACT, the Alabama Department of Education's Technology Plan.

The 2007-2012 revision of IMPACT includes numerous changes in terminology and structure, and places new requirements upon systems filing local plans. This guide is designed to provide background and additional resources to help systems understand the meaning of the new expectations and to help them begin to create a framework for evaluating progress on technology initiatives developed through local plans. Throughout this document you will find templates and other resources to assist systems in developing unique local plans and evaluation strategies.

The first section of this document is organized around the online technology planning Template that all systems will use in filing local plans with the state. The structure of the template is replicated here, along with guidance to systems on completing each section. (When filling out the actual form on line, systems will be able to access the text of this Assist Guide and additional resources through links at each section.)

The latter portion of this guide provides a more thorough explanation of the local technology planning process and components of a good technology plan. It offers guidance to systems in the creation of customized strategic plans that truly address local needs, while still meeting state requirements. With the information provided in this section, systems interested in building upon existing local priorities and aligning technology efforts with broader curricular goals can begin to develop technology plans and evaluation strategies reflective of this integrated approach.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the state of Alabama requires only that each system create a plan according to the structure laid out in the state's Template in the IMPACT document. The degree of customization and ownership of the strategies for carrying out the plan and for evaluating its progress are entirely at the discretion of the local system. This guide presents options for both, and hopes to provide a compelling case for systems to move toward developing locally significant strategic plans that will provide useful a "roadmap" for implementing technology as a meaningful tool for teaching and learning.

Local Planning Steps

Systems should engage in the following steps *at a minimum* in order to create a Local System Technology Plan:

1. Choose a technology planning committee, and hold an initial meeting to determine roles, responsibilities, and a timeline for creating a plan
2. Complete the Statewide Teacher and Administrator technology surveys
3. Review survey data (and other data sources as available) as a committee in order to provide background to the creation of plan elements
4. Draft the following:
 - A technology vision
 - Local interpretations of the four IMPACT goals
 - Ideal performance statement for each goal
 - Objectives, either chosen or created for each goal
 - Action steps for each objective

- Responses to the six “E-Rate Questions”
5. Approve the draft (of above) as a committee -- finalize draft
 6. Enter the final draft into the ALSDE online template for Local System Plans by 8/15/07

The following sections of this Assist Guide provide definitions of these items and steps.

The System Technology Plan Template

All local plans must be submitted to the Alabama Department of Education by August 15, 2007. Systems are to use the electronic template form located at http://ti_sp.alsde.edu/tp2007/default.aspx.

Pages in the ALSDE Local System Plan Template

Home - The opening, organizing page of the online Technology Plan template

General - Your system's Vision for instructional technology goes on this page, along with responses to several other questions necessary for E-Rate.

Goal 1 - Use this page to input information (goal statement, ideal performance statement, data sources, objectives, and action steps) pertaining to Goal 1.

Goal 2 - Use this page to input information (goal statement, ideal performance statement, data sources, objectives, and action steps) pertaining to Goal 2.

Goal 3 - Use this page to input information (goal statement, ideal performance statement, data sources, objectives, and action steps) pertaining to Goal 3.

Goal 4 - Use this page to input information (goal statement, ideal performance statement, data sources, objectives, and action steps) pertaining to Goal 4.

Action Steps - This page keeps a running list of the various Action Steps created in relation to planning objectives. Use this page to assign Actions to Objectives connected to any of the Goals in your plan.

E-Rate - Action steps that have been flagged as "E-Rate Actions" will be automatically listed on this page.

Inventory - This page contains information from ALSDE as to your registered hardware inventory.

Survey - This is a link to the statewide teacher and administrator surveys.

Discussion - A forum for posting questions and having discussions with ALSDE.

The following pages of the Assist Guide detail the contents of many of these Template pages.

Home

Home - Technology Planning 2007

Home - Technology Planni...

Home Print Plan Up to ALSDE - TI Website

Technology Planning 2007

Home General Goal 1 Goal 2 Goal 3 Goal 4 Action Steps E-Rate Inventory Survey Discussion

Sample District
System Code 999
Superintendent Dr. John T. Super
Technology Coordinator Jim James
Financial Officer Jenny Penny
Superintendent Email jtsuper@sd.k12.org
Address 123 Main Street
City Somewhere
State AL
ZipCode 36999
ZipCode4 0112
Phone 334-555-5555
Fax 334-555-5556
SystemEmail Sd@sd.k12.org
WebAddress www.sdk12.org
Edit

Technology Plan 2007 Status

New Item Filter

Status	Modified By	Modified
LEA Submit for Review by SDE	Alabama Department of Education	3/23/2007 7:41 AM
LEA Edit & Additions	Alabama Department of Education	3/23/2007 7:40 AM

Technology Planning Team

Last Name	First Name	School/Organization	E-mail Address
Browning	Jerome	Alabama Department of Education	jbrowning@alsde.edu

Add new Item

Plan Status

In this section you will communicate whether your plan is ready for review by the state, and what, if any, modifications, attachments, etc. still need to be included.

Technology Planning Team

Your technology planning committee must represent a broad stakeholder group within your community. Stakeholders are those people who have a keen interest in technology planning because it will impact their work or interests. Systems in Alabama must include representation from individuals in the following positions:

- classroom teachers
- administrators
- library/media specialists
- parents
- private school personnel (where applicable)

General

The General section of the Template is designed for systems to input those parts of their plan that are overarching to the entire plan.

Vision

A vision statement is a detailed description of an organization (or system) as it effectively carries out its mission. A vision for a system technology plan must be developed locally and should address both *why* a local committee feels that technology is important to its students and teachers, and *how* it believes that technology supports the overall goals of the learning community. By “painting a picture” of how an ideal technology-supported learning environment would look, a vision statement can serve to inform, inspire and bring members of the community to the “same page”.

Sample vision statements and visioning tools are provided on [page 17](#) of this Assist Guide.

Overarching Infrastructure Questions

Also on the General page, systems are asked to enter information on:

- Systemwide Infrastructure
- Connectivity/WAN
- Information Security Measures
- Internet Access

Contact [Jerome Browning](#) (at ALSDE) for more information on these questions.

Goals

There are four tabs for Goals accessible from the Template's main page. These tabs correspond to the four goals required in each local system plan. The format and required items for each goal is identical. You should complete one of these Goal pages for each of your four goals.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Technology Planning 2007". The page has a navigation bar with "Home" and "Print Plan" on the left, and "Up to ALSDE - TI Website" on the right. Below the navigation bar is a "Technology Planning 2007" header with a logo and a menu of tabs: "Home", "General", "Goal 1", "Goal 2", "Goal 3", "Goal 4", "Action Steps", "E-Rate", "Inventory", "Survey", and "Discussion". The "Goal 1" tab is selected, and the page content is titled "GOAL 1: TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AND MASTERY OF STANDARDS".

