



**Metro  
secondary  
school cluster  
edition**

We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal people and pay our respect to Country.

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# 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 metropolitan secondary schools met with the department's professional services 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.

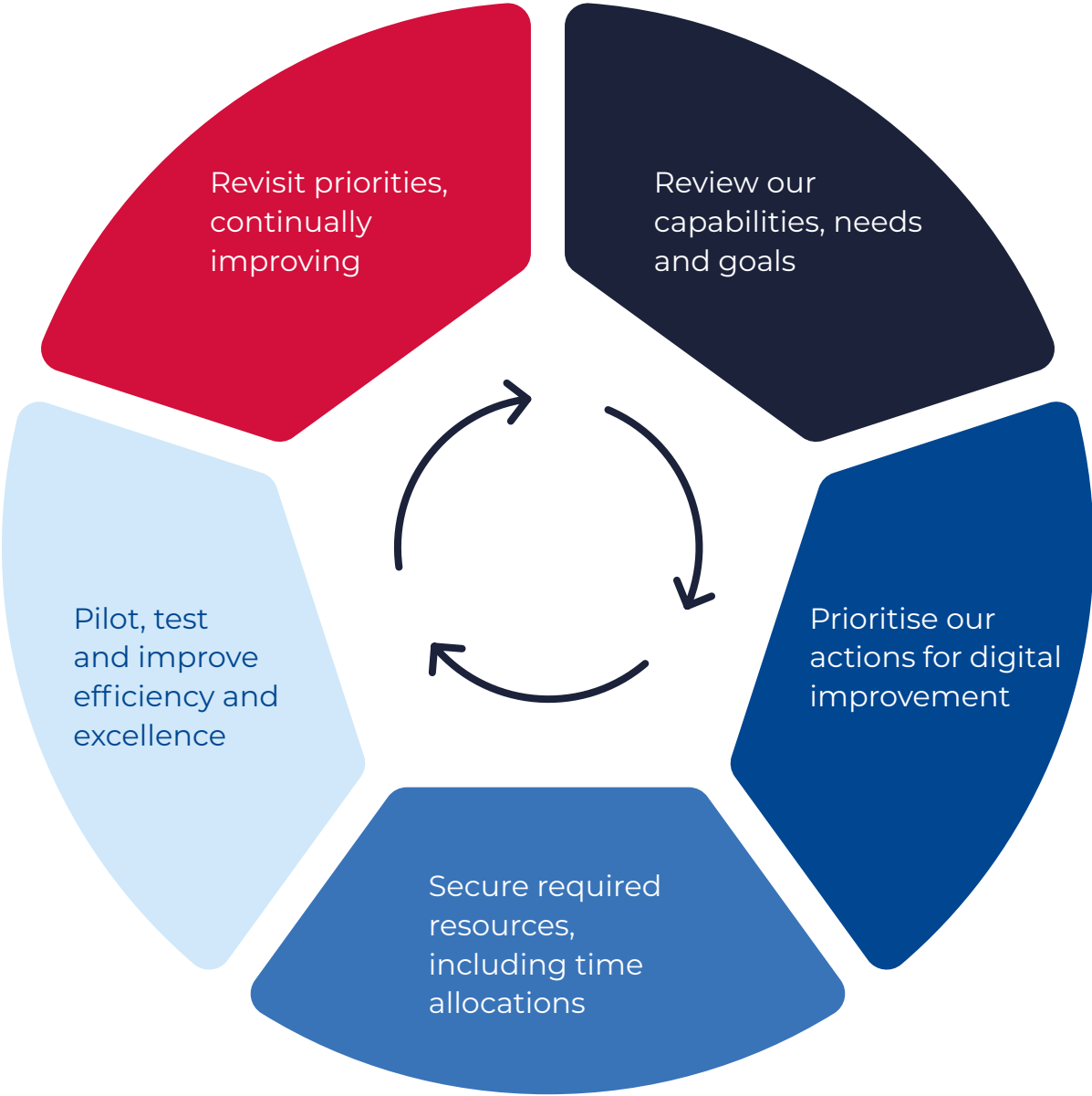
The SDS encompasses the critical participants in a student's learning journey – parents and carers, teachers, the community, and of course the students themselves.

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).





# How our school's digital strategy contributes to the big picture

State strategy	SDS outcomes
20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boosting digital connectivity and utilise existing and ongoing network rollouts.</li> <li>Equipping students with in-demand skills and competencies.</li> </ul>
State Infrastructure Strategy 2018–2038 (Connecting Metro/ Country Schools Programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening the physical infrastructure to support digital uptake and use in learning spaces.</li> <li>Connecting schools across the state in collaborative learning experiences.</li> </ul>
Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018–2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing student engagement and participation.</li> <li>Equipping students with the digital, technical, and communication skills of the future workforce.</li> <li>Closing the digital divide between schools with equitable access to resources and opportunity.</li> </ul>
Digital NSW A wider government priority is to improve the customer service experience for all citizens who come into contact with government services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering customer-centric education services.</li> <li>Enhancing data analytics and reporting capabilities to inform teaching and investment.</li> <li>Digitising and automating processes to reduce burdens and increase efficiency.</li> </ul>

# 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:

- Improved and automated systems offer an opportunity to free up valuable time for our school leaders, teachers and admin staff.
- Our teachers have first-hand experience to recognise student needs and identify innovation opportunities within the learning experience.
- Customer interactions are well-served in places, and could be connected to form a seamless customer experience.
- As our school takes the lead on digital maturity, we provide important lessons to learn and share.
- 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) and development

Help us find experts and digital resources to help with professional learning.

