Country primary school cluster edition

Leading education in a digital world

Voice of Schools handbook
2019–2026

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The world is turning truly digital

From teams collaborating across the globe to data-driven decisions that improve the lives of millions, new frontiers are being crossed every day.

To become Australia's best education system and one of the finest in the world, we need to change the way we approach our digital development.

With the Schools Digital Strategy (SDS), we can give our students, our teachers and those who support them the digital skills they need today and in the future.

The SDS is a seven-year plan to lighten your school's administration load; provide your staff and students with the digital skills they need to succeed now and in the future, and to make each of your learning spaces a rich, engaging, personalised environment that brings out the best in each student, academically and socially.

This handbook sets out the priorities your school has identified; areas of need and opportunities you have identified to develop the digital capacity of your school and staff.

It's a snapshot of what you can do now; what you need help to achieve, and where you want to be in the future. It will help you assess your current digital capability and plan your development path, with access to the training, guidance and direct assistance you need to succeed.

We'll be following your journey and providing support at every stage, to help you achieve your goals and share your experience.

Murat Dizdar

Deputy Secretary,
School Performance South

Cathy Brennan

Deputy Secretary,
School Performance North

About this handbook and our digital strategy

Developing and implementing our school's digital strategy

Principals from our cluster of primary schools in the Dubbo region met with the department's SDS Project team to develop this handbook.

This book is our school's voice regarding digital. It presents our needs, priorities and a roadmap for Horizon 1, the next few years. Our voice is an important part of the department's wider seven-year Schools Digital Strategy, the SDS.

Our roadmap for leading education in a digital world

The SDS is our pathway to improving digital literacy and efficiency across the board. To meet our vision we must better understand, invest into and integrate digital across our schools and the department. In this book, we set out five digital support priorities for which we rely on the department, and ten digital priorities we can drive from our school in partnership with the department.

Focusing on those who teach

The SDS focuses on "those who teach" and "those who support those who teach". While it concentrates on teaching and learning, it also addresses digital foundations in administration and corporate functions.

The SDS encompasses the critical participants in a student's learning journey – parents and carers, teachers, the community, and of course the students themselves.

The SDS encompasses the critical participants in a student's learning journey

- Teachers
- Students
- Admin & support
- School leaders
- Parents

Our SDS journey

Our school's journey to digital maturity is set out in the following planning and implementation model. We are building this digital cycle into our three-year plan. Going forward, digital will be more explicitly called out in our school plan as an enabler for excellence under the Schools Excellence Framework (SEF).