The main content area includes the following sections:

- All Alabama students, teachers, and administrators will effectively use technology as an integrated tool for teaching, leading, and learning to master local, state, and national standards.**
- Our Local Interpretation of Goal** (with an "Edit Form" button and a text area containing "Click the Edit Form button to enter text in this area.")
- IDEAL PERFORMANCE (Indicator for Goal 1): When we have achieved Goal 1 we will see the following in our district.** (with an "Edit Form" button and a text area containing "Click the Edit Form button to enter text in this area.")
- DATA SOURCES: We will use the following data source(s) to monitor performance.** (with an "Edit Form" button and a text area containing "Click the Edit Form button to enter text in this area.")
- WHERE WE STAND: We have made progress toward achieving Goal 1 in the following ways.** (with a text area containing "Not necessary until 2008")
- Current Objectives (Goal 1) - Must have at least 3** (with a table of objectives):

Objective	Description
1	Students meet the Technology Literacy Content Standards found in Alabama's Technology Course of Study.
2	Student's regularly make use of current and emerging technology in the learning process.
3	Teachers meet local, state, and national technology standards.
4	Teachers effectively and equitably map instructional technologies to specific content standards and levels of student learning.
5	Teachers appropriately and regularly assign learning activities that integrate the use of technology tools.
6	Teachers model the appropriate use of technology tools and resources
7	Teachers use technology to gather and analyze data for improving student achievement.
8	Educators use technology to communicate with stakeholders at the local, district, and state level.
9	Administrators meet local, state, and national standards.
10	Administrators use technology to gather and analyze data to assess instructional effectiveness and monitor student achievement.

Local Interpretation of Goal

Goals break your vision down into broad areas on which to focus your efforts. The Alabama state plan includes four such goals addressing technology integration and standards, access to resources, professional development and infrastructure. Districts are encouraged to use their local vision as a starting point for crafting goal statements which address the four general goal areas of the state's plan.

“This is what this IMPACT goal means to our system”

A local interpretation of a goal would be to focus the goal language on those areas and/or initiatives that have particular meaning and relevance for *your local system*. For example, if you have a particular overarching program or philosophy (e.g., “Success for All”) you could reference this in your goal statement. The point is to use language in your goal that states the broad *intent* of the state goal but expresses it in terms that have meaning locally.

Ideal Performance Statements

“When we have achieved Goal 1 we will see the following in our system”

Ideal Performance Statements are detailed descriptions that develop a clear picture of what it looks like when your system has achieved or put into place what is described in your goal statement. Since goals are in fact composed of at least three objectives, it is entirely likely that your Ideal Performance will be a composite picture of what it “looks like” when you have met your stated objectives. The ideal performance statement should be written in descriptive language that describes *qualitatively* what one will see when your goal has been met.

For more information on Ideal Performance Statements, see [page 20](#) of this Assist Guide

Data Sources

Systems must identify *where* and *how* the data can be found to inform you of your progress. Some systems may choose to use only the statewide survey tool as a means of monitoring progress, while others may wish to develop a more in-depth understanding of what is working well in the system and which areas need improvement.

“We will use the following data source(s) to monitor performance”

If, for example, you are trying to assess how well a system is supporting teachers and administrators in their use of technology, you might begin your investigation with an examination of the professional development offerings of the past year. You might look at how well those sessions aligned with content standards, how useful the teachers felt the trainings were, or how well the participants were compensated for their time to attend professional development sessions. Finding this information will require you to access a variety of system records, examine training materials, and talk with teachers about their experiences. Refer to page 27 of [IMPACT](#) for more ideas on local data sources aligned with IMPACT goals.

Where We Stand

Beginning in 2008, this section will be used as a way for systems to report on current status. Systems will analyze local data and report on progress made toward the Ideal Performance described for each goal.

The screenshot shows the 'Technology Planning 2007' application. It features two main sections: 'Edit/Add Objectives Goal 1' and 'Action Steps for Goal 1'. The 'Objectives' section is a table with columns for 'Objective', 'Description', 'Modified', 'Modified By', 'Created', and 'Created By'. It lists 11 objectives, with the last one being a new entry. The 'Action Steps' section is a table with columns for 'Title', 'Description', 'Goal 1 Objectives', 'Person Responsible', and 'Total Estimated Cost'. It shows two action steps: 'NETS Training in Montgomery Fall 2007' and 'do things NEW'.

Objective	Description	Modified	Modified By	Created	Created By
Yes	1 Students meet the Technology Literacy Content Standards found in Alabama's Technology Course of Study.	3/18/2007 9:11 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	2 Student's regularly make use of current and emerging technology in the learning process.	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	3 Teachers meet local, state, and national technology standards.	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	4 Teachers effectively and equitably map instructional technologies to specific content standards and levels of student learning.	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	5 Teachers appropriately and regularly assign learning activities that integrate the use of technology tools.	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	6 Teachers model the appropriate use of technology tools and resources	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	7 Teachers use technology to gather and analyze data for improving student achievement.	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	8 Educators use technology to communicate with stakeholders at the local, district, and state level.	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	9 Administrators meet local, state, and national standards.	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	10 Administrators use technology to gather and analyze data to assess instructional effectiveness and monitor student achievement.	3/13/2007 4:02 PM	Alabama Department of Education	2/18/2007 11:09 PM	Jerome Browning
Yes	11 this is a new objective	3/19/2007 10:48 AM	Sun Sample DistrictDistrict	3/19/2007 10:48 AM	Sun Sample DistrictDistrict

Edit	Title	Description	Goal 1 Objectives	Person Responsible	Total Estimated Cost
	NETS Training in Montgomery Fall 2007	The principals from each school will attend as 2 day seminar in	3,8	Jenni Smith, Training Coordinator...	\$600.00
	do things NEW	quickly	1,2,5	me	\$1.00

Objectives

“These are the things we will focus upon in order to implement this goal”

Objectives break goals down into smaller, more manageable pieces. Unlike Action Steps which are about particular things you will do to achieve goals/objectives, objectives are intended to describe in finer detail the things that your goal will address. You make decisions about what your goal will address (i.e., what your objectives will be) based on a review of what you *need* to accomplish to meet your system's goals. These decisions are informed by your evaluation data.

IMPACT as a state plan has multiple objectives already associated with each goal. Objectives for each goal are listed on that goal's page for review or selection by local systems. These are the *state's* objectives, but systems may appropriate these objectives as their own (and create their own action steps intended to achieve these objectives). On the other hand, you can create your own objectives to use instead of, or in conjunction with, the state objectives. You would want to create your own objectives if you do not feel that the existing state objectives adequately describe how a goal needs to be implemented and/or focused in your particular system.

