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Key Points

- Between 1995-2000 the federal government has allocated over eight billion dollars to the states to purchase educational technology equipment.
- An analysis of state statutes that address education and technology reveals four trends.
- The analysis also reveals that most states have failed to carve out a role to be played by school administrators.
- An analysis of the case law suggests that school administrators could or would be held professionally responsible for failing to successfully integrate the technology into the curriculum.
- There is a need, both locally and statewide, to revise the policy approach such that colleges and universities provide training for administrators to be involved in policy formation.
- A handful of states already allow school administrators to participate on instructional technology committees. We suggest that this practice be expanded.

The Role of the Administrator in Instructional Technology Policy

By T.K. Daniel and Jason Nance

The Drive Toward Technology

Since *A Nation At Risk*, the federal government has emphasized the important role educational technology should play in public education. Between 1995 and 2000, the federal government allocated over eight billion dollars to the states to purchase technological equipment for schools and to fund educational technology programs. That initiative, released through the National Educational Technology Plan, provided the nation with five technology goals:

- 1) All students and teachers will have access to information technology in their schools.
- 2) All teachers will use technology effectively to help students achieve high academic standards.
- 3) All students will learn technology and information literacy skills.
- 4) Research and evaluation will improve the next generation of technology applications for teaching and learning.
- 5) Digital content and networked applications will transform teaching and learning.

State Initiatives

This cascade of federally sponsored educational reform has been quickly absorbed by state governments and almost all have implemented programs in school technology for K-12 education. Four general trends have emerged from the statutes.

- 1) Every state except Alaska has enacted legislation that enables public schools to gain access to technology.
- 2) Many states have created a state educational technology commission, council, office, or department whose purpose is to help public educators integrate technology into the curriculum.
- 3) Several states have statutes designed to help teachers receive professional development training in technology. Some states simply make grants available; others hire personnel to develop and offer professional development; others require the school districts to create professional development programs; and others create teacher resource and computer training centers.
- 4) Nine states require teachers to be trained in integrating technology with instruction to obtain certification or licensure.

The above analysis also demonstrates that on the whole most states have failed to carve out a role to be played by school administrators. Only six states even mention the word “administrator” in a statute addressing education and technology. That role is typically restricted to membership on an advisory committee or council consisting of fourteen or more persons.

Accountability

It is ironic that state lawmakers, for the most part, have not determined a role for administrators in educational technology. The irony is even more pronounced since

Reference:

Daniel, P.T.K. & Nance, J. (in press). The Role of the Administrator in Instructional Technology Policy. B.Y.U. Educ. & L.J.

The P-12 Project is a university-wide partnership developed to strengthen the scope and effectiveness of OSU's commitment to P-12 education, with a special emphasis on the education of underserved children and youth.

Through these briefs, The Ohio State University hopes to assist the state's decision and policy makers with relevant research and information.

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administrators are ultimately held responsible for the teaching and learning process that occurs in schools. The statutory language demonstrates that legislators postulate that educational technology is an important element of educating public school students for the 21st century. As such, it seems plausible that an administrator could or would be held professionally responsible for failing to successfully integrate the new communications media into the curriculum. Clearly, this is the trend in American public school education; school administrators are the country's academic barometer, and the mercurial measurement of student success or failure will determine just how much such professionals will be held accountable. Said differently, the "accountability" or "reconstitution" movements in the states permits school officials to terminate administrators who do not demonstrate student achievement or who do not meet the objectives of a particular reform movement (such as in instructional technology). Various case law support the above statements.

Administrator Training and Policy Participation

Recognizing the crucial role to be played by administrators in the crafting of curricular strategies in the information age, the Collaborative for Technology Standards for School Administrators (TSSA) has defined standards that seek to create a place for school leadership in the development and integration of technology in school curricula. Like so many other approaches, as well as the state and local legislative initiatives cited above, the TSSA Collaboration neither lists nor proposes a role for any sort of policy participation for school administrators beyond assessment at the local level. In light of the above, we would like to suggest another domain to the TSSA framework: Educational leaders take an active role in the creation, implementation, and modification of local and state policy relating to technology and public education. For administrators to meet this standard, government leaders must allow them to take a role in the creation and modification of policy.

Conclusion

The thesis of this research is that school administrators should have some level of participation at all levels of the policy enterprise since it is they who will be ultimately responsible for the implementation and success of any school-related technology endeavor. A process must be established such that a representative group of administrators be involved in the review and reporting of technology policy to those whose job it is to make the policy. Professional preparation programs, including formal degree coursework as well as in-service seminars, need to develop the perspectives and skills necessary for this bottom-up reporting so that it can occur accurately with efficiency, and with facility. State lawmakers, executive school personnel, and commercial organizations that control educational accreditation programs can provide enlightenment and reduce administrative turnover by including in the policy paradigm the front line troops whose job it is to achieve proposed policy goals and objectives.



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