- Review our capabilities, needs and goals
- Prioritise our actions for digital improvement
- Secure required resources, including time allocations
- Pilot, test and improve efficiency and excellence
- Revisit priorities, continually improving
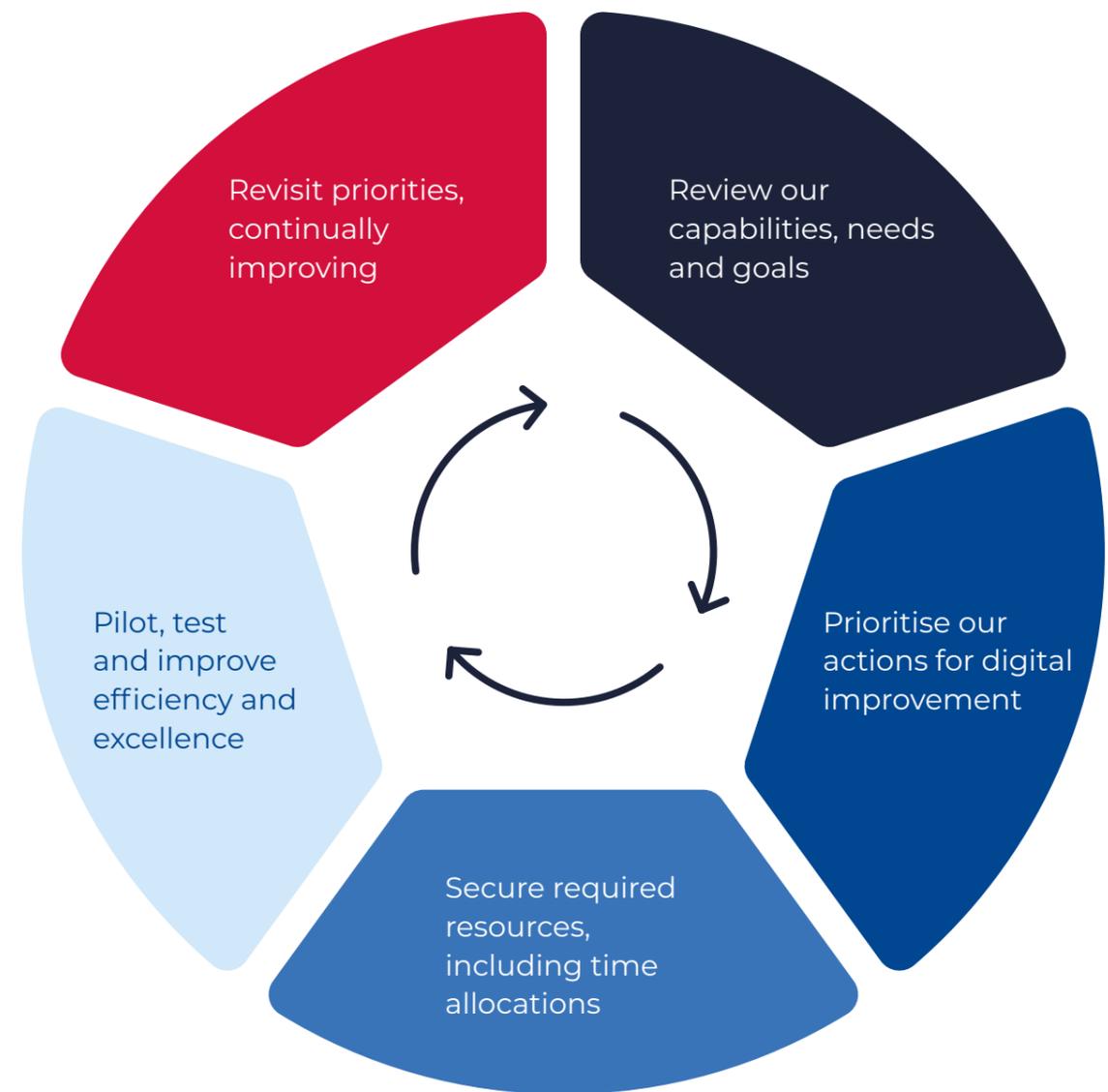
How our school's digital strategy contributes to the big picture

State strategy	SDS outcomes
20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW	• **Boosting digital connectivity and utilise existing and ongoing network rollouts.** • **Equipping students with in-demand skills and competencies.**
State Infrastructure Strategy 2018–2038 (Connecting Metro/Country Schools Programs)	• **Strengthening the physical infrastructure to support digital uptake and use in learning spaces.** • **Connecting schools across the state in collaborative learning experiences.**
Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018–2022	• **Increasing student engagement and participation.** • **Equipping students with the digital, technical, and communication skills of the future workforce.** • **Closing the digital divide between schools with equitable access to resources and opportunity.**
Digital NSW A wider government priority is to improve the customer service experience for all citizens who come into contact with government services.	• **Delivering customer-centric education services.** • **Enhancing data analytics and reporting capabilities to inform teaching and investment.** • **Digitising and automating processes to reduce burdens and increase efficiency.**

We're starting from

Amplifying our opportunities

As a school, we have already made significant strides forward into the digital era. To provide a robust foundation for further progress, we've identified a range of digital opportunities to build upon:

1. Improved and automated systems offer an opportunity to free up valuable time for our school leaders, teachers and admin staff.

2. Our teachers have first-hand experience to recognise student needs and identify innovation opportunities within the learning experience.

3. Customer interactions are well-served in places, and could be connected to form a seamless customer experience.

4. As our school takes the lead on digital maturity, we provide important lessons to learn and share.

5. A wealth of student and school data is being collected, and presents an opportunity to help make more informed decisions.