For example, if you have a goal on integrating technology, reasonable objectives might be:

- Teachers will map technology into their curriculum
- Students will master the technology skills necessary to interact with the curriculum
- Administrators will set expectations that encourage teachers to integrate technology

Action Steps

Action Steps are those specific strategies that you will put into place to accomplish your goal. Effective Action Steps identify exactly what you need to do to support your goals by specifying *who* will be responsible for which activity, *when* each activity needs to be completed, *what* resources are required, and *where* the activity will take place. The Template allows you to associate different budget categories (Items) to each Action Step. These categories are useful for determining what parts of the activity are covered by E-Rate.

For example, for your goal of technology integration, you might write Action Steps that spell out the type, frequency, cost, and focus of professional development opportunities that will be made available to enable

teachers to achieve the level of integration described in your goal and Ideal Performance Statements. You might also identify the individuals charged with mapping technology resources to the curriculum, and present a timeline for when each area of the curriculum is to incorporate which technology tools and resources.

What is important is that, taken together, the Action Steps that you write provide adequate means for you to accomplish your goal. These are the strategies that you will use to meet your objectives, and they must thus be targeted and appropriately focused on the details of the Ideal Performance described.

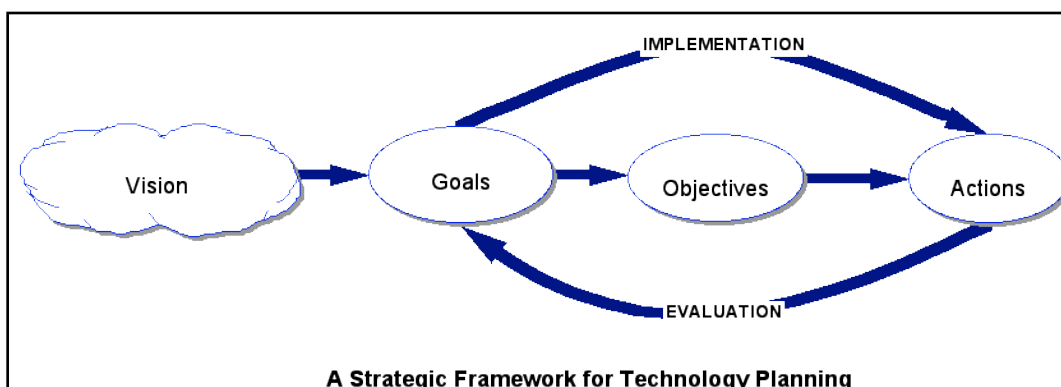
On the Template, you will have the opportunity to write Action Steps associated with each goal. The first time you access the Action Steps screen, you will have no actions listed for your goals. Once you have begun to enter actions, however, the actions that you have created will appear as a list. If an Action Step pertains to more than one goal, you may attach it to other goals as well.

Additional Guidance on Developing Plan Elements

School systems across Alabama—and across the country—are required to submit technology plans to the state on an annual basis. Many of these documents are carefully written to comply with state regulations and remain shelved at the central office or on a technology coordinator’s computer for the bulk of the year.

Few of the local plans that get submitted are truly strategic in the sense that they offer clear visions for how technology is to be used to support learning. Instead, many represent an enormous amount of effort on the part of a technology coordinator charged with collecting necessary information and filling out forms required for federal or state funding. As such, local plans often fall short of being useful to the system at the local level.

As illustrated in the diagram below, a strategic plan begins with a vision for technology’s place in the classroom and is accompanied by a series of goals and objectives, an action plan, a timeline, and a plan for evaluation. This strategic framework contains broad outlines and details for all of the steps involved in technology implementation — the building of the infrastructure (hardware and software), creation of student and teacher technology competencies, professional development strategies, purchasing, funding, scheduling, and support. The value of a strategic plan is that it creates framework for the myriad of individual strategies and actions that must take place to bring everything together successfully. The goal of this section of the guide is to provide systems with information and resources to support the



development of truly strategic local plans and meaningful ways to measure progress. We offer background information on local planning, from the creation of a planning committee to the writing of action plans, and present a method of evaluation that is rooted in your system’s vision for technology.

Throughout this portion of the guide you will find activities, samples, and links to resources that will also help to inform the planning process.

Components of a Good Technology Plan

There is no single model for an effective technology plan. The best plan is one that suits local needs and is closely linked to its system’s overall instructional goals. A strong technology plan arises out of local concerns and priorities, is informed by research on best practice, and is developed by a broadly representative planning group. As with any educational innovation, it can take as long as five years for improvements (including technology implementation) to impact student achievement measures. Therefore, most technology plans are designed with goals and objectives that extend over a five-year period. Included in the plan should be descriptions of the activities that will take place within that time and identification of the sources of funding that will support those activities.

The following are several key items that you will want to include in your technology plan:

- A vision statement
- Current status of technology infrastructure and use
- Goals
- Objectives
- Action plans or strategies
- An evaluation plan

The System Technology Plan Template includes each of these components.

Forming Your Technology Planning Committee

Assembling your planning committee is the first step toward developing a strong local plan. A broad based committee comprised of stakeholders from all areas and levels of the system will serve your planning efforts well. Stakeholders are those people who have a keen interest in technology planning because it will impact their work or interests. These individuals can both help to generate support for your technology initiatives and can provide a means by which constituent interests are represented to the committee.

Writing your system technology plan requires a committee composed of educational technology stakeholders who will actively work to help write the system's plan. Consider these tips for forming your technology planning committee:

- Your committee members should represent all aspects of your system community. This means teachers (from a variety of grades and/or subject areas), administrators, parents, community members (e.g., business people), and perhaps students.
- While working by committee may be burdensome, resist the temptation to rely on a committee of only one or two persons. On the other hand, you don't need a committee that is too large and unmanageable.
- Since the planning process contains many different tasks, you will need members with a variety of skills: curriculum design, professional development, technology infrastructure expertise, experiences with budgetary matters, administrative policy, and process tasks.
- Committee members need to understand that planning, implementation, and integration are on-going processes and are not short-term commitments. The committee members should be willing to assist in technology implementation efforts long after the actual plan is written.

Creating a Vision Statement

A well-defined vision statement is the cornerstone of any good plan. Before proceeding with technology planning, the committee must first define or describe its vision for how technology is to be used and supported in the system. This vision should reflect your system's core values as they relate to teaching and learning and should articulate the role that technology will play in helping support those values. We suggest that you conduct brainstorming sessions such as those described below to develop your vision statement.

Activity 1 - Brainstorming for Creating a Vision

Introduce the activity with the following:

The overall goal of a strategic educational technology plan is to lay out an operational plan for bringing technology tools to bear upon student learning. It is expected that the process for implementing technology will not be instantaneous or finite. Rather, technology implementation is an ongoing process. Nevertheless, it should be possible at the “end” of a given strategic plan to look back and see definite change and growth. If the plan has been successful, that change and growth should have followed the basic structure – the goals, objectives, and timelines – of the technology plan. As a technology planning committee, your task is to write that plan.

