

ISTE Technology Support Index (TSI)

Many factors are involved in the overall effectiveness of a district's technology support program. The ISTE Technology Support Index (TSI) was developed to assist districts in evaluating their programs. ISTE provides an online tool for using the TSI model to evaluate a district's technology program at <http://tsi.iste.org/profile/>.

According to the TSI model, "For more than 20 years educators have been faced with questions about the use of technology, and more recently, have faced equally important questions in regards to technology support: After the hardware and software is purchased, what is needed to support technology? What should every school district do to provide the best possible technology support? How much does it cost to provide the support your district needs? Does limited support impact effective use? Is one support strategy better than another? What should I do first? These are just a few questions the [TSI] begins to answer as it looks at effective technology support in schools.

The overall purpose of the [TSI] is to identify effective technology support strategies for school districts that can be utilized for technology support improvements and [TSI] is the primary tool developed as a strategic guide for school districts. The TSI considers the diverse characteristics among schools and districts, and identifies specific support strategies that can be applied to the school system based upon their unique characteristics. Simply put, it allows your school district to learn how they can improve their technology support program without incurring the costly expense of hiring an independent consulting firm.

By completing less than 50 questions, you will be able to objectively ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of your school district's technology support program. Upon completion, these results are immediately provided to you in the form of a district profile and a technology action plan for improvement.

Aided with this important information, district staff can develop clear, strategic goals with which they can confidently approach their school district administration, school board, corporate partners, and others. Parents and staff will have a better understanding of the importance of technology support and will also have a roadmap of possible strategies. A carefully selected but substantial array of technology support initiatives can be made available to both teachers and administrators as the result of a thoughtful and strategic approach.

With an effective support system in place, the impacts upon technology use in the district can be profound. Confident that the technology works when it should, teachers, students, staff, and parents will reap the benefits of the district's technology investment preparing students for the 21st century.

The Technology Support Index assessment is a tool for schools and districts to profile their technology support programs and to provide

solutions based on those unique profiles. Two assumptions are built into the use of the TSI: First that all districts have in place or are planning network infrastructure to every classroom. The TSI does not address the need for infrastructure. Second, we assume that all four domains of support are required. There is a relationship between the four domains — spectacular work in one domain will impact the need for work in another (e.g., staffing vs. standards). It is assumed, however, that a minimum threshold is required in each domain.

The four domains of support described in the TSI are:

1. Equipment Standards — Focuses upon consistent equipment and software decisions that can directly impact the quality of support provided.
2. Staffing and Processes — Addresses technical assistance staffing and the support practices used that can impact efficiencies in support.
3. Professional Development — Considers how strong professional development, both for instructional and technical support personnel, can change the nature organizational support requirement and impact a technology support team's ability to provide support.
4. Intelligent Systems — Identifies strategies that capitalize upon the technology itself to provide strong support.

The TSI was developed so that four general stages describe a district's capability for each strategy, and also for each overall domain. The stages are broad generalizations, but can be used to better understand where a district may want to focus their improvement efforts.

The four stages of capability are:

1. Deficient — A strategy or domain that has a need for attention and improvement; the deficient strategy or domain is in the beginning states on a developmental continuum, and if the issues aren't addressed on-going support challenges will likely be found.
2. Limited — A strategy or domain that has isolated areas of excellence, but still needs attention and improvement. Some effective practices are in place, but they are not systemic in nature.
3. Satisfactory — A support strategy or domain that is doing a very good job of support in many areas. Improvements are recommended, but they are limited in nature.
4. Outstanding — An outstanding strategy or domain; few improvements are necessary as most areas are supported well. Improvements will refine the support strategy.

In addition to the four stages of capability, fiscal implications are also included. For each strategy in the TSI, general fiscal implications are identified with dollar signs (\$\$\$). Many strategies are fiscally neutral, while others will have significant fiscal impact (\$\$\$\$\$). Recommendations will be provided with the least costly recommendations listed first.”