Our considerations

Five key considerations shaped the formation of the SDS. These were used to ensure the strategy was focused, effective and fit for the future.

• **Schools are best placed to take charge of their own digital journey, and innovate based on their needs.**

• **Teachers' digital literacy is a powerful lever to pull in improving digital maturity and improving the learning experience.**

• **The department is best placed to provide support to schools on their digital journey, and leverage their network perspective for innovation.**

• **Real time feedback and collaboration within the learning environment will improve student outcomes.**

• **The digital playing field needs to be leveled across the state to ensure equity of opportunity for all students.**

Our school's digital agency

We are now empowered to shape our school's digital journey

- **We assess our digital maturity.**
- **Create and implement plans to build our capability.**

We are building our school's digital equity and capability

- **Deliver enhanced digital teaching and learning.**
- **Improve student administration and school management.**
- **Drive collaboration and communication.**
- **Enhance our data, analytics and reporting capabilities.**
- **Strengthen our digital and equity foundations.**

Aligning with the department

- **Realign our support relationships with the department.**
- **Engage in innovation at the school and cluster level.**

Our digital support priorities

Here are five priority areas we have identified for which we require the department's ongoing support:

1
Professional learning (PL) in the flow of work

Help us access experts and peer networks to support our staff's pursuit of digital maturity. Provide us release time for an onsite digital champion. Supplement this with tailored, context-appropriate digital resources that target putting PL into practice, in pedagogy and administration.

2
Respect our time

Provide us with quick access to people with answers to our common digital issues. It often does not serve us well to ring a call centre. We need to deal with a local person. A local digital friend is critical.

3
Remove complexity in purchasing

We seek a digital marketplace that works for our schools, helping us assess and purchase pre-qualified digital resources and services with confidence.

4
Equity

Our students and staff need equitable access to devices, networks, online resources, professional learning and personalised digital learning experiences.

5
Access requests

We need the complexity removed from the application process for financial assistance for students with disabilities or high needs.

Our country primary school cluster

Hi, I'm Patricia Howard and I'm the principal at Gilgandra Public School where we support 226 students.
....

Patricia Howard
Principal - Gilgandra Public School

Hi, I'm Jason Stewart and I'm the Deputy principal at Guerie Public School where we support 123 students.
....

Jason Stewart
Deputy Principal - Guerie Public School

Hi, I'm Sharon Murray and I'm the principal at Dubbo South Public School where we support 676 students.
....

Sharon Murray
Principal - Dubbo South Public School

Hi, I'm Rebecca Letfellah and I'm the principal at Dubbo North Public School where we support 266 students.
....

Rebecca Letfellah
Principal - Dubbo North Public School

Hi, I'm Debbie McCreadie and I'm the principal at Yawarra Community School where we support 40 students.
....

Debbie McCreadie
Principal - Yawarra Community School

Our voice, school agency

"Our SDS top ten priorities are clear, great ideas to relieve burden on each school, supports universality, identifies current issues."

"The fact that you guys [the SDS project team] are here, listening is a big step. Coming here and interacting rather than advising us remotely shows commitment. Continued local support to operate improved platforms would be excellent."

"Digital needs to be a layer in our School Plan. It needs to be there."

"Once the Schools Digital Strategy was explained, the digital maturity model was easier to understand. The top ten priorities look good as they are focused."

"From what I see, there is plenty of "tech" in schools, but there are two factors: 1. It doesn't work reliably, if it's not working, teachers don't have time to fix it and we don't know about it to help them, and 2. Teachers need face-to-face professional learning to use that technology most effectively."

"stem.T4L allows us to self-provide professional learning (connected classrooms) and other resources."

"Teacher professional learning is so vital in the technology mix, but PL has challenges. We cannot spend our PL money as we cannot find people to release staff to undertake PL. We could run PL in our staff meeting every Tuesday afternoon if there were effective, one-hour, bite-sized elearning modules on important digital learning areas that we can run through, that would be useful. Also, it would be enticing if digital teaching and learning PL was accredited."