To help you develop a picture of what your system will “look like” as this technology plan is implemented, imagine one of your systems five years from now. Specifically, think about a student who is attending that system. As you imagine a day in that student’s life, identify the ways that technology touches the student’s experience in the system.

Brainstorm images that help you see technology being used to:

- support new ways of teaching and learning
- expand learning beyond the walls of the traditional classroom
- support teachers in their instructional tasks and professional learning
- bring the system closer to its parent community
- make more efficient use of teacher and administrator time and resources

Write these ideas on a flip chart paper and save them for later when you create your vision statement.

Activity 2 - Identifying Core Values

The Core Values activity is useful for helping your committee identify the core values that support your common vision.

In the Core Values Worksheet you will be asked to describe why you believe that technology is a necessary tool for teaching and learning in this system. The worksheet will also ask you to describe in broad terms how your core educational values and the ways that technology will impact student learning in your system. You will also be asked to describe your commitment to make sure that the students, teachers, administrators, and your entire educational community have access to technology tools.

Use this tool to catalog the core values of your system – particularly paying attention to how these values relate to technology’s role within the teaching and learning environment. Make sure that your vision statement reflects these core values.

Each person on your planning team should complete the worksheet individually and then a facilitator should work with the entire group to reach consensus on the core values for your system. Once expanded upon, these “reasons” can form the basis of the vision statement of your system technology plan. For example:

- | |
|---|
| 1. Technology gives all students greater access to knowledge and information. |
| 2. Technology provides students with more ways to manipulate, interpret, and present information. |
| 3. Technology is a catalyst for creativity, collaboration and cooperation. It builds creativity. |
| 4. Technology provides students with “real life” tools to solve “real life” problems. |
| 5. Technology allows our teachers to spend more time teaching and less time “record-keeping”. |

Core Value Worksheet

Instructions:

Use the spaces below to list five reasons why technology is important to the students and teachers in your system. Start by thinking about how technology can impact and improve student learning.

Reason

Activity 3 - Creating the Vision Statement

Once you have completed the brainstorming activity and identifying core values, your system technology planning committee can begin to work on your vision statement. You may use the statements from the brainstorming and core values activities to stimulate conversation and spur additional thoughts about why your system needs to integrate technology in its teaching and learning environments.

The vision statement should result in a descriptive statement that summarizes your "answer" to the questions:

- **Why is technology important to the students and teachers in your system?**
- **Why do you believe that technology is a necessary tool for teaching and learning in this system?**

Filter your answers to both of these questions through the lens of the core values developed in Activity 2.

Sample Educational Technology Plan Vision Statements

Lakeside School District

Our Vision for Educational Technology

It is the vision of the Lakeside School District that all students and faculty be provided with the latest technology tools and training so that they can function in society and be competitive in the global market. We envision that students will develop the necessary skills to be productive members of society. Technology will support this development by refining their critical thinking skills, enabling effective communication, and fostering creativity.

Lakeside School District is committed to providing ongoing and continuous training to all of its teachers in the use of and integration of technology tools. To ensure equity of learning, these tools will be made available to all students in support of their varied learning styles and needs by providing faculty access to state-of-the-art information and resources.

To achieve our vision, the Lakeside School District will enlist the active engagement of our parents and community and offer the technological resources of the systems.

As you start work on your vision statement, it may be useful to look at what other systems have created as their visions. As you will see, there are many different interpretations of what constitutes an appropriate vision statement. One thing that *is* consistent across all good vision statements is that their bottom line is an expression of how technology will be used to impact student learning and achievement.

To the left is a sample technology plan vision statement from a typical system. Other sample tech plan vision statements can be found online at www.sun-associates.com/resources/visions.html. You may wonder why you cannot just “adopt” a vision statement that someone else has generated such as this one here. Your vision statement should reflect your own situation and the values and context in which the technology plan will operate. Moreover, for many systems, it is the actual collaborative process of creating the vision that makes it a useful guiding light to the plan. The vision setting process can help get your committee all on the “same page” with regard to the overall direction of the effort, which will serve you well when it is time to evaluate progress toward fulfilling that vision.

Current Status

Knowing where your system currently stands in its use of technology will provide you the baseline data that you need in order to begin the planning process. In future years, the data that you collect will become the yardstick against which you will measure progress toward your goals.

The [statewide survey for IMPACT](#) can provide a portion of the baseline data that your committee needs in order to develop an understanding of how technology is viewed, accessed, and integrated in your system. Again it is important to remember that the IMPACT survey was designed as a tool for the state to use to measure its progress --in aggregate--on technology initiatives. As such, the questions align closely with the goals and objectives of the state plan, and may not adequately address all local priorities articulated in your system plan.

You will likely find over time that while some aspects of your technology effort can be accounted for by using this tool, many others need to be tracked by other means. The final portion of this guide is devoted to a discussion of local evaluation and the development of system-specific measures to gauge progress on locally significant initiatives.

Your system may have additional sources of data that will be useful in determining the current level of technology use and access. Sources may include inventories of hardware completed for E-Rate funding, PEPE teacher technology use documents, or standardized test scores pertaining to technology courses of study. All relevant teacher, student, and administrator data can be used to help your committee develop a detailed picture of where the system currently stands. When this picture is held up against the ideal described in your indicators, the committee can begin to think strategically about how to move from the current reality to the desired conditions.

With the 2007-2012 revision of IMPACT and the Template for filing plans, there is no requirement that systems report current status this year. The state's intention is that during the 2007-2008 school year, systems will collect data to report in 2008 as progress toward achieving each goal's ideal performance. For the purposes of local planning however, your committee will need to begin its work with a clear understanding of current status. Any data that you have regarding the use and support for technology in your system should be assembled for review by your committee prior to setting goals or developing action plans.

Goal Statements

Once you have created your vision statement and your planning team has a focus for its direction, it's time to create goal statements. Very broadly, goal statements outline the areas in which you will focus your efforts. They support your vision by addressing each of its components and defining what you want to accomplish. You can use the Process Prompts (one for each goal) listed on the following worksheet to help you connect your goals to your vision.

While your vision statement might not change over time, your goals could change slightly according to the progress you make toward achieving them. You may find over time that you have achieved elements of your goals and that you can strive for new challenges within the same broad goal areas.

The following worksheet is designed to assist systems in developing local interpretations of the four IMPACT goals.

