

Executive Summary  
J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation

A report by the  
Institute for Evidence-Based Change

September 2014



Review of  
Idaho's  
Educational  
Technology &  
Data Systems



**MOVING  
IDAHO  
FORWARD**

### Idaho and the nation are at a critical juncture for technology in education.

Educators and parents are using mobile devices more than ever and electronic communication, content and instruction is advancing rapidly. The result is shifting beliefs about technology and increasing acceptance of it as an important educational tool for all students.

Idaho educators, like their counterparts across the nation, are grappling with funding challenges, technology maintenance, how to use data effectively and teachers' lack of experience using technology to enhance learning. As in other states, Idaho is still in its infancy in authentic technology use to positively impact student achievement.

In late 2013, the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation commissioned the Institute for Evidence-Based Change to conduct a review of Idaho's educational technology and data systems. The purpose of this review was to assess the degree to which technology and data systems funded, in large part by the Foundation, are doing what they are intended to do, continue to be state of the art, and ultimately, are leading toward improved college and career readiness for all Idaho's students.

The primary educational data and technology providers reviewed in the report included the Idaho Leads Project, Idaho Regional Optic Network, Idaho Digital Learning Academy, Idaho Education Network and Doceō Centers for Innovation + Learning.

To develop this report, IEBC identified and interviewed multiple key stakeholders, administrators, information technology staff and others among 34 school districts stratified across Idaho's six education regions including large, small, rural and urban districts. An online teacher survey was also conducted among school districts across the state. Two small groups were also convened for deeper discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted with primary education technology service providers.

The full report is designed to build buy-in for a statewide plan to ensure Idaho's educational data and technology systems fully support student college and career readiness. The report describes the current education technology and data landscape in Idaho, identifies challenges and gaps and provides a list of prioritized recommendations and action steps.

### A statewide plan will move Idaho forward and ensure that we remain at the forefront of national efforts to enlist technology and data in the service of student success.

This step should be taken before further investments in the systems are made.

**Key themes and immediate action steps emerged from the IEBC report and are summarized below.**

Theme	Immediate action steps for Idaho
1. The state lacks understanding of the technology and data needs of all school districts in the state	<b>Conduct a comprehensive statewide technology and data needs assessment-</b>
2. Idaho is struggling with the cost of and accessibility to technology in school districts, in the classroom and outside the classroom	<b>Develop a 3-5 year statewide strategic technology and data use plan</b>
3. Educators lack coordinated and effective professional development in data and technology use	<p><b>Develop a comprehensive calendar of professional development offerings</b></p> <p><b>Work with a professional development provider to create a classroom coach model to replicate statewide</b></p>
4. A considerable gap exists between the technical assistance needed in districts, schools, classrooms and the technology support available	<b>Explore regional solutions to local issues and create a system to provide technical assistance to small and rural districts and other districts unable to set aside resources of their own</b>
5. Rapid changes in technology and the evolving needs of students and teachers leave districts struggling to keep up	<p><b>Create a comprehensive map of the technical assistance, professional development, student courses, networking and other educational technology resources available in Idaho</b></p> <p><b>Convene a statewide technology advisory committee</b></p>
6. Districts are ahead of the state when it comes to creating policies about technology	<b>Survey school districts about their technology policies</b>

<p>7. Idaho's weak definition of college and career readiness makes it difficult to assess and set goals for students, schools or districts</p>	<p><b>Create a report from the SLDS about college and career readiness in Idaho</b></p> <p><b>Operationalize the definition of college and career readiness in a way that supports metrics at each level of student's academic progress</b></p>
<p>8. Administrators, teachers and other educational stakeholders are not skilled at using data</p>	<p><b>Encourage the SDE to continue with outreach and messaging to districts about changes, adjustments, and improvements to statewide data systems</b></p> <p><b>Develop a CCSS SBAC update and regular notifications about progress and expectations</b></p> <p><b>Review state and federal data submission expectations and develop a consolidated data submission system that could be used for multiple accountability and compliance requirements</b></p> <p><b>Ensure teachers have scientifically rigorous formative data to improve instruction at the classroom and student levels, by providing professional development in using data and continuing to respond to district student data requests from state data systems</b></p>
<p>9. The state lacks effective collaboration, coordination and communications surrounding data and technology</p>	<p><b>Make more information public and accessible, including new reports available to school districts from the Idaho SDE</b></p> <p><b>Develop a data use one-stop clearinghouse website</b></p>

In addition to the immediate action steps, mid-range and long-term action steps have also been identified.

## Mid-Range action steps

- Identify Idaho best practices for technology integration showcasing Idaho practitioners
- Develop criteria for and list of technical assistance providers
- Capitalize on current systems for peer-to-peer support by formalizing a moderated system for professional development
- Develop a system for vetting, rating and publicizing professional development providers
- Consider a regional or virtual approach to providing technology technical assistance and professional development
- Develop a formal partnership structure to encourage pipelines and pathways between high schools and colleges and businesses
- Explore the potential benefits of a statewide college readiness conference

## Long-term action steps

- Provide resources to districts struggling to maintain their current technology hardware
- Study the implications of the "bring your own device" movement and provide creative solutions to the growing equity gap
- Ensure the Idaho Education Network continues to have the capacity to meet the growing needs among Idaho's school districts.
- Identify recommendations for effective educational technology policies for Idaho school districts with examples and suggestions for development and implementation
- Encourage state-level educational technology policies and funding that support effective district policies
- Showcase case studies of successful experiences providing students with devices on the resources clearinghouse website