

Public Education Technology Initiatives

Second Follow-up Report
July 2007

Office of Performance Evaluations
Idaho Legislature



Report 07-06F

Created in 1994, the Legislative Office of Performance Evaluations operates under the authority of Idaho Code § 67-457 through 67-464.

Its mission is to promote confidence and accountability in state government through professional and independent assessment of state agencies and activities, consistent with legislative intent.

The eight-member, bipartisan Joint Legislative Oversight Committee approves evaluation topics and receives completed reports. Evaluations are conducted by Office of Performance Evaluations staff. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the reports do not necessarily reflect the views of the committee or its individual members.

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee

Senate

Shawn Keough, *Co-chair*
Edgar J. Malepeai
Elliot Werk
John McGee

House of Representatives

Margaret Henbest, *Co-chair*
Maxine T. Bell
Donna Boe
Clifford R. Bayer

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluations

Acknowledgments

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from the Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Idaho Council for Technology in Learning. Amy Lorenzo and Jennifer Hill of the Office of Performance Evaluations conducted this follow-up review. We contracted with Paul Headlee to perform quality assurance for this project.

Public Education Technology Initiatives

Second Follow-up Report

In 2005, we released a report on public education technology initiatives. In that report, we outlined recommendations to improve the ability of the Board of Education and the Idaho Council for Technology in Learning to comply with statute and fulfill their responsibilities of providing technological assessment and guidance. In our 2006 follow-up review, we found that the board had implemented one recommendation, the council had implemented one recommendation, and the Legislature had addressed two recommendations. This follow-up report shows that little progress has been made in implementing the remaining recommendations.

Background and Current Status

When we presented our evaluation report in 2005, we recommended that the Board of Education and the Idaho Council for Technology in Learning (ICTL) take steps to improve their planning, guidance, advocacy, and accountability efforts. We also recommended the board and council comply with requirements in Idaho Code. In our first follow-up review, we found the board and council were making some effort to implement our recommendations and that several recommendations were in process. Since then, little else has happened.

Board and council staff indicated two factors have impacted the board and council's ability to implement our recommendations: (1) the council, which is responsible for implementing most of our recommendations, has not met since June 2006; and (2) the position of ICTL coordinator is a support position shared between the board and the Department of Education.

We provide the current status of each of the remaining recommendations in the following sections. The board's update on its progress is provided in appendix A, as well as the department and council's update.

Annual Review of Technology Plan

Recommendation: To comply with the statutory requirements of the Idaho Education Technology Initiative of 1994, the State Board of Education should annually review and approve the statewide technology plan developed by the Idaho Council for Technology in Learning.

The Board of Education formally reviewed and accepted the 2004 State Technology Plan on October 12, 2006. In the fall of 2006, the council began developing a larger, more comprehensive K–20 statewide technology plan; however, the council has not submitted the new plan to the board for approval. In the event the council does not submit the new plan in 2007, council staff told us the council will recommend that the board re-approve the current plan.

Status: Assuming the board continue to annually approve a technology plan, either the current plan or the new K–20 plan, this recommendation has **been implemented**.

District Project Plans

Recommendation: To comply with the statutory requirements of the Idaho Education Technology Initiative of 1994, the Idaho Council for Technology in Learning should require school districts to submit a project plan as a part of the application for annual grants. The plan should include a description of proposed purchases, effective classroom use, teacher training, and local matching funds.

Board staff told us that the 2007 technology grant application (also known as the phase II technology survey) will include the elements specified in our recommendation. However, neither the board nor the council provided us with a draft of the application scheduled to be sent to districts this July.

Status: This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

Exemplary Programs, Practices, and Products

Recommendation: The ICTL should identify and recommend to the State Board of Education exemplary education technology programs, practices, and products.

The proposed K–20 plan lists a performance benchmark of developing exemplary programs, practices, and products, but it does not identify specific recommendations.

Status: This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

ITRMC Policies as Guidelines

Recommendation: The ICTL should consult with Idaho Technology Resource Management Council (ITRMC) staff for guidance in adhering to ITRMC policies that would benefit school districts in their use of technology dollars.

The proposed K–20 plan calls for a coordination team of the council and ITRMC to create educational technology standards. While one of the council subcommittees has met with ITRMC to discuss the K–20 plan, this subcommittee’s primary focus is on requirements for higher education. The council as a whole has not addressed our recommended policy changes.