Local Goal Worksheet

Our System's Vision:

	Process Prompt	Our Local Interpretation	Sample/Example
Goal 1	How is our system's vision for technology articulated in terms of student/teacher/administrator use of technology as an integrated tool for learning?		All Lewisboro students will make regular and effective use of technology as a tool for learning in accordance with the district's framework for technology integration. This framework will be aligned with the appropriate AL standards of learning and will be implemented through learning activities that integrate a wide variety of technology tools.
Goal 2	In line with our system vision for technology, how do we intend that students/teachers/administrators will benefit from technology-supported educational opportunities?		Through the use of technology, all students, teachers, and administrators in Lewisboro will benefit from a broad range of opportunities and resources aimed at improving the educational experience for all learners. The system will support the use of technology to expand its offerings and promote participation in activities not available at the local level.
Goal 3	How will professional development and other supports help us realize our system vision?		On a regular basis, and in the course of their daily work, all teachers and administrators in Lewisboro will be provided with high quality research-based professional development aimed at improving their ability to use technology to reach and teach all students. All offerings will be aligned with standards and courses of study, and will be accessible by educators at all levels of the system.
Goal 4	How will technology resources and infrastructure be used to support our system vision for technology?		All students, teachers, and administrators in Lewisboro will have consistent and ready access to up-to-date technology tools and infrastructure necessary to support teaching, learning, and learning.

Ideal Performance Statements – Evaluation

In June 2006, a group of Alabama administrators representing 5 local systems undertook a project aimed at developing local evaluation strategies to inform the creation of useful, meaningful system plans. The focus of their work initially was to put into place a new set of strategies for collecting information about the status of technology use in their systems. Teams collaborated in the identification of indicators of success tied to existing technology plan goals. They developed new means of collecting qualitative data across their systems, and learned to analyze that data in relation to their locally developed definitions of success. As a result of what these systems have learned from the data they collected, they are now in a position to develop truly strategic plans which will guide and shape their technology efforts in the coming year.

Knowing what you want to see happen in relation to each of your goals is the first step to developing Ideal Performance Statements. Your task in this section is to create a detailed and highly descriptive account of the conditions you would find in your system when each of your goals is achieved. In the same way that your technology vision statement “paints the picture” of the system making optimal use of technology, so too will your Ideal Performance Statements develop this image—organized around the specifics of your objectives and actions.

Ideal performance Statements – otherwise known as performance indicators - for technology plans in Alabama will include descriptive, visual terms clearly communicating to the reader *what it will look like* in each local system when all four goals are fulfilled. Descriptions of these optimal conditions will vary according to local interpretation and circumstances, but will all respond to the four broad areas of focus in IMPACT: technology integration, access to resources, professional development, and infrastructure.

To use the example of a goal about integrating technology into teaching and learning, then, a performance indicator would describe in detail the ways in which students and teachers make optimal use of technology throughout the day to support mastery of content area standards. It might describe the uses of various new and emerging technologies, and could provide percentages of classrooms across the system in which technology is mapped to curricular objectives. Finally, an Ideal Performance Statement for this type of goal might describe

how technology is used to differentiate instruction, manage student data, communicate with parents, or provide students with 21st century skills.

It is essential that the ideal which you describe in your performance indicator for each goal is one that *your* committee agrees represents full attainment of that goal *in your local system*. Moreover, the picture that is painted as ideal performance must be reflective of your vision and fully supported by the actions in your technology plan. Without the support of clear, specific, targeted action plans, your system will find it difficult to turn your ideal into reality.

Districts choosing only to appropriate the state’s objectives as their own may use the associated indicators as the basis for their Ideal Performance Statements. Indicators must be chosen/adapted in such a way that they convey a clear picture of what the system would expect to see when it has achieved its goals *as interpreted locally and as expressed in the local vision*.

Sample Ideal Performance Statements

Goal 1

All students and teachers seamlessly utilize technology effectively to support learning across the curriculum and meet local, state, and national standards by consistently integrating a variety of technologies and technology-infused techniques into classroom curriculum. Classroom activities exhibit compelling evidence of technological tools and instructional methods that utilize technology. All administrators, teachers, and students master real-world applications of technology and 21st century skills by selection and appropriate use of technological tools. Teachers, administrators, and staff utilize technology effectively and inventively throughout their day to improve productivity across the system in communication, daily tasks, assessments, data analysis, and other routine duties.

Goal 2

All teachers and administrators actively and positively work to support a technology friendly environment where a wide range of technological resources and educational opportunities are available at all levels of education and administration. All educators and students take advantage of well implemented distance and local learning opportunities that are well suited to their needs. All educators and students utilize local and Internet resources for curriculum and instruction.

Goal 3

All teachers and administrators are provided with convenient, accessible, and relevant professional development opportunities that are well documented in their alignment with local, state, and national standards and courses of study. All teachers and administrators demonstrate mastery of professional development objectives through articulation and action plans that result in improved student learning. All professional development implementation decisions are consistently based on a variety of evaluation data that supports the effectiveness of the training. Supports, such as compensation, supplies and substitutes, are fully provided to allow adequate opportunity for participation.

Goal 4

All instructional and administrative areas are fully equipped with current technology resources to support the teaching and learning goals of the district. All infrastructure resources, such as bandwidth, Internet resources, hardware, software, communication resources, etc., are implemented in such a way that students, teachers, and administrators are afforded with safe, convenient, “anytime-anywhere” access. All fiscal and personnel resources are budgeted and provided to abundantly support technology including professional development, hardware, software, connectivity, etc.

Data Sources

All efforts to collect data in your system must respond to the conditions described in your Ideal Performance Statements. Your task is to identify sources of data throughout your system that will help you develop a rich picture and a thorough understanding of how technology is being used and supported in relation to the exemplary performance described in each indicator.

Determining your system’s progress toward effective use and support for technology will likely require that you survey as many teachers as possible (using a variety of tools) talk directly with a representative sample

of teachers and administrators, examine lesson plans, and observe what is happening in the classroom. The more accurately your data can represent the state of technology use in your system, the better informed you will be as to the changes and adjustments needed to move toward fulfilling of your goals and realizing your vision.

Those systems opting only to use the statewide survey to gauge local progress should remember that this tool was designed to measure the *state's* progress on its *own* goals. As such, the questions on the survey all align with the goals and objectives in the *state's* plan. They will not necessarily respond to local concerns or initiatives in any useful level of detail. Data collection instruments developed locally in alignment with performance indicators would be better suited to this task.

Locally Derived Data

As shown on page 27 of IMPACT ([Data Sources for Local Evaluation](#)), there are many options for how to accumulate data that pertains to each of the IMPACT objectives, and in turn the four IMPACT goals. Your choice of data collection instruments will depend upon the type of information you are seeking, but might eventually include locally developed surveys, focus group questions (to be asked of teachers, administrators, and parents) interview questions, and observation protocols. You may also find it useful to review lesson plans, curriculum documents and student work for evidence of technology use.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that all survey, interview, and focus group questions must be tied closely to your system's own Ideal Performance Statements for each goal. While some of this data could come from survey questions, there is much that you will need and want to know that is not covered by the existing survey items. Therefore, systems will want to design their own unique data collection tools and techniques. Here is where we note that the so-called [Pioneer Process](#) (see page 27 in this Assist Guide) is intended to build capacity among Alabama systems to do this sort of more in-depth data collection. Over time, systems will learn how to conduct focus groups, etc.

