A Framework for Cultivating High-Quality Blended Learning at the State Level

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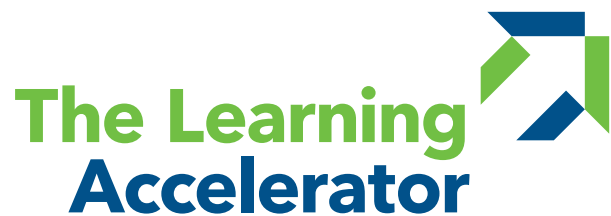
State Ecosystems Can Align
To Support the Transition to Blended Learning

At The Learning Accelerator, we believe that states have an important role to play in the shift to blended learning.

While policy is an important driver of change, state actors can act as catalysts in a number of ways to spur the implementation of high-quality learning.

The following framework will help state leaders begin to better understand the role they can play in a transition to blended learning, with the goal of achieving improved student outcomes within an innovative culture.

This framework version 1.0 will evolve over time to reflect our work with early adopter states. Please refer to our FAQ for more information.

Seven State Levers
To Cultivate High-Quality Blended Learning

- Leadership
- Resource Allocation
- New Capacity
- Support for Early Adopters
- Strategy for Scaling
- Communications
- Policy

Cultivating High-Quality Blended Learning

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Leadership

- **Mobilize a community of potential actors** to establish a vision of learning

- Define the **problems to be solved** and the **transformational outcomes** to be achieved

- **Develop metrics and methods** by which progress towards specific outcomes, system change and innovation performance will be continuously assessed

- **Organize the right team** or teams in ways that unlock the level of system innovation desired

- **Assess the strengths and weaknesses** of the current education system against critical dimensions of the desired system

- **Create an ecosystem-level roadmap** that identifies the human, political, financial and technical resources required to make the shift

- Determine **who will coordinate**, steer, and/or account for execution of the roadmap

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- Determine the **amount of time and dollars** at play in the current system

- Identify the initiatives, programs, and staffing that will **change, be replaced or reallocated** to support roadmap execution

- Commit a percentage of your resources to people and places that have the **potential to foster disruption**

- Attract, coordinate, and **leverage resources** across public entities, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, and others in ways that **privilege outcomes over inputs**

- Foster **transparency** at every level

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BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE ECOSYSTEM

- **Assess the overall culture of innovation/**ability to introduce new ideas or ways of thinking and translate it into action to solve problems

- **Analyze the operational capabilities** (including core competencies, advantages, innovations, and necessary autonomies) the state could leverage, or needs to develop or acquire, to deliver the desired results in a new system

- Create new rules and propositions that **attract and permit transformational actors** to enter and/or recreate the system

- Build the capacity of state actors to **leverage performance contracting** to realize a new array of high-quality options, services, and models

- **Capitalize on new venture development**, including public sector redesign strategies, nonprofit and/or intermediary creation

- Create **new opportunities and professional identities for educators** who are leading the shift

- **Spur new, autonomous school creation** as a critical, rich and accelerated source of innovation

- **Create leeway to innovate** in exchange for accountability at all levels of the system

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CREATE OASES OF INNOVATION

- Develop an **innovation fund to support an R&D** approach to blended learning, encouraging the rapid-prototyping of new schools, structures, and systems to meet critical challenges and achieve outcomes

- **Create opportunities for third-party technical assistance** to schools and districts

- Provide **support for teachers** moving toward blended learning on an as-needed/as-wanted basis

- Create **permissive and intensely supported environments** where teams of early adopters can create new models and meet entrepreneurs, researchers and other innovators

- **Form incubators, networks or clusters** that can establish the desired shape of a new ecosystem

- **Make intelligence gathering and evaluation** a part of strategy development and implementation

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CULTIVATE ADOPTION AS EVIDENCE GROWS

- Establish **technology infrastructure and Internet connectivity** that can support a range of models inside and outside of school

- Leverage adoption of **high-quality open education resources** alongside other digital content and tools

- Develop opportunities for **shared procurement** of devices, digital content and support that optimize choice and purchasing power

- **Build the capacity of proven intermediaries** and/or organizations that have successfully supported schools and districts in the transition

- Develop the capacity of **transformational leaders** at all levels of the system

- **Conduct research and evaluation** to understand the ways and the degree to which new models and their instructional approaches are impacting student achievement

- **Create a clear "Innovation Infrastructure"** that positions successful models and practices for scale in the current system and provides opportunities to rethink the system itself

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- Collaborate with students, teachers, parents and communities to establish values, "jobs to be done," and desired outcomes to **create demand**

- Create and sustain **communities of engagement** through **purposeful communication** as blended learning is conceptualized, designed, and implemented

- Shine a spotlight on learning and instruction that **focus on the individual progress of each student**

- **Amplify teachers' and students' experiences** with blended learning

- **Foster transparency and manage expectations** by sharing lessons honestly – move forward, faster

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- **Identify, analyze and eliminate** myths, disincentives, or disablers of blended learning from the system

- **Leverage enabling policies** that foster development and support for high-quality blended models

- **Create incentives** that allow leading schools to transform rapidly, and encourage all schools to move toward transformation

- Work with early adopters to **assess policy implementation** and address policy on a continuous basis

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FAQ

What is unique about this framework? State policy plays a critical role in supporting the implementation of blended learning. However, policy alone is insufficient to change attitudes, beliefs, and practices on the ground. This framework focuses on a range of levers for states' consideration—including and beyond policy—in catalyzing and accelerating blended learning.

Who is the core audience for the framework? How does TLA define "the state?" The core audience is the combination of state actors that comprise "the state." State actors may include State Education Agencies (SEAs), State Boards of Education (SBEs), Governor's Offices, legislatures, foundations, philanthropists, membership organizations, district leadership, education reform organizations, technical assistance providers, the nonprofit and business sectors and more. An underlying assumption of our work is that transformation will require a range of competencies, resources, and influence that can only be obtained from a broad coalition of actors -- working both inside and outside of the system.

Does TLA have examples of states that are successfully implementing the framework? TLA is working with select "early adopter states" to create examples of how elements of the framework can be effectively achieved. These states will emerge as national showcases for blended learning. We will share successful strategies via open source, available for replication across the country.

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FAQ

Why is the framework labeled version 1.0? The framework reflects innovation in action. We will incorporate new knowledge as we work with early adopter states. Sharing version 1.0 openly will help accelerate action at the state level.

How do I get started using the framework? Mobilizing a group of state actors and using the framework as an assessment to identify your state's strengths and challenges is a great place to start.

Can TLA advise our state? TLA considers short-term and long-term engagements on a case-by-case basis.

How does the framework relate to TLA's investments? The framework currently guides the scope and types of investments comprising *TLA's state portfolio*. We consider a broad range of entities and make both direct and indirect investments. It's important to note that TLA never accepts funding from states—nor does it take equity stakes in any organization or product it helps create.

For inquiries or to share your thoughts or experiences with the framework, contact Lisa Duty, Partner: State Strategy, Partnerships and Investments.

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