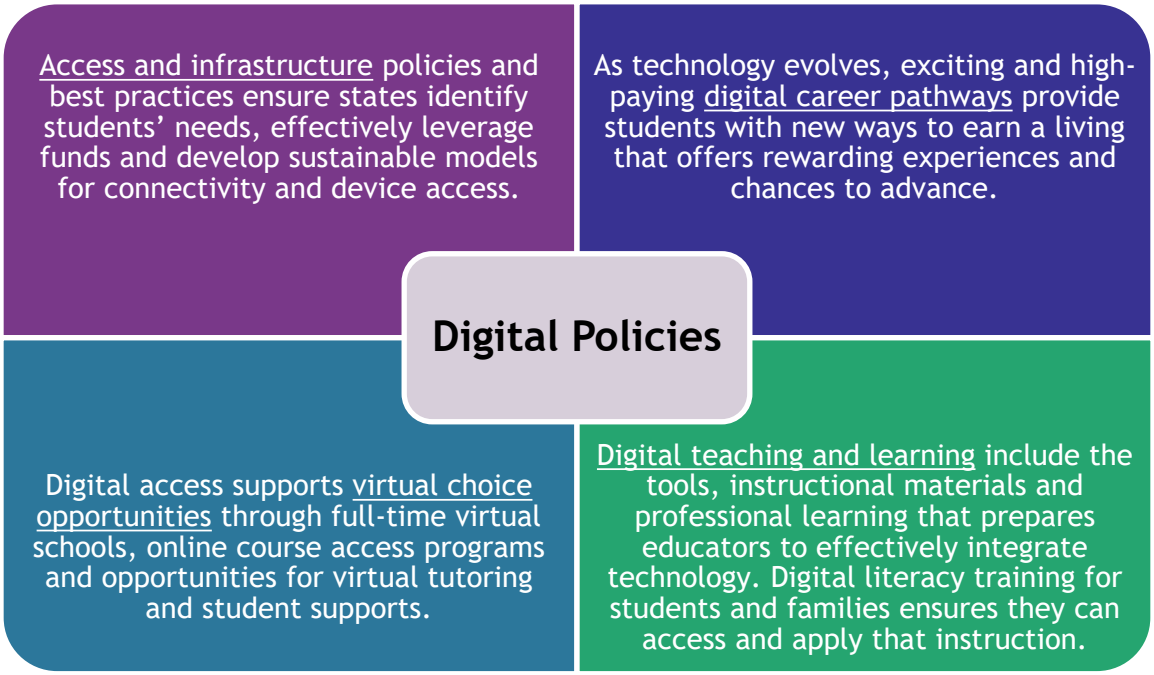
DIGITAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

ExcelinEd Policy Toolkit - 2023

Digital Policy Framework for States

To bridge the digital divide and fully leverage digital resources, Excel*in*Ed has identified four key policy areas for state leaders to focus on: **access and infrastructure, digital career pathways, virtual choice opportunities and digital teaching and learning**.



The toolkit is regularly updated as Excel*in*Ed identifies and develops new resources.

Access and Infrastructure

States can consider several model policies that can establish baseline requirements for state agencies to raise awareness of broadband subsidy programs, prioritize investments that increase broadband and device access for educational purposes, and establish regular reporting on educational broadband and device access and remaining needs.

- Model policy and policy brief: Closing the Digital Divide in Education Act
- Model policy: Digital Devices for All Act
- Blog and communications toolkit: Closing the Home Broadband Affordability Gap
- Blog: Quantifying the Digital Divide: Surprising Disparities in Broadband Affordability Across U.S. States

States can also assist districts in establishing cost-efficient, sustainable uses of technology-related funding through state procurement options. By negotiating competitive pricing on behalf of districts, statewide procurement efforts can result in substantial cost savings on devices and connectivity.

- Model policy, policy brief, and webinar: Competitive State Procurement for Digital Educational Resources
- Policy brief: Achieving K-12 Broadband Goals Using a State RFI
- Policy brief and blog: Lowering the Cost of In-School Internet through E-Rate
- State spotlight: State Success in K-12 Procurement of Connectivity and Devices (Texas)
- State spotlight: Ohio's Broadband RFI

Digital Career Pathways

With the infusion federal and state broadband expansion grant dollars, students have new opportunities to pursue high-demand, high-wage jobs in broadband-related fields. And without a prepared workforce, states will be unable to effectively leverage available funds or maintain their systems over time. To meet this workforce shortage, Excel*in*Ed developed several resources related to the broadband workforce specifically:

- Policy toolkit: Strengthening the Broadband Workforce
- Blog: Federal Broadband Implementation Requires Next-Gen Workforce
- Strategies from Ohio's Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership, in which Excel*in*Ed participates, including a policy brief, slide deck, and conversation with Lt. Gov. Jon Husted.

While the broadband workforce is critical to closing America's digital divide, ubiquitous connectivity opens up numerous other digital career pathways.

- Webinar: Strengthening States' Digital Career Pathways featuring leaders in Ohio, South Carolina and Georgia discussing careers in broadband, cybersecurity, and financial technology
- Blog: What Students and Teachers Think About STEM, AI and Jobs of the Future

Virtual Choice Opportunities

When students have access to home broadband and educational digital devices, they can take advantage of educational opportunities available through high-quality virtual instruction. The following resources highlight several of those opportunities.

- Model policy: Course Access
- Policy brief: Course Access Policy Summary
- Policy brief and blog: How Can States Leverage the Promise of Virtual Learning
- State spotlight: Idaho Expands Educational Opportunities Despite Pandemic
- Partner spotlight: Florida Virtual School's 25th Anniversary Part 1 and Part 2

Digital Teaching and Learning

Good instruction incorporates multiple tools, including technology, to both teach content and prepare students to learn 21st century digital skills. These digital skills are important for both students and teachers.

- Blog: Making Informed Decisions: Choosing the Right Ed Tech Tools for Student Success
- Blog: The Ongoing Need for Academic Digital Skills
- Blog: Building Digital Citizenship Post-COVID
- Blog: Ensuring Digital Readiness for Educators
- Guiding principles: Teacher Support for Effective Technology-Enabled Instruction

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT, has brought up new questions, opportunities and concerns for educators and policymakers alike. Recent Excel*in*Ed resources related to AI in education include:

- Policy brief: ChatGPT and Education: FAQs for State Policymakers
- Blog: For Sixth Grade Students in Texas, ChatGPT "Was an Idea to Get Them Going"
- Partner resources: Excel*in*Ed is on the advisory committee of TeachAI, a multinational organization that has a mission of "*bringing together education leaders and technology experts to guide the safe, effective, and responsible use of AI in schools by connecting the discussion of teaching with AI to teaching about AI.*"

Continue the Conversation

Closing the digital divide requires partnerships between state policymakers, state broadband and education agencies, community partners, internet service providers, and more. Excel*in*Ed facilitates quarterly opportunities for partnership through its **Digital Divide Network**, which includes representatives of each of those stakeholder groups. The Digital

Divide Network offers an opportunity for collaboration, sharing best practices, troubleshooting common problems, and presentations on emerging practices. States interested in sending a participant to network meetings can contact Dr. Amy Owen, Excel*in*Ed's senior director of digital and teacher policy, at Amy@ExcelinEd.org.