2

## Respect our time

Provide us with quick access to people with answers to our common digital issues.

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

## eSafety

Provide our school an eSafety intervention solution. A single cyber bullying matter can tie up our deputy for a week. We need expert support to safeguard students from cyber bullies, screen addiction, online gambling and other cyber issues we have not had to deal with in the past, some which go beyond the school gate and involve multiple government authorities.

5

## Access requests

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



# Our metro secondary school cluster



Hi, I'm Warren Parkes and I'm the principal at Picton High School where we support 1047 students

Warren Parkes  
R/Principal - Picton High School



Hi, I'm Robyn Matthews and I'm the principal at Inner Sydney High School which is currently under construction.

Robyn Matthews  
Principal - Inner Sydney High School



Hi, I'm Tim Lloyd and I'm the principal at Plumpton High School where we support 962 students.

Tim Lloyd  
Principal - Plumpton High School



## Our voice, school agency

"We are moving from Cat5 to Cat6 and wireless, for better performance. Due to our socio-economic profile and our mandate for equity, we do not run BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)."

"Professional learning is our biggest challenge, for example, accessing experts to assist us to better use our digital learning environment across stage 4. We need trainers for our teachers, trainers with pedagogy and technical expertise. By the way, stem.T4L is a good model. We worked side by side with Noelene (Digital Classroom Officer), she is excellent."

"We would value tools that enable us to access and adapt digital learning resources."

"We applied some creative staffing to ensure none of our teachers get caught up in student admin tasks. Any improvements in student administration systems will enable us to make savings and further reallocate funds to the front line – learning and teaching."

"We maintain valuable relationships with local industry to better support our students in the digital age. Through industry relationships, we align students' individual learning pathways with industry needs. This informs our school digital setup, for example, we have invested in 3D CAD (computer-aided design) VET learning opportunities for many of our students, to great success."

"We have data exchange issues between ERN and our student administration (SA) system, creating roll inaccuracies. Separately, our SA vendor has hiked fees. We look forward to these issues being ironed out through the department's current work on SA."

"We utilise and rely upon a digital learning environment to back our project-based learning model across all of stage 4."

"We backward-map our student learning pathways. That is central to our three-year plan and we plug in digital solutions to fit those pathways and our overarching contemporary learning approaches. We draw inspiration and support from other schools that share in this approach."

"There are student administration processes, for example, signing off on attendance reports and other department requests, that can be improved with digital solutions and more dialogue between the department and our school."

"We see a huge opportunity for our HSC students to be able to digitally access work samples to see and learn from peers who are performing at band 6."



# Our school's top ten priorities

1

## Activate professional learning and communities of practice for digital maturity

We want to embed digital into our pedagogical model. Teacher professional learning is key to that. Simultaneously, we seek digital tools, resources and processes that support our project based learning and other contemporary pedagogies.

2

## Make plans, set goals and solve digital issues by leveraging in-school professional support

Our school's digital maturity plan will support our pursuit of excellence under the Schools Excellence Framework (SEF). We will draw upon local and SDS professional support. Release time will free up our digital leaders, providing a critical mass of in-house professional learning resources for our teachers success.

3

## 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. Paperless and cashless solutions can provide quick wins.

4

## Contribute to and benefit from a blueprint guide that features what works best

Schools don't need to work out everything for themselves. We would all benefit from a digital catalogue that features 'what works' for schools that are similar to ours.

5

## Access role-based, integrated interfaces that provide an exceptional user-friendly experience

Let's migrate to role-based, unified digital environments that save time, providing more school-friendly workflows. Help our school to manage and administer access privileges and access to digital networks, resources, systems, tools and devices.

6

## Access all services from anywhere

Free us from needing to sit at a specific device to get a task done. Help us truly migrate to the cloud.

7

## Access digital tools and resources we need through a digital resources store

Help us search, adapt, publish, share and rate digital teaching resources and lesson plans, 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 contemporary learning models..

8

## Equip our school with more robust Wi-Fi and provide our people better mobile services

Provide all our learning spaces with more robust Wi-Fi and provide our people with more reliable mobile access to email and other online services, for example, better principal access to mobile-based email services on weekends.

9

## Invest in our leadership

Provide context-appropriate digital resources and training for our deputies, lead teachers and inducted leaders to unpack creativity and engage in backward design when embedding digital in our contemporary learning settings. We need digital resources that back our leaders to implement ahead of the curve.