"Don't bother about bringing people out for PL. We need to do more PL on using interactive whiteboards. The PL comes from the suppliers, but we still got people that use these devices as an overhead projector. We are not seeing the student interaction that they were designed for."

"NBN is not always available at our students' homes. Some students only have a mobile phone. We need to think about access from anywhere."

"The SDS digital maturity model concept has great potential if completed collectively with all stakeholder and revisited probably twice annually."

"We don't use the Department EBS reporting and feedback platform anymore. It is a bit clunky and not very reliable. We went and found a better system. We need a platform that is reliable and has all the student information in one spot."

"If our teachers were learning about, say, coding, it has to contain specific strategies that the teachers can put into practice, straight into their lesson's, underpinning the learning outcomes of their subject. It needs to be integrated and practical, not a novel add-on."

Our school's top ten priorities

1 **Improve local IT support continuity**

We need local IT support that is less reliant on a single staff member who may be unavailable, have skills gaps or be transferred away. We need local continuity in handling day-to-day troubleshooting and tasks such as imaging machines.

2 **Leverage in-school release time and bite-size resources to drive digital professional learning**

Provide us with a local digital learning leader who has release time to support our staff in digital practice PL, primarily in the flow of work and as part of a regional Community of Practice. Complement PL with curated, dynamic PL multimedia that matches our digital set up, time constraints, and reflect our future-focused learning priorities.

3 **Develop a digital maturity plan that is championed by our school leaders**

Provide us a framework, tools and professional support to ensure our school leaders own and prioritise digital maturity as a vital part of our shared pursuit of excellence under the Schools Excellence Framework (SEF).

4 **Provide a digital solutions guide that features what works best**

We don't know what we don't know. We would benefit from a digital catalogue that features pre-qualified digital solutions for schools that are similar to ours. Also, a digital resources store would provide our teachers and students more flexible access to worthwhile applications, more like they would in the real world.

5 **Access the digital tools, resources and practices we need for future-focused learning**

Help us search, review and access, adapt, publish, share and rate digital learning and teaching resources and strategies, collaborating with teachers across our school and the state. We want to search in one place for quality resources that reflect the latest curriculum developments and digitally reframed pedagogies that support student agency.

6 **Digitise and improve processes that are burdensome**

Help our school reduce the double handling of information. Let's reduce the number of clicks and hours involved in school administration. Student information needs to be more easily transferred when students change school or are subject to compliance measures.

7 **Access user-friendly, integrated interfaces that provide an exceptional user experience**

Let's migrate to role-based, unified digital environments that save time, providing more school-friendly workflows.

8 **Experience secure, role-based access management that is simplified**

Help our school to manage and administer access privileges and access to digital networks, resources, systems, tools and devices.

9 **Access all services from anywhere**

Help us and our students migrate to the cloud. In some situations, this will require online access for students at local community facilities outside school. Offline alternatives can help in some situations.

10 **Refresh our technology through a digital renewal fund**

Help us to tap into a digital refresh fund to migrate from legacy technologies that are still being used, for instance, all our first generation smart-boards are all failing at the same time - losing screen brightness, out-of-support, etc.

