



Making Technology Standards Work for You

A Guide to the
NETS•A for School
Administrators

THIRD EDITION

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Introduction

In 1983, Apple announced the Kids Can't Wait program, in which approximately 10,000 Apple II computers were donated to California schools. The strategy was a brilliant move on the part of the company because for nearly 20 years afterward, Apple dominated the education market. Early computer users were certain that this new technology would sweep the schools and redefine educational practice, empowering teachers and students to attain greater heights of academic achievement. Nearly 30 years later, schools are spending large sums of money yearly on various technologies, but the full promise of instructional technology has yet to be realized. A primary cause for this situation is that technology integration requires systemic reform, which must be supported by school and district leadership. The reality is that many school administrators do not have the necessary backgrounds in either system change or technology integration to make such reforms. The purpose of ISTE's NETS for Administrators (NETS•A) is to provide guidelines to administrators to assist in school reform, particularly as it relates to technology use.

Although reference is made to technology integration throughout the standards, the leadership skills described are not necessarily technology-specific but identify current expectations for how school administrators need to approach all school reform. In a compilation of articles written for the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse on Educational Management and the College of Education at the University of Oregon, Larry Lashway, a freelance research analyst, points out that today's administrators have had little or no training in how to manage system change and that the current school reform movement does not clearly define the role of the administrator. Lashway states that although the school administrators who are publicly lauded for system changes typically are noted because they "came in and turned things around" (Lashway, 2003, p. 6) on their own, most reform movements suggest that the goal for district sites is empowered leadership, in which decision making is shared throughout the district and site structure. These mixed messages leave administrators confused about how to approach any changes, let alone technology integration. For many school administrators who already feel stretched to their limits, the question becomes: How can I tackle an area such as instructional technology when I know true integration requires a kind of change that I am not sure how to support and involves an approach to teaching that I'm not entirely familiar with myself?

Becoming and remaining an effective leader in today's educational environment requires sustained effort on the administrator's part. It requires the ability to hold a global perspective of the school or district while being able to recognize and address all the pieces that affect programs, including technology, curriculum, instructional practice, assessment, staff and community members, and managerial tasks.

The original standards for administrators were developed by the Technology Standards for School Administrators Collaborative (TSSA Collaborative), a group of educational organizations from across the United States, and published in November 2001. ISTE adopted the TSSA as the core for its expanded National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for Administrators published in 2002 and refreshed in 2009. These standards represent a national consensus of the things PK–12 school administrators need to know and do to support technology integration effectively in schools. The standards go beyond personal productivity or a technology plan. The five areas addressed in the standards provide a context that encourages administrators to use their leadership skills and expertise to promote instructional programs that support student outcomes, incorporating technology where appropriate.

The purpose of this book is to serve as a guide for site and district administrators as they review all aspects of planning, curriculum and instruction, assessment, staff development, and legal and social issues. The authors of the standards define three separate categories for school administrators. These are used in this book to describe the various responsibilities of educational leaders as they implement the standards in their differing roles. The categories are defined as follows:

- **Campus-Level Leaders.** This group includes principals and assistant principals.
- **District-Level Leaders.** This group is represented by district-level program directors and district-level technology directors.
- **Superintendents and Executive Cabinet.** In addition to the superintendent, this group includes administrators in positions such as assistant or deputy superintendents.

Each standard is addressed in a separate chapter with its performance indicators, which are statements that more specifically describe the skill set for each standard. The material in this book is presented in a consistent format designed to assist the reader in understanding the performance indicators. Individual performance indicators are discussed in a narrative, followed by the Roles and Responsibilities section, which provides a suggested approach for planning and implementation for administrators in each category. The section includes three components:

1. **What Is Already in Place?** This component offers approaches to reviewing existing practices.
2. **What Practices Demonstrate Successful Implementation of This Performance Indicator?** This component defines implementation goals.
3. **What Steps Lead to Successful Implementation of This Performance Indicator?** This component identifies tasks that will move you from where you are to where you want to be.

To reap the greatest benefit from this book, begin by carefully reading the standards and their performance indicators (see page 5). This will give you an overview of the areas addressed by the standards. If you are looking for background information about a particular topic, the narrative for each performance indicator provides information and resources and will stand alone as a reference. If you are implementing a particular performance indicator, read both the narrative and the tasks and responsibilities described for the performance indicator as they pertain to your current position. The Standard 1 chapter describes a model for planning, and the four subsequent chapters address in-depth issues that pertain to planning, so it is likely that you will use this chapter as an anchor point and refer to other chapters as needed.

As you cannot implement these standards in isolation, it is helpful to use the book as a reference for a group of leaders and the narratives as springboards for group discussions. However, you can also use the book on your own for background information and ideas to bring to the table for discussion with other educational leaders.

Resources

Articles

Lashway, L. (2003). *Role of the school leader. Trends and issues*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. Retrieved from www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED479933.pdf