Objectives

Each of the four goals of IMPACT -- technology integration, access to resources, professional development, and infrastructure -- is broad and encompasses a range of elements. Systems are charged with interpreting and restating these basic goals in terms that are relevant and that pertain to the local environment. Objectives offer even greater detail on the things that your goal seeks to accomplish, and will be even more dependent upon local conditions, priorities, and existing initiatives.

The plan that your system files with the state is required to include at least three objectives for each goal. For the purposes of local planning, however, you may write as many additional objectives as you deem necessary to adequately address your goals. IMPACT includes several objectives associated with each goal, and if desired these may be adapted for inclusion in local plans. It is important to note here, however, that the objectives written by the state are intended to help the state achieve its goals. You would likely want to create your own objectives to reflect how a goal needs to be implemented and/or focused in your particular system.

Action Steps

Actions are the specific things that you will do to accomplish your objectives and ultimately your goals. In their specificity and high level of detail, actions create the roadmap that you will follow throughout the course of your plan.

Creating individual Action Steps for each goal can become quite complicated since you need to determine *what* it is exactly that you need to do to support that goal, *who* will be responsible for carrying out the action, *when* an activity needs to be completed, *what* resources are required, and *where* the activity will take place. Furthermore, some activities will depend on the completion of another activity. It may be helpful to create a flowchart or diagram to show how all of the Action Steps relate to each other, to each of the goals, and to the vision statement.

The Local System Plan Template includes a facility to create Action Steps.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Action Steps - New Item". The browser's address bar shows "Action Steps - New Item". The page has a blue header with "Home" and "Print Plan" on the left, and "Up to ALSDE - TI Website" on the right. The main content area is titled "Technology Planning 2007" and "Action Steps: New Item". Below the title is a navigation bar with "Save and Close", "Attach File", and "Go Back to List". The form consists of several fields:

- Title ***: A text input field.
- Description ***: A large text area. Below it is a note: "You may add HTML formatting. Click [here](#) for more information. A detailed description of this Action Step."
- Estimated Start Date ***: A date input field containing "6/1/2007". Below it is a note: "Enter date in M/D/YYYY format."
- Estimated Completion Date ***: A date input field containing "6/30/2012". Below it is a note: "Enter date in M/D/YYYY format."
- Timeframe Description**: A large text area. Below it is a note: "You may add HTML formatting. Click [here](#) for more information. Describe the timeframe for this action step. If E-Rate is included then be sure to discuss that activity expected within the E-Rate Funding Years that may apply."
- Person Responsible ***: A text input field. Below it is a note: "Enter the name and/or general title of the person who will be responsible for this action step."
- Item 1 Estimated Budget Category ***: A dropdown menu with "Hardware" selected.
- Item 1 Estimated Amount ***: A text input field containing "0". Below it is a note: "Must have at least one Budget item with an estimated amount."
- Item 1: Source(s) of Funds ***: A large text area. Below it is a note: "You may add HTML formatting. Click [here](#) for more information."
- Item 2 Estimated Budget Category**: A dropdown menu with "(None)" selected.

As you can see, the Template asks you to specify a name and description for the Action Step. You also need to indicate the timeframe for completing the Action as well as an individual who will be responsible for overseeing its completion.

Another important part of Action Step creation is the assignment of “budget categories” to each Step. Follow the pull-down template to assign budget categories and descriptions of sources of funds to each Step. Likewise, this is a place where you can indicate that an Action Step is connected to your E-Rate funding. Connecting an Action Step to E-Rate will also make it appear under the E-Rate tab/page on your template.

You may add HTML formatting. Click [here](#) for more information.

Indicate E-Rate Relationship

No E-Rate Discounts

Applied for Discounts in FY2007-2008

Will be applied for in FY2008-2007

Will be applied for in FY2009-2010

Will be applied for in FY2010-2011

Will be applied for in FY2011-2012

Will be applied for in FY2012-2013

Specify your own value:

Will E-Rate discounts be applied to (for) items in this action step?

Does this Action step address Goal 1 Objectives?

Goal 1 Objectives

If you checked Goal 1 indicator then please indicate which objective of Goal 1 that this particular Action Step will apply to by entering the number of the Objective listed as a current objective. If multiple objectives are to be addressed with this Action Step the separate the number with a comma (e.g. 3,5,10).

Goal 2

Goal 2 Objectives

If you checked Goal 2 indicator then please indicate which objective of Goal 2 that this particular Action Step will apply to by entering the number of the Objective listed as a current objective. If multiple objectives are to be addressed with this Action Step the separate the number with a comma (e.g. 3,5,10).

Goal 3

Goal 3 Objectives

If you checked Goal 3 indicator then please indicate which objective of Goal 3 that this particular Action Step will apply to by entering the number of the Objective listed as a current objective. If multiple objectives are to be addressed with this Action Step the separate the number with a comma (e.g. 3,5,10).

Goal 4

Goal 4 Objectives

If you checked Goal 4 indicator then please indicate which objective of Goal 4 that this particular Action Step will apply to by entering the number of the Objective listed as a current objective. If multiple objectives are to be addressed with this Action Step the separate the number with a comma (e.g. 3,5,10).

* indicates a required field

Since Action Steps are the finest level of detail in your technology plan, it is important that they be as specific and precise as possible. These literally tell what you are going to *do* in order to implement your plan.