Status: This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

Elements of Technology Plan

Recommendation: The State Board of Education should ensure the statewide education technology plan has the following elements:

- a. Assessment of current goals and realignment (if necessary) with statute*
- b. Timelines for achieving goals and objectives*
- c. Standards or benchmarks for performance measures*
- d. Standards and planning guidance for adequate district staffing for technical support*
- e. Guidance on finance, budgeting, and cost-effective technology acquisition*

The council’s draft guidance document, which is separate from the proposed K–20 plan, provides school districts with general technology-related information and some guidance related to parts (d) and (e) of our recommendation. It does not, however, offer guidance in three other parts of the recommendation. The council told us it would be difficult to create a document that works for all districts. The board has not provided us with additional information regarding its implementation.

Status: This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

Charter School Grant Distributions

Recommendation: If the intent of the ICTL is to disburse technology grant program dollars directly to charter schools, the council should modify the funding formula to reflect this.

Status: This recommendation was **implemented** as discussed in our 2006 follow-up report.

One Time Expenditures

Recommendation: The ICTL should clarify annual appropriation bill intent language for the use of one time funds for ongoing expenditures (including personnel) and communicate this intent to school districts.

Status: This recommendation was **implemented** as discussed in our 2006 follow-up report.

Improved Data Quality

Recommendation: ICTL staff should improve the quality of technology information maintained and reported to the Legislature, and reduce the duplication of financial reporting requirements placed on school districts by:

- a. Coordinating with the State Department of Education's Bureau of Finance and Transportation and the Division of Accounting and Human Resources to obtain audited financial information already submitted by the districts.*
- b. Taking steps to improve quality controls of district technology inventory data, and using existing electronic information when available, in coordination with the State Department of Education's Bureau of Finance and Transportation.*

Council, board, and department staff provided us with appropriation bills from the 2007 legislative session. New language in these bills requires districts to report actual spending in areas that were previously categorized as remediation spending. Staff told us the new language will streamline some reporting from schools and districts and allow the council to pull accurate technology expenditure data from the Bureau of Finance.

Status: This recommendation is **in process**.

Technology Assessment Tools

Recommendation: The ICTL should review the CEO forum's technology assessment chart, used by other states, and develop a plan, including needed resources, for implementation of a similar assessment tool to meet Idaho's needs.

The council provided us with a draft chart that measures Idaho's technology and readiness, but the chart has not been finalized, approved, or distributed.

Status: This recommendation is **in process**.

Technology Staffing Standards

Recommendation: The ICTL should develop a standard ratio of computers-to-district technology support (measured by full-time equivalent employees).

The council told us that developing a formula for technical support is difficult due to variations in the size and complexity of district computer systems, as well as differences in levels of technology support. As a result, the council offers three guidelines in its draft guidance document. The council does not recommend specific ratios for districts to follow.

Status: This recommendation has **not been implemented**.

Statewide Student Information System

Recommendation: Should the State Department of Education invest state or federal dollars into the development of a statewide centralized student information management system, legislative financial auditors should consider including a review of the department's technology-related financial and budgetary practices as a part of their periodic audit work.

The department is not required to implement this recommendation unless the board or department pursues another statewide, centralized student information system.

Status: This recommendation is **not relevant** as discussed in our 2006 follow-up report.

Eighth Grade Technology Standards

Recommendation: The State Board of Education should formally revisit Idaho's eighth-grade technology standards, their purpose, and implementation relative to the requirements of the statewide technology plan and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Status: This recommendation **was implemented** as discussed in our 2006 follow-up report.

Appendix A

Updates of Implementation Efforts



RECEIVED

APR 13 2007

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

650 W. State Street P.O. Box 83720 Boise, ID 83720-0037

208/334-2270 FAX: 208/334-2632

e-mail: board@osbe.idaho.gov

www.boardofed.idaho.gov

April 12, 2007

Mr. Rakesh Mohan
Director, Office of Performance Evaluation
700 West State Street
Lower Level, Suite 10
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0055

Re: Public Education Technology Initiatives

Dear Rakesh:

Thank you for the opportunity to inform you of the progress the State Board of Education (Board) has made toward accomplishing the goals outlined in the January 2005 Report on Public Education Technology Initiatives. The Board's Progress is as follows:

