



Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools >>

Technology and Accreditation

The Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools (ATLIS) is pleased to share this guide with our members and the larger independent school community with the hope that it will provide a structure to assist schools in examining the role of technology in the school program in the same way that other departments undergo study as part of the accreditation process. The guidelines were written and reviewed by a committee comprised of technology directors, other school administrators, visiting team chairs, and directors of accreditation from accrediting associations. The committee sought input and held a commenting forum that included a number of independent school administrators and technology leaders as well as accreditation professionals from accrediting organizations. The chairs of the committee are: Bill Donovan, Cannon School, NC, Amy Grunat, Drew School, CA, Dawn Klus, ISACS, IL. ATLIS is grateful for the countless hours generously donated by these volunteers. In their work, the committee drew upon a number of resources, most notably the *NAIS Principles of Good Practice for Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age*.

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Technology Self-Study

Each part of the self-study may be separated out and assigned to individuals in different areas or may be completed by one individual assigned to interview key constituents in other parts of the school, depending on school resources, structure of the self-study visiting team, etc. The completion of this section is an opportunity for reflection and growth for technology leaders.

Schools completing the self study may wish to use the guiding questions in Appendix B to help foster reflective and productive conversations.

Technology Self-Study Guiding Questions

1. How does the school implement and innovate technology with respect to the **academic program, educational processes, and teaching and learning**? How does technology staff communicate and coordinate with other information specialists (e.g., librarians or media specialists)?
2. How does the school **manage and execute technology with respect to the operating and institutional processes** of the school? Responses should consider, but need not separate out, advancement, enrollment, business/data management, and sustainability.
3. How does the **structure, support, and leadership** of the technology department optimize the contribution of technology to overall **school sustainability and success**?
4. How does the school ensure **best practices** are followed in **building, securing, and supporting technology resources**?
5. How are **long-range 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?

Appendix A: Supporting Prompts for Guiding Questions

Schools may find these questions helpful in crafting the self-study process. Items designated with □ are part of the recommended document collection that should accompany the self-study (see Appendix B). These questions are not intended as requirements, but rather as prompts for discussion and reflection. No written responses are required. Schools should feel free to use these as much or as little as is appropriate for their circumstances.

1. Academic Programs, Educational Processes, Teaching and Learning

- 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, wrestle with ethical challenges and responsibilities of using technology, supported in their growth as digital citizen, and encouraged to find a healthy balance in their use of technology in school, work, and personal life?
- 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.

2. Managing Technology for School Operations

- 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 is data flow and data integrity across departments managed?
- How is access control implemented in network storage, shared databases and files?

3. Leading the Technology Department

- Describe and document the technology department structure, indicating its organization, defining team job descriptions, detailing to whom the leadership reports, and underscoring the department's relationship to the school mission and supporting initiatives. If the school utilizes a managed service provider, consider including that agreement as well. Items to include: □ Organizational Chart; □ Technology Team Job Descriptions; □ Technology Department Mission Statement.
- Describe and document school policies: for example, □ Document Retention; □ Responsible or Acceptable Use Policy; □ Social Media Policy; □ Privacy Policy; □ Digital Security and Incident Response Policy; □ Digital Ethics Curriculum for students; □ Professional Development for employees; □ Personal Device Policy; □ PCI Compliance Policy, □ Employee Onboarding and Exit Policies related to technology. □ Service level agreement
- 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 and managed, delivered, and supported.
- How does the school's technology leadership investigate new technologies as they relate to the operations and academic arms of the school, and what are the avenues for technology leaders to advise other school leaders on these developments?

4. Best Practices Regarding Technology Resources

- What is the process 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 the effectiveness of learning 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? Attach inventory documents.
- 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?
- Provide a map of the network.
- 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?

5. Long-Range and Strategic Planning

- Provide the school's long-range or strategic plans as they relate to technology.
- 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?

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Appendix B: Documentation Checklist

The Association of Technology Leaders in Independent Schools (ATLIS) is pleased to share this checklist to accompany our guide to accreditation best practices. It is the committee's hope that the list will provide a way for schools to examine internal documentation and practices to streamline, address gaps, and further cement best practices.

Departmental Documents

- ☐ Technology Department(s) Organizational Chart
- ☐ Technology Team Job Descriptions
- ☐ Technology Department Mission Statement

Technology Policies and Procedures

- ☐ Document Retention Policies
- ☐ Responsible, Ethical, or Acceptable Use Policies
- ☐ Social Media Policies
- ☐ Privacy Policies
- ☐ Digital Security Policies and Procedures
- ☐ Service Level Agreement
- ☐ Personal Device Policy
- ☐ PCI Compliance Policy

Teaching and Learning

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

Software and Hardware

- ☐ Software Adoption and Update Policies
- ☐ Hardware Adoption and Replacement Policies
- ☐ Hardware Inventory
- ☐ Software/App Inventory
- ☐ Digital Subscription Inventory

Networking and Systems

- ☐ Network Diagram
- ☐ Map of Data Flow Through the School's Information Systems
- ☐ Site Survey

Strategy and Assessment

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

Appendix C: Full Committee

ATLIS and the committee chairs would like to thank the committee members for their work in making this guide as a resource to the larger independent school community. We are grateful for their guidance and dedication to their colleagues.

Committee Chairs

Bill Donovan	Director of Institutional Technology	Cannon School (NC)
Amy Grunat	Director of Technology	Drew School (CA)
Dawn Klus	Director of Accreditation	ISACS (IL)

Committee Members

Jamie Britto	Chief Information Officer	Collegiate School (VA)
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