Good activities within your action plan should allow you to answer “yes” to each of the following questions:

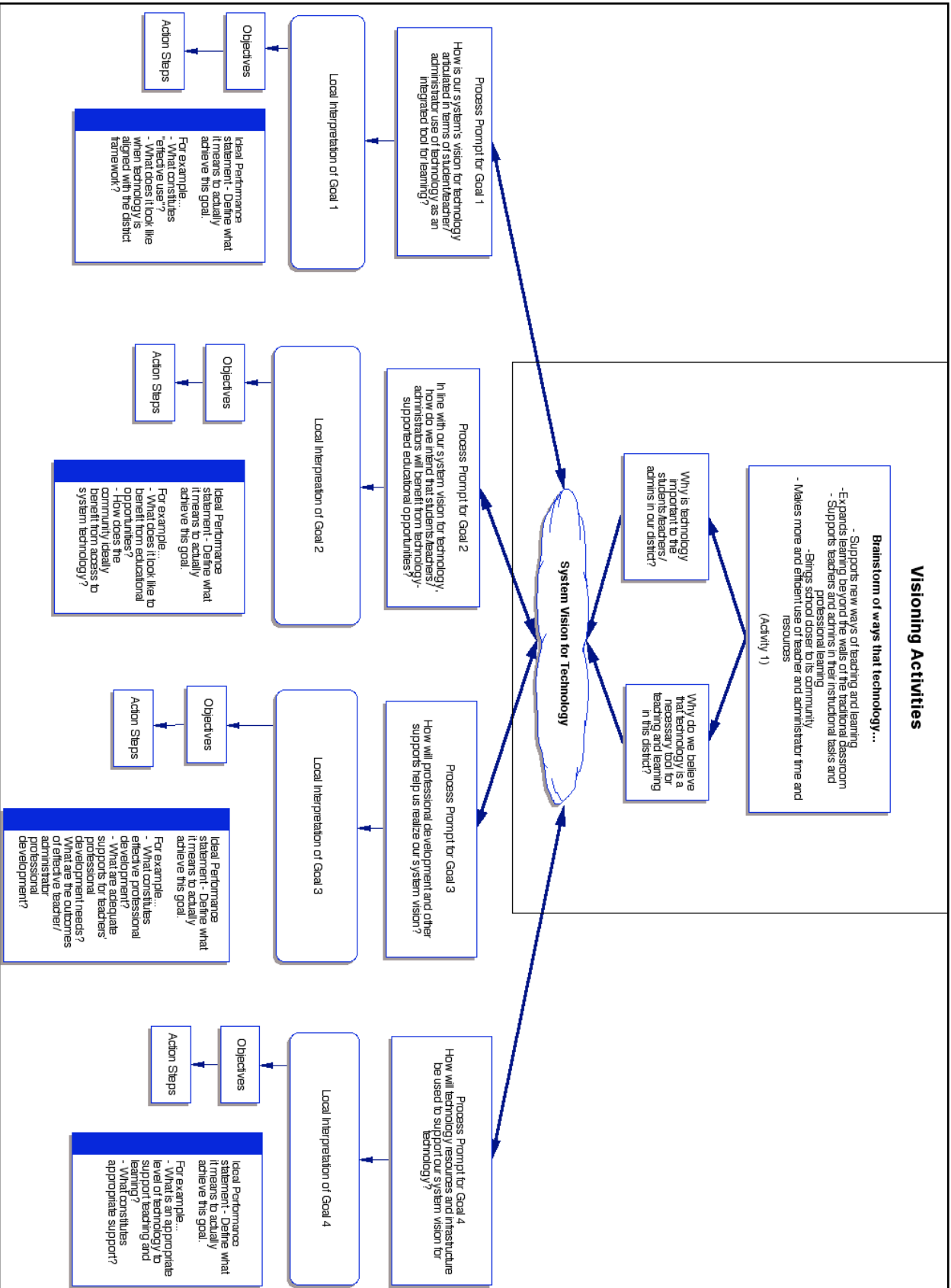
- **Does this activity directly relate to at least one of your goals?**
Remember that you cannot have goals that do not support your vision and you cannot have activities that do not support goals.
- **Is this activity critically important to accomplish or fulfill the goal it supports?**
If you do not perform this activity, you would not be able to accomplish your goal. It is important to choose activities which have a clear relationship to the goal and which create sustained and measurable impact in terms of the goal.

- **Is the activity “do-able”?**
Do you have the resources — financial, human, or time — to accomplish this activity by the end of the time period you have specified? Have you accounted for all of the resources — time, hardware/software, staff development, funding — that you need to accomplish this activity?
- **Does the activity link to related activities in following years?**
Is there anything about this activity which would prevent you from performing other related activities beyond year one of your plan? For example, is this activity so expensive that you would deplete all of the funds that might be designated for such activities? Is it an activity that needs to be ongoing?
- **Does this activity build upon other activities and initiatives undertaken within the system?**
Certain activities -- particularly those related to professional development, curriculum revision, and infrastructure development -- should be linked to system initiatives much broader than those discussed directly in this technology plan. Examples might include building renovations, system reform plans, and professional development plans. It is to your benefit to be knowledgeable of, and build upon, those other system initiatives.
- **Is this a measurable activity?**
How will you evaluate this activity? Is there data you can identify and collect which will allow you to document your progress and/or success in accomplishing the activity?

Putting It All Together

In this section of the Assist Guide we have discussed how the key strategic components of a local system technology plan flow from a vision for technology to goals to objectives and related action steps. Progress toward implementing the plan is measured against statements of ideal performance (indicators) using data collected from a variety of sources. Additional local plan components relate to various E-Rate requirements (e.g., the questions about infrastructure asked in the General section of the Template), but the basic vision-goals-objectives-actions structure is one that is central to all strategic technology plans.

The diagram on the following page shows schematically how these objects relate.