Our school will work on these digital priorities in partnership with the department's professional support team.
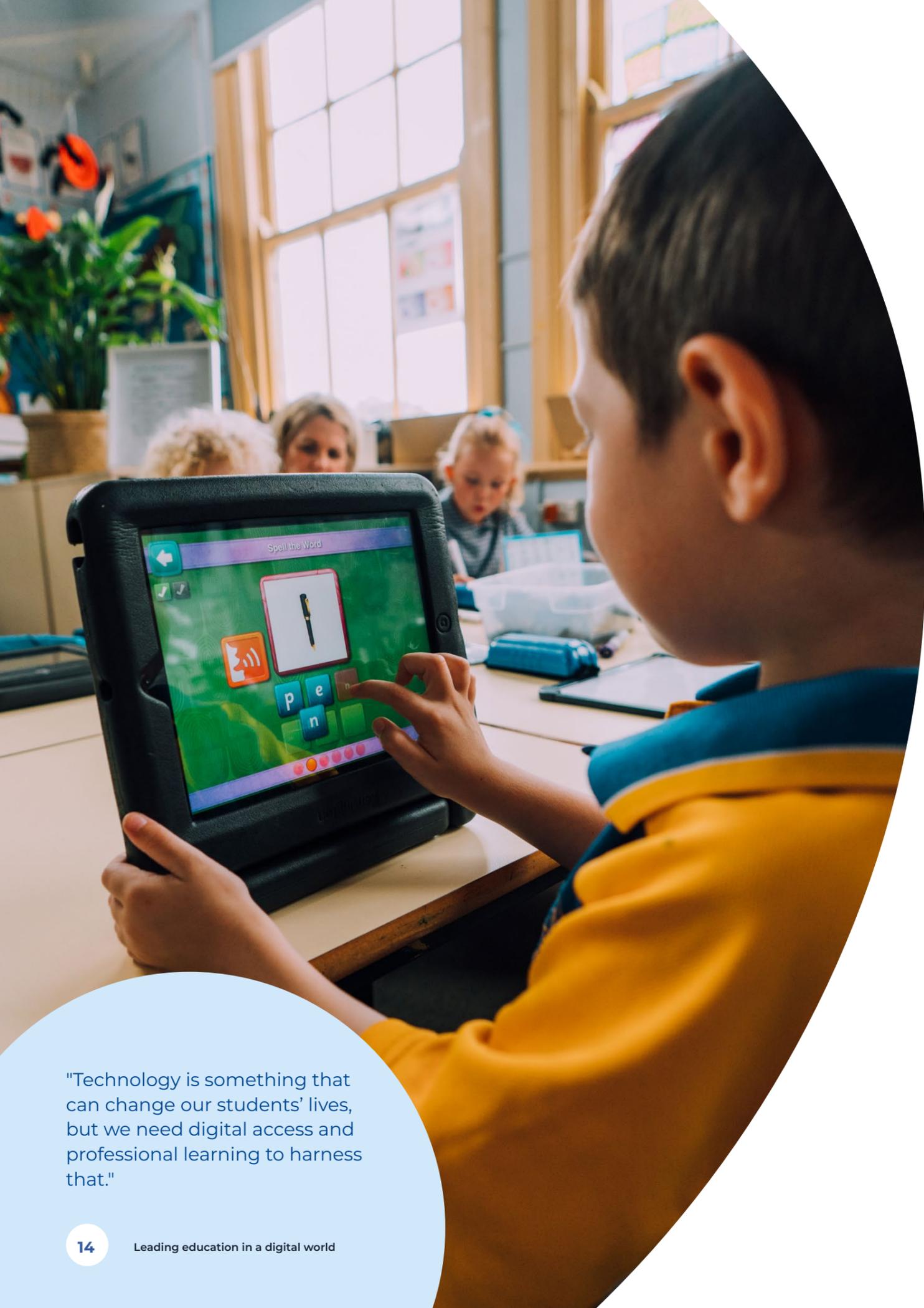
"Technology is something that can change our students' lives, but we need digital access and professional learning to harness that."

How we'll achieve our vision

Here are five priority areas we have identified for which we require the department's ongoing support:

Setup — Horizon 1 — Horizon 2 — Horizon 3 — 7 years

2019   2019   2026
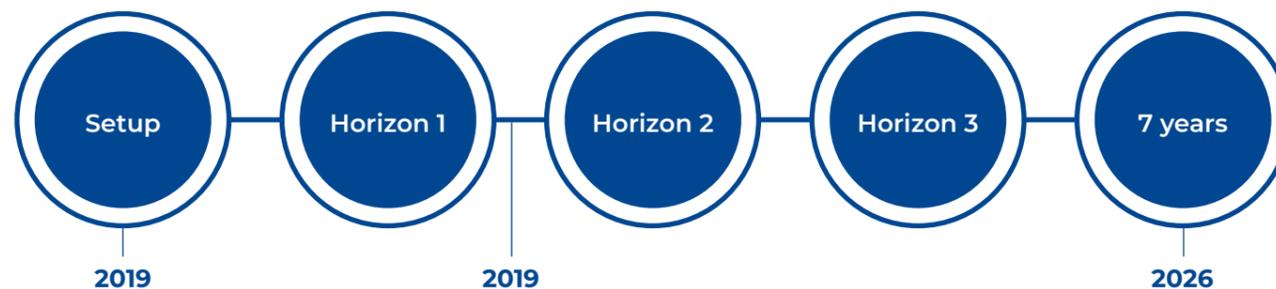
Our current focus

Setup:
Foundations
Core foundations are designed, and pilot programs are implemented at our school.

Horizon 1:
Optimising
Benefit measures are established, pilot projects are being scaled and a school-centric service culture created within the department.

Future vision

Horizon 2:
Evolving
The pace of our school's digital capability development increases, continual innovation becomes the norm and the school-centric service becomes fully embedded.

Horizon 3:
Transforming
Digital delivery becomes fully integrated across department and sector-leading expertise are developed.

Set up: Foundations

Horizon 1: Optimised

Today — **Setup** — Dec 2021

SDS Comms program launches

Digital pilots start launching in select schools

Our school has a clear baseline of it's digital maturity, and can make decisions about platforms and systems accordingly.

Horizon 1

We lead our digital decisions, being supported by the department

Parents can access their child's school records and admin through a centralised hub.

Dec 2021

Capabilities and activities:

- Designing
- Planning
- Agreeing

Duration:

6 months

Key actions:

- **Creation of opportunity canvases.**
- **Human-centred design ideation sessions.**
- **Validation with our schools.**
- **Implement pilots and deploy quick wins.**
- **SDS communications program.**
- **Service model redesign.**
- **Service catalogue design and launch.**
- **Device strategy ratios finalised for H1.**
- **Automation pilots.**
- **Digital maturity baselined.**

Capabilities and activities:

- Delivering
- Building
- Embedding

Duration:

2 Years

Key actions:

- **Digital capability pilots scale across network.**
- **Market and vendor selection as required.**
- **Benefits measurement in place.**
- **Business change program and PD.**
- **Create school-centric service culture.**
- **Service model implemented.**
- **Service catalogue available.**
- **Connected schools.**
- **Device equity increases.**
- **Digital learning environment available.**
- **Enhanced reporting.**
- **Student and teacher portals available.**
- **Streamlined administration.**

Our future

7 years

2026

Our school thrives in a digital world.

The future of education will see students learn on their own terms. Their teachers, empowered to innovate, will continuously improve the learning environment. Outcomes and impacts will be measured to affirm growth.

School leaders and staff will be supported by efficient administration and management processes, and parent, carers and school communities will enjoy seamless digital interactions as they engage with schools.

Our schools will be a connected network, backed by the department, empowered with the agency to drive their digital journey.

Key benefits:

- Students are engaged and prepared for jobs of the future.
- Improved equity of access to digital devices and learning opportunities.
- Data-driven student outcomes.
- Improved customer experience for everyone interacting with schools.
- Improved school and student management efficiency.

"At a recent SDS forum, principals were asked what the essential elements would be if we were designing and building a new school to meet the needs of today and into the future. That was a great question to ask a group of principals who are all working in established schools. It really turned our conversation on the head to say well if we were starting from scratch what would it look like. There is great value in these sorts of discussions. I see this as one of the benefits of working in the SDS context."

What this means for our school cluster

Students

Across the Central West NSW region, students are prepared for the jobs of the future with enhanced digital literacy and critical collaboration and team-based problem solving skills.

Teachers

Time and focus on students grows as teachers are freed of admin and low-value tasks. Teachers' capability is enhanced through hyper-relevant professional development, access to quality digital tools and greater visibility of student development.

Leadership

School leaders are empowered to make decisions on the digital direction that suits their school. Data-based insights drive better decision-making, whilst automated school management allows more time to support their teachers and students.