OPE Recommendations	OPE's Findings	Status
<p>1. To comply with the statutory requirements of the Idaho Education Technology Initiative of 1994:</p> <p>a. The State Board of Education should annually review and approve the statewide technology plan developed by the ICTL.</p>	Has implemented	<p>The 2004 State Technology Plan was formally reviewed and accepted by the State Board of Education on October 12, 2006. With that approval, the representative from ICTL informed the Board that they would bring an updated plan to the Board in 2007.</p> <p>The new K20 Statewide Technology Plan has not yet been submitted to the Board. The K20 Plan will be presented to the ICTL at their May or June meeting for review and possible approval.</p>
<p>2. b. The ICTL should require school districts to submit a project plan as part of the application for annual grants. The plan should include a description of proposed purchases, effective classroom use, teacher training, and local matching funds.</p>	In the process of implementing	The 2006-2007 Phase II Technology survey will include these elements. This survey is due from districts on October 31, 2007.

<p>3. c. The ICTL should identify and recommend to the State Board of Education exemplary education technology programs, practices, and products.</p>	<p>In the process of implementing</p>	<p>This recommendation is addressed in Goal E of the proposed K20 Plan.</p>
<p>4. d. The ICTL should consult with Idaho Technology Resource Management Council (ITRMC) staff for guidance in adherence to ITRMC policies that would benefit school districts in their use of state technology dollars.</p>	<p>In the process of implementing</p>	<p>ICTL and ITRMC staff have been working together in the creation of "Educational Technology" standards. This coordination is included as part of the proposed K20 Plan.</p>
<p>5. The State Board of Education should ensure the statewide education technology plan has the following elements: a. Assessment of current goals and realignment (if necessary) with statute. b. Timelines for achieving goals and objectives. c. Standards or benchmarks for performance measures. d. Standards and planning guidance for adequate district staffing for technical support. e. Guidance on finance, budgeting, and cost-effective technology acquisition.</p>	<p>Has not implemented</p>	<p>Current work on the K20 Plan will ensure that these recommendations are addressed. Furthermore, when the final plan is presented to the Board, Board staff will ensure that all elements are contained in the plan.</p>
<p>6. If the intent of the ICTL is to disburse technology grant program dollars directly to charter schools, the council should modify the funding formula to reflect this.</p>	<p>Has implemented</p>	<p>The council addressed this recommendation in fall 2005 by adopting a revised funding formula that distributes funds directly to charter schools.</p>
<p>7. The ICTL should clarify annual appropriation bill intent language for the use of onetime funds for ingoing expenditures (including personnel) and communicate this intent to school districts.</p>	<p>Has addressed</p>	<p>In 2005 and 2006, appropriation bill language alleviated the need to accomplish this recommendation by specifying funds were to be used expressly for the purchase of equipment and software or for costs for Idaho Standards Achievement Test remedial instruction.</p>
<p>8. ICTL staff should improve the quality of technology information maintained and reported to the Legislature, and reduce the duplication of financial reporting</p>	<p>In the process of implementing</p>	<p>Financial data being collected from districts is being coordinated with the SDE's Bureau of Finance. The Bureau of Finance does not have a</p>

<p>requirements placed in school districts by:</p> <p>a. Coordinating with the State Department of Education's Bureau of Finance and Transportation and the Division of Accounting and Human Resources to obtain audited financial information already submitted by districts.</p> <p>b. Taking steps to improve quality controls of district technology inventory data, and using existing electronic information when available, in coordination with the State Department of Education's Bureau of Finance and Transportation.</p>		<p>"remediation" code. This makes the data collected through the IFARMS Annual Financial report confusing to districts due to the "remediation" allowance in the intent language.</p> <p>However, legislation passed this year, will eliminate the need to collect technology funds spent on remediation beginning in FY 2008.</p>
<p>9. The ICTL should review the CEO Forum's technology assessment chart, used by other states, and develop a plan, including needed resources, for implementation of a similar assessment tool to meet Idaho's needs.</p>	<p>In the process of implementing</p>	<p>With input from Idaho Education Technology Association (IETA) and the Public Education Information Technology Sub-Committee (PEITC), work is underway in creating an Idaho Technology Assessment Chart that combines technology assessment ideas from CEO Forum's STaR chart, ISTE and NCES assessment recommendations.</p>
<p>10. The ICTL should develop a standard ratio of computers-to-district technology support (measured by full-time equivalent employees).</p>	<p>Has not implemented</p>	<p>Work is currently underway to create a "Technology Coordinator" certification. This certification will ensure that all technology coordinators have the necessary skills and knowledge needed to support technology in the educational environment.</p>
<p>11. Should the State Department of Education invest state or federal dollars into the development of a statewide centralized student information management system, legislative financial auditors should consider including a review of the department's technology-related financial and budgetary practices as a part of their periodic audit work.</p>	<p><i>Is not germane to the state's current plans.</i> However, should the Department of Education or the Board of Education pursue any statewide, centralized system – such as a centralized data warehouse or "longitudinal" data system, or centralized software – <i>this recommendation should be addressed.</i></p>	<p>With the discontinuation of the ISIMS Project, there are no plans to create a statewide centralized student information management system.</p>