10

## Refresh our technology through a special fund

Help us to tap into a replenishment fund to migrate from legacy technologies that are still being used, for instance, all our first generation electronic whiteboards 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 SDS professional support team.







"Our digital choices are driven by our focus on contemporary learning."

# How we'll achieve our vision

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



<b>Our current focus</b>	<b>Setup:</b> Foundations Core foundations are designed and pilot programs are implemented at our school.  <b>Horizon 1:</b> Optimising Benefit measures are established, pilot projects are being scaled and a school-centric service culture created within the department.
<b>Future vision</b>	<b>Horizon 2:</b> Evolving The pace of our school's digital capability development increases, continual innovation becomes the norm and the school-centric service becomes fully embedded.  <b>Horizon 3:</b> Transforming Digital delivery becomes fully integrated across department and sector-leading expertise are developed.



# Set up: Foundations



## 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.

# Horizon 1: Optimised

## 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



## 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 metropolitan NSW, 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

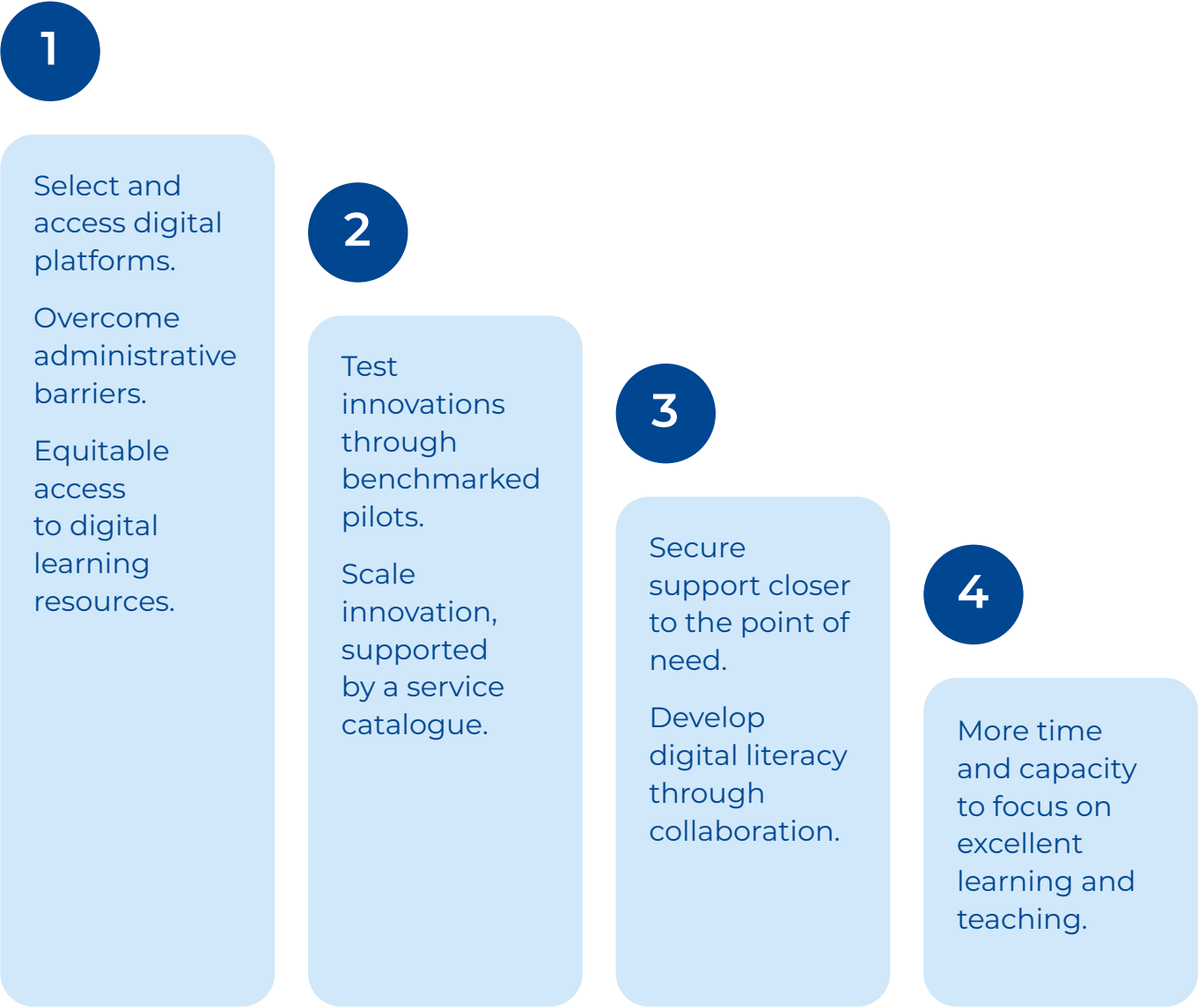
A reoriented service model that provides greater people support to schools in order to more effectively deploy digital practices into the classroom. It embodies the principles of putting schools at the centre of service delivery and enabling them to succeed.

### 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.



# 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:

