



**Additional briefs include:**

Strategies for Improving Academic Achievement and Teacher Effectiveness

Goals

Steps to Increase Accessibility

Promotion of Curricula and Teaching Strategies That Integrate Technology

Professional Development

Technology Type and Costs

Coordination with Other Resources

Integration of Technology with Curricula and Instruction

Innovative Delivery Strategies

Collaboration with Adult Literacy Service Providers

Accountability Measures

Supporting Resources

*Collection of Key Questions to Consider*

## Parental Involvement

*Local technology applications and plans should include a description of how the applicant will use technology effectively to promote parental involvement and increase communication with parents, including a description of how parents will be informed of the technology used.*

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### Overview

Most educators are keenly aware of the positive impact of parental involvement on student achievement. Research indicates that when parents participate in their children’s education, the result is an increase in student achievement and an improvement of students’ attitudes towards learning (Caplan, Hall, Lubin, and Fleming, 1997). In recent years, however, changes in social structures and increased economic pressures have reduced the time and energy some families can devote to school (enGauge). In response to these changes, more educators are applying Internet-based tools and applications as a powerful new communication link to engage parents in children’s school experiences.

### Key Questions to Consider

- Does your application and long-range technology plan enable parents, educators, students and community members to contribute to and benefit from the investment in technology?
- Is the community involved in district and school strategic technology planning efforts?
- Does your application describe how parents will leverage existing networks and communication systems to facilitate communication with educators regarding student progress, assessment results, and support resources?

*For more information, contact Keith Nuthall, Project Director, at [knuthall@edc.org](mailto:knuthall@edc.org)*

*“The evidence is in: when schools and families work together to support learning, everyone benefits.”*  
(National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education)

## Strategies for Addressing Local Technology Applications and Plans

Email, classroom websites, online student performance portfolios, and grade books are increasingly being used by teachers to keep parents informed of students’ academic performance. Schools and districts are turning to the Internet as a vehicle to highlight successful programs, inform parents new to the community, and adhere to state requirements to report school achievement reports. Internet-based technologies are changing the way educators, parents, and community members exchange information and provide support to families. As educators become more comfortable communicating via technology, and as communication software becomes more robust, technology will play an increased role in supporting community connectedness to schools.

Many parents have a greater fear and misunderstanding of technology than do their children. It is imperative to involve family members in the development of school technology plans through establishing partnerships and by including parents in discussions and decisions pertaining to the development of the technology plans (Valdez). Fostering the role of parents in the planning process will result in parents serving as advocates for schools throughout the community (Cotton and Reed Wikeland, 1989). Districts are using technology tools to engage a larger audience in strategic planning efforts by using online surveys, listservs, and email. Involving parents, business partners, and the community in district and school technology planning is key to the success of both the planning process and the actual plan implementation.

The *Technology Connections for School Improvement Planners’ Handbook* suggests four action steps for involving parents and the community in the technology planning process (McNabb, Valdez, Nowakowski, and Hawkes 1999).

- Create a study group to engage subcommittee members and other relevant stakeholders in discussing a school-based case study scenario.
- Develop, implement and synthesize a Parent-Community Needs Assessment survey. Conduct parent interviews during the event to collect parental needs assessment information.

- Sponsor a Family Technology Event to increase parents' awareness and hands-on experience with the types of technology the school plans to purchase.
- Conduct parent involvement programs that highlight students-parents-teachers-administrators as "Partners in Learning with Technology."

Worksheets, tools, and rubrics that support the action steps above can be accessed by visiting the handbook Web site.

## Extended Resources

Family and Community Connections with Schools

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/>

Developed by the Southwest Education Development Laboratory, this Web site provides resources and strategies for connecting schools, families and communities.

The George Lucas Education Foundation

<http://www.glef.org/>

A collection of Web-based resources targeted toward policymakers, business groups, principals, and teachers building strong communities within schools using technology.

Critical Issue: Developing a School or District Technology Plan

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/technlgy/te300.htm>

Developed by the North Central Regional Education Laboartory, this Web site contains interviews with leading technology directors regarding the technology planning process and sample model technology plans.

Understanding State Standards and Assessments: How can parents and community help?

<http://www.md12.org/mspp/index.html>

Part of a larger Web site highlighting the State of Maryland Accountability system. It provides tips and strategies for helping parents assess data from state's accountability system.

## References

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NEIRTEC Partners:



LearningInnovations  
at West Ed



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Technology Briefs for  
NCLB Planners can be  
obtained by visiting  
<http://www.neirtec.org>.

Technology Briefs for No  
Child Left Behind  
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