12. The State Board of Education should formally revisit Idaho's eighth-grade technology standards, their purpose, and implementation relative to the requirements of the statewide technology plan and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.	Has implemented	The Board of Education formally approved eighth-grade technology standards at its October 2005 meeting.
---	-----------------	---

Please let us know if we can provide any further information. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Karen L. Echeverria
Deputy Director

Cc: Jason Hancock, Principal Budget Analyst, Budget and Policy Analysis
Judie Wright, Acting Bureau Chief, Division of Financial Management

Public Education Technology Initiatives Second Follow-up Update from Department of Education/ICTL as of July 2, 2007

Recommendation 1. To comply with the statutory requirements of the Idaho Education Technology Initiative of 1994: The State Board of Education should annually review and approve the statewide technology plan developed by the ICTL.

The draft K-20 plan was not presented at the June SBOE meeting. The ICTL has yet to approve the draft of the K-20 plan and present to the Board. The K-20 Plan will be brought before the ICTL for their recommendation at their next meeting tentatively scheduled for late July or early August.

It is the intent of the ICTL to present the K-20 Plan to SBOE for approval or recommend that SBOE re-approve the 2004 Plan for this year.

Recommendation 2. The ICTL should require school districts to submit a project plan as part of the application for annual grants. The plan should include a description of proposed purchases, effective classroom use, teacher training, and local matching funds.

The Phase II draft will be available June 19th. Phase I is post-spending while Phase II is pre-spending .

Recommendation 3. The ICTL should identify and recommend to the State Board of Education exemplary education technology programs, practices, and products.

Any recommendations will be presented to the ICTL at their next meeting tentatively scheduled for late July or early August. The ICTL will then decide what recommendations will be made to the Board.

Recommendation 4. The ICTL should consult with Idaho Technology Resource Management Council (ITRMC) staff for guidance in adherence to ITRMC policies that would benefit school districts in their use of state technology dollars.

The team referred to in the K-20 Plan has not been identified and no policy changes, as yet, have been made.

However, Dave O'Neil (HEITC) and Kevin Iwerson (ITRMC) have met twice and have identified critical areas that need to be addressed. Specific details on meeting this recommendation will be discussed at an ICTL Sub-committee planning meeting scheduled for July 13th.

The focus of adherence to ITRMC policies will be toward Higher Education institutions because they are considered state agencies and, therefore, are required to comply. Public school districts are considered Local Educational Agencies (LEA's) that are bound by local policies passed by their local school boards. However, it is ultimate intent of this collaboration to produce "Educational Technology Guidelines" that meet both ITRMC's and ICTL's approval and become the standard for all educational agencies.

Recommendation 5. The State Board of Education should ensure the statewide education technology plan has the following elements: a. Assessment of current goals and realignment (if necessary) with statute. B. Timelines for achieving goals and objectives. c. Standards or benchmarks for performance measures. d. Standards and planning guidance for adequate district staffing for technical support. e. Guidance on finance, budgeting, and cost-effective technology acquisition.

The "Tech Support" document is not incorporated into the K-20 Plan at present. However, when the K-20 Plan was created, the authors have intended it to be a living document. Therefore, it is intended that such guidelines, standards, and/or recommendations be included in future drafts of the K-20 Plan.

The "Tech Support" document intended to provide a variety of options to districts due to their various needs, circumstances, and expertise. It would be impossible to draft a "one size fits all" solution.

***Note – Recommendations 6 and 7 have been implemented.

Recommendation 8. ICTL staff should improve the quality of technology information maintained and reported to the Legislature, and reduce the duplication of financial reporting requirements placed in school districts by: a. Coordinating with the State Department of Education's Bureau of Finance and Transportation and the Division of Accounting and Human Resources to obtain audited financial information already submitted by the districts. b. Taking steps to improve quality controls of district technology inventory data, and using existing electronic information when available, in coordination with the State Department of Education's Bureau of Finance and Transportation.

