

10 Issues in Educational Technology

The Southern Regional Education Board's Educational Technology Cooperative recommends that policymakers in SREB states address 10 education technology issues now. Without adequate progress on them, states may fall short of their educational improvement goals, and their key policy initiatives may fail.

The issues are critical to both public schools and higher education. States need coordinated leadership to allocate funds and focus improvements on students. The ETC will work with states on these issues through 2018, assess and update progress, and refine the list.



1 Data Systems

Link statewide data systems between education and other sectors, from early childhood through college and workforce, and adopt common data definitions across the K-20 state education data systems.



6 New Learning Models

Provide for more use of technology to create personalized competency-based learning environments and delivery methods that allow students to demonstrate mastery of content at their own pace.



2 Data Privacy

Protect the sensitivity of student data held within education data systems, while enabling the use of this data to inform education policy and practice.



7 Student Digital Literacy

Ensure students have the fundamental skill sets they need from the early grades through college to be fully engaged in technology-mediated learning opportunities to develop lifelong fluencies for success in a digital world.



3 Predictive Analytics

Incorporate the use of data for decision-making and predictive modeling of student-centric outcomes to improve education systems, processes and policy.



8 Technology Security

Provide adequate resources to protect information and information systems from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification or destruction, while keeping them highly available for learning and education administration.



4 Bandwidth

Expand reliable, affordable bandwidth to ensure that educators and their students gain maximum benefit from current and emerging technologies.



9 Digital Accessibility

Make digital content and sites accessible to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other regulatory requirements through design, professional training and instructional practices.



5 Emerging Technologies

Factor the relevance and appropriate use of emerging technologies in strategic decision-making and foster faculty professional development in these technologies to maximize their benefits to students.



10 Policy

Maintain regular state-level review of technology-related legislation and policies on education standards, access and infrastructure to ensure these policies are adequate, aligned, necessary and integrated.

The intent of the 10 Issues process is to create a policy environment to improve education in SREB states. The process leverages technology to support the efforts of instructional staff, support staff, education leaders and policymakers who serve students. Then states will be able to address their highest educational priorities more effectively. Through the 10 Issues, the ETC hopes to engage education leaders, policymakers and practitioners in funding solutions and taking action to address them.

The 10 Issues project is a member-driven initiative. The ETC represents K-12 and higher education agencies across the SREB region. These agencies represent more than 800 colleges and universities, more than 3,100 school districts and thousands of educators in SREB's 16 states.

To make progress on these issues, SREB encourages states to address them in a coordinated effort in both K-12 and postsecondary education. If states do not make adequate progress on these issues, many policies and efforts to improve education will fail. SREB's *Challenge to Lead 2020 Goals for Education* calls for significantly increasing postsecondary credential attainment for working-age adults. This goal requires assessing alternative paths to a degree for many adult students who juggle work, home and studies.

The scope of the 10 Issues covers aspects of technology that will better prepare students to thrive in a digital world. By making progress on these issues, states can achieve a technology environment that supports innovation, personalized competency-based learning and individual learning paths at an accelerated pace. The issues also address technology tools at various grade levels that keep students more engaged in learning and successful in attaining their educational and career goals. They address critical support systems and training for effective teaching. They combine emerging technologies, data, infrastructure, security and support systems for a more comprehensive approach to digital learning in SREB states.

10 Critical Ed Tech Issues

The Cooperative identified the following 10 Critical Issues in Educational Technology policymakers in SREB states should provide guidelines and resources for:

- linking statewide data systems from early grades through college and into the workforce and adopting common data definitions across systems;
- protecting sensitivity of student data while ensuring its use to inform policy and practice;
- transforming vast amounts of data into usable information to improve decision-making, predictive modeling and student outcomes;
- expanding reliable and affordable bandwidth so students and educators gain the full benefit of available technologies;
- assessing emerging technologies and their relevance for education, as well as improving faculty development on technology — all to maximize benefits to students;
- promoting instructional innovation and student engagement through personalized competency-based learning, and self-paced mastery of content;
- ensuring students have adequate skill sets and develop lifelong fluencies for success in a digital world;
- providing adequate resources to protect information and systems from unauthorized access, use, disruption, modification or destruction, while keeping them highly available for learning;
- promoting awareness and training to make e-learning sites and content more accessible to students with disabilities; and
- maintaining regular review of technology policies, standards, access and infrastructure to ensure policies are adequate, necessary and integrated.

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