May 10, 2021

U.S. Department of Education Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse: International Society for Technology in Education Submission

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) is a nonprofit organization that works with the education community to accelerate the use of technology to solve tough problems and inspire innovation. In response to the U.S. Department of Education’s notice of request for information on supporting the development of the Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse, ISTE is pleased to submit the following materials and resources.

Topic and Target Audience: All of the following links are aligned to the “Teacher, Faculty, and Staff Well-Being, Professional Development, and Supports” topic. More specifically, they are aligned to the requested K-12 topic of “Assisting educators in providing effective virtual or hybrid instruction (including supporting the use of educational technology).”

Contact Information: Please reach out to Ji Soo Song, ISTE’s Senior Policy Advisor, at jssong@iste.org for any questions.

1. From Crisis Management to Sustained Change: States Leading the Future of Learning with the ISTE Standards

   Link: iste.org/sustainedchange


   Description: Through a systematic review of states’ reopening and instructional guidances from fall 2020, as well as interviews with several exemplary state and district leaders, ISTE developed a set of strategic recommendations for education
leaders in setting ambitious goals around technology-enabled, effective learning in 2021 and beyond that empowers students equitably with digital tools and resources.

What makes it a lesson learned or best practice?

Core recommendations featured in this report for state and local education leaders — set a shared vision for the future of learning enabled by technology, build the capacity of educators to lead and implement effective learning strategies, and develop policies and structures to guide schools and districts equitably and sustainably towards the future of learning — were primarily informed by ISTE’s analysis of states’ reopening and/or remote learning guidance documents and the extent to which they align to the ISTE Standards for Educators, a nationally-recognized framework for educators to empower students with technology.

The recommendations were also informed by interviews with several exemplary state and district leaders, featured in the report, who are leveraging COVID-19 as a moment to provide educators with supports and opportunities necessary to sustainably improve effective digital learning practices. In line with these recommendations, states like Arizona have begun the official process of updating the state’s education technology standards, while others like California (see below) have begun developing guidance on educator practice.

Is there a focus on racial equity and/or another equity focus?

The report emphasizes that achieving digital equity not only must involve narrowing of the digital divide, but adequately supporting the educators who use technology in their classrooms. Therefore, recommendations featured in this ISTE report are focused on systemic actions that education leaders can take to ensure that educators from every district can be best prepared to leverage technology in student-empowering ways now and beyond the pandemic.

2. California Digital Learning Integration and Standards Guidance

Link: https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr21/documents/may21item02a1.docx

Description: In collaboration with the California Department of Education, California State Board of Education, and Sacramento County Office of Education, ISTE
developed comprehensive guidance around how educators can lead and implement transformational instructional practices grounded in the ISTE Standards for Educators in online, blended, and/or face-to-face settings. In chapters 4 and 10, the guidance also features how these practices may be applied in the context of specific content areas, such as mathematics, English language arts, and English language development.

What makes it a lesson learned or best practice?

Recommendations for practices and strategies included in this guidance document are derived from major consensus and findings from a literature review conducted by ISTE, as well as resources produced by the California Department of Education and national education organizations. The guidance was additionally informed by interviews with educators from around California showcasing examples of how they are implementing a particular practice or strategy, which are incorporated into the guidance text. Finally, the guidance was informed by an advisory committee of content and digital learning experts from around California, as well as focus groups of parents and students. Practices and strategies included in the guidance may be helpful for K-12 educators and administrators in a variety of district and school settings.

Is there a focus on racial equity and/or another equity focus?

Specific sections of the guidance are explicitly dedicated to supporting students with disabilities (e.g., IEP considerations, accessibility considerations when adopting digital tools), English learner students (e.g., strategies to ensure a sense of belonging for both students and families/caregivers), as well as homeless and foster youth (e.g., resources for student identification and engagement).

3. Collection of ISTE Blogs on Online and Remote Learning Practices

Links:
- Flexibility is Key to Successful Remote Learning
- Three Ways to Make Remote Learning More Engaging
- People-Power Fuels Launch of District’s Remote Learning
- Three Ways Teachers Can Integrate SEL into Online Learning
- Five Tips for Designing Materials for Remote Learning
Description: Throughout 2020 and 2021, ISTE has collaborated with educators, coaches, district leaders, education researchers, and other experts to publish several blog posts, which inform educators about specific practices that leverage technology to empower learners and address challenges illuminated and exacerbated by COVID-19. The topics addressed by these blog posts range from practices to foster student engagement to infusing social and emotional learning into remote learning experiences.

What makes it a lesson learned or best practice?

Written for a K-12 educator and district leader audience, the ISTE blog posts draw from a range of evidence on impact. For example, the “Flexibility Is Key to Successful Remote Learning” examines Lakota Local Schools’ (Ohio) experiences with developing and implementing its remote learning expectations and guidance for schools and educators. Others like the “Five Tips for Designing Materials for Remote Learning” provide the research support behind each of its recommended strategies.

Is there a focus on racial equity and/or another equity focus?