A Process for Technology Plan Evaluation

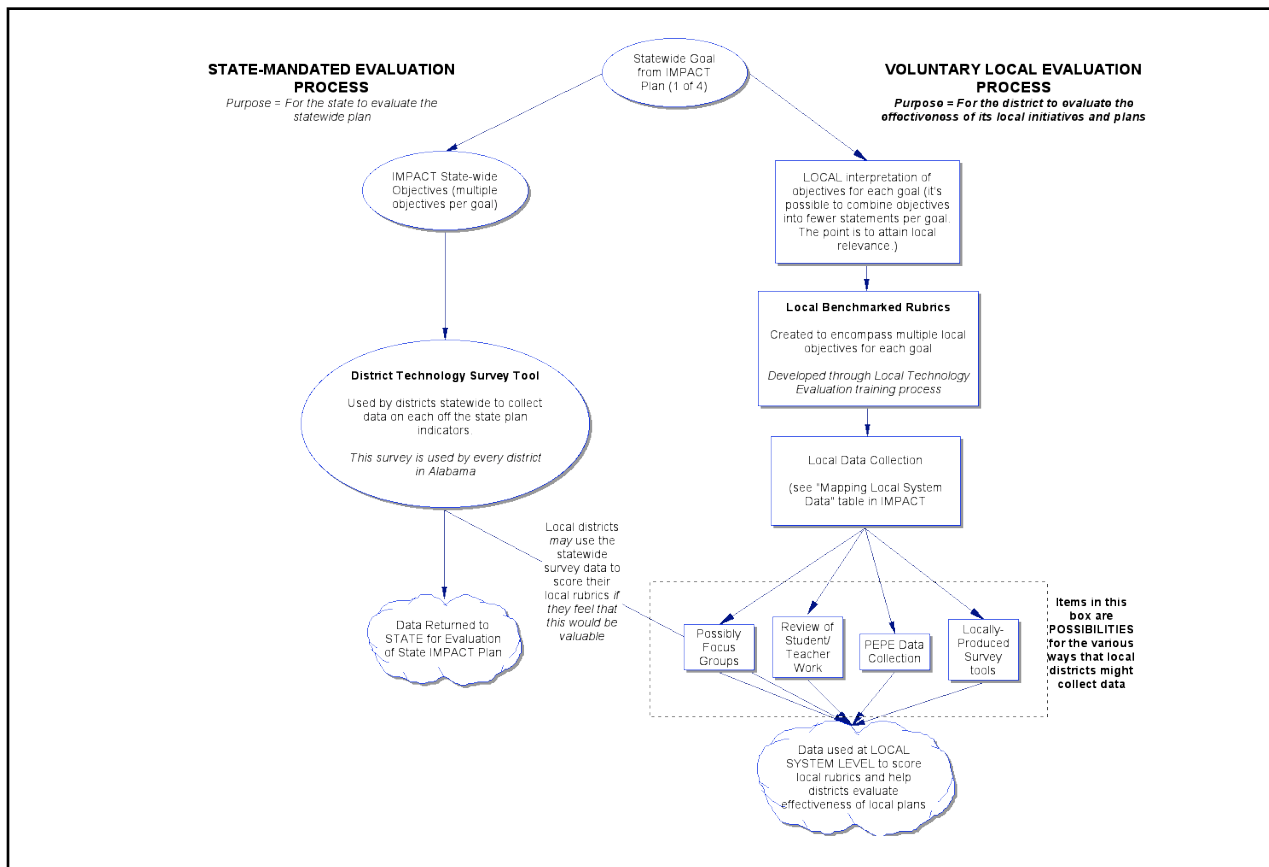
In order for a local system's technology plan to be truly strategic, it must include an evaluation process that gathers meaningful data on the performance of the plan (and the things the plan puts into place) over time. This data should be assembled from multiple sources and it should be derived from a deep *investigation* of the myriad of outcomes from the plan. Such an evaluation is more than a simple survey that seeks to "count" the responses to a fixed set of questions. Instead, a meaningful evaluation is one which asks questions, includes observations, and measures performance on a number of your technology plan's goals and objectives. As illustrated in the diagram below, the outcomes of such an evaluation will provide a data basis for making informed decisions as to adjustments in your plan's objectives and action steps, all targeted at the ultimate accomplishment of your plan's goals.

The Pioneer Process

Since June 2006, five Alabama school systems have participated in a pilot program for developing detailed evaluations of their local technology implementation. These systems - called Pioneer Districts - have been engaged in an exploration of what it means to create evaluation plans that fully comply with the intent of the voluntary local technology evaluation process described in IMPACT 2007 - 2012 and illustrated below.

The method piloted by the Pioneer group includes the following five basic steps:

- Development of evaluation questions
- Creation of performance indicators for each evaluation question/ goal
- Organization of indicators into assessment rubrics
- Collection of data to score rubrics
- Creation of an evaluation report /recommendations for planning



Evaluation Questions and Performance Indicators

ALSDE's vision, as illustrated above, for a local evaluation process involves the creation of local interpretations of each IMPACT goal, and the writing of unique local performance indicator rubrics which describe the conditions present when each goal is attained. Pioneer systems created evaluation questions to focus their investigations and developed benchmarked indicator rubrics as a way to measure the degree of compliance with their goals. These rubrics have as their basis the same sort of performance indicator that now all systems must create as the Ideal Performance Statement.

Data Collection for Evaluation

One of the main values of developing performance indicators is that they provide the basis for the creation of a unique local data collection plan which includes multiple sources of data. The task is one of identifying where and how relevant data is to be found that will respond to evaluation questions in enough detail to form a coherent picture of what is happening. Underscoring the local nature of this type of evaluation, choices about data sources, as well as decisions about how to gather the necessary information vary by system according to local conditions and locally written performance rubrics.

Sources of data might include:

- Surveys (in addition to the statewide teacher and administrator surveys)
- Focus group interviews of teachers, parents, students, etc.
- One-to-one interviews with administrators, teachers, system committee members, etc.

- Classroom observations
- Review/analysis of student and/or teacher work
- Student achievement data
- Professional development plans
- Computer lab usage logs
- Network traffic analysis

Whether any of these sources work to support a particular system's indicators is entirely dependent upon what those indicators say; every system will be different.

Most data sources - particularly focus groups, surveys, interviews, and observations - require the creation of data collection questions. This is in fact where the evaluation "rubber meets the road". Creation of good questions - questions that are aligned with the performance indicators and therefore goals - is one of the most significant challenges in project evaluation. It is this task that has occupied much of the Pioneer systems' project time. Training on the creation of data collection questions and how to administer them (e.g., how to conduct a focus group, how to create a survey, etc.) is a major part of the Pioneer process.

Once all of the data has been collected, it must be organized and analyzed against the indicator rubrics that drove its creation. Pioneers receive training in this aspect of the work as well. Ultimately, an assessment is made of where the system stands in its progress toward meeting each of its four technology plan goals. This assessment is then written in the form of an annual evaluation report and is attached (starting in 2008) to the Where We Stand section of the System Technology Plan Template.

Benefits of the Pioneer Process

The five systems - Autauga County, Baldwin County, Cherokee County, Madison City, and Mobile County - that composed the first cohort of Pioneers during the 2006/2007 system year have all reported that their experience has enriched their technology planning work. The more detailed evaluation performed via the Pioneer Process has provided a solid base of data that serves to inform decision-making in technology. This in turn allows the Pioneers to make more informed and better decisions in the creation of plan objectives and actions.

Starting in June 2007, up to 12 new systems will be chosen to constitute a second cohort of Pioneers. Through support provided by ALSDE and Sun Associates (the consultants supporting the Pioneer work), this second cohort will complete an evaluation of their system technology plans by Spring 2008. As the years go by, more systems will join the Pioneers via successive cohorts, thereby building capacity across the state to conduct these more rigorous, in-depth, technology evaluations.

Highlights of the Pioneer Process

- Builds upon the "minimum basic" requirements for technology evaluation that now apply to all AL systems (Ideal Performance Statements and Data Collection plans)
- Supports the creation of detailed, benchmarked performance indicator rubrics for each of a local technology plan's four goals
- Utilizes a variety of local data sources, well beyond the use of the statewide teacher/administrator survey data
- Provides systems with training and assistance in the development of data collection instruments such as focus groups, observations, interviews, surveys, etc.
- Creates a rich data basis for making informed technology decisions and detailed technology plans

- Creates a detailed evaluation report that can be used to inform teachers, administrators, parents, system committees, and the entire stakeholder community on progress made in using technology as a tool for teaching and learning
- Grows each year, with additional AL systems engaging with the process; aiming for 100% system participation by 2012