Districts report their expenditures in categories, such as Special Services Program, School Administration Program, Transportation-Activity Program, etc., and each of these programs are associated with a numerical code. Since the Bureau of Finance did not have a code for remediation expenditures, districts could not track this spending – there was no code to attach it to. This problem was amplified because there was no definition of what "remediation" spending encompassed. The term remediation could refer to after school programs, special computer applications, the salaries for classroom aides, and so on.

Therefore, when districts were required by the ICTL grant intent language to report remediation spending, the best they could do was make their best educated guess as to what those expenditures were. As you can imagine, this ambiguity resulted in inaccurate data reporting (compromising the quality of the data) as well as a wide variety of what districts were reporting on (lack of coordination).

Now that the remediation piece is no longer a part of the intent language, the ICTL can pull technology expenditure data from the Bureau of Finance that is accurate.

Recommendation 9. The ICTL should review the CEO forum's technology assessment chart, used by other states, and develop a plan, including needed resources, for implementation of a similar assessment tool to meet Idaho's needs.

The PEITC sub-committee is tentatively planning on meeting the week of July 13th to finalize work on the Idaho Assessment Chart with the intent of presenting a draft at the next ICTL meeting.

Recommendation 10. The ICTL should develop a standard ratio of computers-to-district technology support (measured by full-time equivalent employees).

The ICTL does not have a recommended standard ratio of computers-to-district technology support personnel.

However, three methods to determine adequate computer-to-district technology support were provided in the "Tech Support" document. These three methods were suggested due to the fact that tech support depends on many factors which include, but is not limited to, the size of the district, the size of the network, the network's complexity, the platform of choice, the operating system of choice, the computer applications in use and their mode of delivery, the age of the computers, and the district's frequency of tech support calls. The "Tech Support" document provides districts with three methods and formulas for determining adequate levels of tech support that fit their needs.

Recommendation 11. Should the State Department of Education invest state or federal dollars into the development of a statewide centralized student information management system, legislative financial auditors should consider including a review of the department's technology-related financial and budgetary practices as a part of their periodic audit work.

The State Department of Education is currently not required to implement this recommendation. However, this recommendation should be considered if the state decides to move forward with another centralized, statewide system.

**** Note - Recommendation 12 has been implemented.*

Office of Performance Evaluations Reports Completed 2005–Present

Publication numbers ending with “F” are follow-up reports of previous evaluations. Publication numbers ending with three letters are federal mandate reviews—the letters indicate the legislative committee that requested the report.

<u>Pub. #</u>	<u>Report Title</u>	<u>Date Released</u>
05-01	Public Education Technology Initiatives	January 2005
05-02	Child Welfare Caseload Management	February 2005
05-01HTD	Use of Social Security Numbers for Drivers’ Licenses, Permits and Identification Cards	February 2005
05-01F	Management of Correctional Data	March 2005
05-03	Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind	October 2005
05-04	State Substance Abuse Treatment Efforts	December 2005
06-01	Management in the Department of Health and Welfare	February 2006
06-02	Idaho Student Information Management System (ISIMS)—Lessons for Future Technology Projects	August 2006
06-01F	Public Works Contractor Licensing Function	August 2006
06-02F	Idaho Child Care Program	August 2006
06-03F	Timeliness and Funding of Air Quality Permitting Programs	August 2006
06-04F	Fiscal Accountability of Pupil Transportation	August 2006
06-05F	School District Administration and Oversight	August 2006
06-06F	Public Education Technology Initiatives	August 2006
06-07F	Higher Education Residency Requirements	August 2006
07-01	Use of Average Daily Attendance in Public Education Funding	February 2007
07-02	Virtual School Operations	March 2007
07-03F	Higher Education Residency Requirements	July 2007
07-04F	State Substance Abuse Treatment Efforts	July 2007
07-05F	Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind	July 2007
07-06F	Public Education Technology Initiatives	July 2007

Evaluation reports are available on our website at www.idaho.gov/ope/.
Office of Performance Evaluations • P.O. Box 83720 • Boise, ID 83720-0055
Phone: (208) 334-3880 • Fax: (208) 334-3871