Blogs in this ISTE series, such as “Three Ways to Make Remote Learning More Engaging” and “People-Power Fuels Launch of District’s Remote Learning” advocate that educators must reinforce all students’ agencies by providing ample opportunities for voice and choice. Furthermore, “Flexibility Is Key to Successful Remote Learning” draws from Lakota Local Schools’ provides an example of how one district ensures that learning activities were accessible to different students and families through multiple means of engaging with learning materials. Finally, “Three Ways Teachers Can Integrate SEL into Online Learning” builds on nationally-recognized framework like the CASEL competencies to demonstrate how educators can become equity leaders and advance their own social and cultural competences.

4. ISTE Standards Video Playlist

Link: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6aVN_9hcQEH6D0zMdylQbDkSrV-MNOwD

Description: ISTE has learned that educators benefit from multimedia resources that succinctly elaborate and illustrate effective pedagogy empowered through
technology. For example, in response to numerous requests among ISTE members for models of the ISTE Standards for Students in practice, ISTE recently developed a playlist of videos showcasing real educators from around the country implementing specific standard strands in their classrooms. In just a few months the videos have already received nearly 160,000 views. Most recently, this playlist was strengthened further with a series of videos dedicated to providing educator strategies for online learning.

What makes it a lesson learned or best practice?

The language and framework of the newest generation of the ISTE Standards for Students are grounded first in a literature scan on a number of key topics related to innovation and digital learning — including student empowerment, computational thinking, social and emotional learning, futurism, digital citizenship, curation, blended learning, design thinking, and global citizenship. In addition, various advisory groups and public comments were carefully considered in developing the ISTE Standards for Students. The exact methodology behind the development of the standards are included in this ISTE report. The newest generation of the ISTE Standards have been adopted in 23 states to guide K-12 educator practice with technology, as well as educator preparation programs.

Is there a focus on racial equity and/or another equity focus?

The video resources feature a range of different classrooms, including those led by educators of color and prominently enroll students of color, where technology is being used in alignment with the vision of the ISTE Standards for Students. Furthermore, several videos (e.g., Knowledge Constructor, Digital Citizen) feature educators showcasing how they use technology to allow students to engage with and solve local equity issues. Finally, the online learning videos address ensuring that multimedia content developed by educators take accessibility considerations into account.


Description: When schools suddenly transitioned to remote and blended models in 2020, parents and caregivers stepped up to support students’ synchronous and asynchronous learning from home. In partnership with the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), ISTE provides three strategy recommendations — provide an effective learning environment, create a meaningful learning plan, and become a supportive learning coach — to ensure that parents and caregivers can provide the support students need to best facilitate their continued learning.

*What makes it a lesson learned or best practice?*

Practices and strategies included in this resource, most appropriate for parents and caregivers of K-12 students, are informed by best practices for parent and caregiver engagement, developed by the National PTA, and recommended approaches for using technology to support learning from home, developed by ISTE.

*Is there a focus on racial equity and/or another equity focus?*

Practices and strategies included in this resource take into account different home environments settings that students and families may be facing, including shared learning spaces with other family members. Additionally, tips for parents and caregivers on supporting students with special needs are addressed.

6. **EdSurge Product Index**


Description: The EdSurge Product Index is a national, curated edtech repository to support educators discovery and selection of high quality tools. The repository, consisting of over 3,500 edtech products, provides transparent, credible and up-to-date information about edtech solutions. The Index offers overviews of products and the attributes that educators want to know about to meet their pedagogical needs. The Index has been the first stop for educators to find edtech solutions. To meet demand, EdSurge is currently updating the design, taxonomy, and functionality to meet the needs of today’s educators. New design will launch in October 2021.

*What makes it a lesson learned or best practice?*
The EdSurge Index is a free and open repository, and companies do not pay for premium profiles or special placement. As educators navigate the plethora of learning solutions, EdSurge believes that our objective repository allows educators to find tools by fit, not just features. Educators are able to review products free from ads, chatbots, and other marketing-driven features seen on product websites. They are able to examine emerging products that may fit their needs alongside established products to make decisions based on their requirements and avoid persuasion from a company with a large marketing budget. When educators are going to spend billions of dollars of edtech solutions, EdSurge aims to make sure that they are able to do so confidently and efficiently.

*Is there a focus on racial equity and/or another equity focus?*

The EdSurge Product Index currently allows educators to find and discover products based on their own set of requirements: pedagogical, cultural, technological. By providing easy access to comprehensive, reliable and meaningful information on edtech products, more efficient and informed choices can be made around edtech in schools to ensure its use is equitable and effective. New attributes will be added to the product profiles in October, and EdSurge plans to include information related to equity and inclusion. By positioning relevant inclusion and equity-based information prominently among more commonly searched for attributes (e.g., grade level, subject area), school leaders and educators will be able to quickly identify tools that meet their system and pedagogical needs. This comprehensiveness offers a way to engage decision-makers and solution providers who have not had a reason to prioritize inclusion and equity previously.

Sincerely,

Ji Soo Song
Senior Policy Advisor
International Society for Technology in Education
jssong@iste.org