Support staff

Support staff can dedicate more time than ever supporting leadership, teachers, students and parents as manual and low-value tasks are automated.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are more connected than ever to their students' learning journey through improved data and transparency. Digital learning resources enable them to actively support the learning journey.

How our schools are embracing the SDS

Digital content, experience and data

Enhance our data, analytics and reporting capabilities

An investment in improving our data and analytics capabilities, including through the development of advanced analytics, the evolution of CESE into a data and analytics centre of excellence, and integrated data within and beyond schools to aid comprehensive student data gathering. Advanced analytics underpin many components of the strategy, including personalised learning support, welfare support, and enhanced performance understanding.

Drive collaboration and communication

This involves developing fit-for-purpose collaboration tools for students and teachers, creating communities of professional teaching practice, giving parents and carers online and mobile device access to relevant school and student information and communications, and giving students access to relevant school and subject information online from wherever they are in the state or beyond.

Support improved teaching and learning

This includes the enablement of digital curriculum, digital assessment capabilities in and beyond the learning environment, the deployment of connected learning spaces with digital technologies, personalised learning support, and making digital content creation and lesson planning easier for teachers.

Improve student administration and school management

Student administration and school management processes are improved, including automation of common transaction activities: AI and chatbot servicing of common service channels; digitisation of paper processes; greater integration of systems and improved user interfaces, and work flow support for tasks.

Digital maturity and user capacity

Enable digital maturity assessment and benchmarking

This involves the development of a digital maturity assessment framework across school capabilities. The digital maturity framework will need to be repeatable and reliable, be easy to deploy and enable schools to self-assess, provide data aggregation at the school, district and state level, and facilitate benchmarking against peer schools. It will also capture the proportion of staff who are progressing their digital skills to support more uniform digital practice uptake.

Enable schools to access digital resources

The integration of digital maturity within the Schools Excellence Framework to assist school planning, and help schools to choose capabilities, deploy them and measure their success. Enabling schools to plan and deploy these new capabilities will require the development of a service catalogue and eventually a digital marketplace of high-quality integrated PL, platforms, applications, content, processes and case studies to aid effective adoption.

Digital devices, networks and infrastructure

Strengthen equity foundations

This area involves increasing the device ratios appropriate to student age, and ensuring the supporting network, connectivity and capacity is adequate to enable effective learning and teaching. It also involves more equitable digital literacy development to increase the confidence and skill sets of students and teachers.

Digital support and innovation

Reorient the service model to support teaching and learning

A reoriented service model that provides greater people support to schools in order to more effectively deploy digital practices into the classroom. It embodies the principles of putting schools at the centre of service delivery and enabling them to succeed.

Scale continuous innovation at the edge

Ensuring the right governance, principles, practices and culture exists to support continual innovation at the edge. This area will support the identification and growth of innovation, capturing better practice and capabilities, test practices across the network and providing the ability to scale across the state.

Our school maturity journey

At our school, digital is a means not an end. We will pursue digital maturity so we have more time and capacity to focus on excellent teaching and learning. Here is our school's digital maturity journey.

1

Select and access digital platforms.

Overcome administrative barriers.

Equitable access to digital learning resources.

2

Test innovations through benchmarked pilots.

Scale innovation, supported by a service catalogue.

3

Secure support closer to the point of need.

Develop digital literacy through collaboration.

4

More time and capacity to focus on excellent learning and teaching.

Our learning space journey

We know from research and experience that digital can support future-focused learning and improved student outcomes. The right infrastructure, professional learning, digital tools and resources are critical to our learning space journey. We will track our journey according to the following five-point scale:

Teacher and learner agency stages:

Stage 1

Digital is an emerging classroom resource, a lesson additive.

Stage 2

Digital is often critical to lesson success, mainly teacher-driven.

Stage 3

Digital enhances student engagement, formative assessment and personalisation.

Stage 4

Teachers leverage digital to develop new learning strategies for excellence (SEF). Learning and teaching are integrated with digital.

Stage 5

Digital drives new levels of learner agency and meta-cognition, vital to successful participation in our future digital society and economy.