



# The Learning Accelerator

A Guide to Centering Students  
and Elevating Equity in Edtech  
Selection, Implementation,  
and Evaluation

October 26, 2022

---

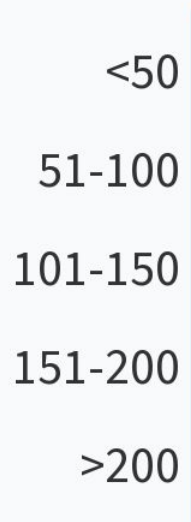
# Welcome to the EdTech Guide Orientation



- Please change your display name to: Name, Organization, role (pronouns).
  - Ex: Lacey Gonzales, Elm Valley Schools, High School Principal (she/her)
- In the chat, share what your favorite edtech tool is and why
- We will get started in just a moment!



# How many edtech tools on average did a student access in the 2021-22 school year?





**Jackie Gantzer**

Massachusetts  
DESE  
@jmgantzer

*Director of Edtech  
and School Support*



**Jin-Soo Huh**

The Learning  
Accelerator  
@JinSooDHuh

*Partner*



**Tina Mahaney**

Gill-Montague  
Regional School  
District

*Director of Information  
Technology and  
Educational Data  
Services*



**Jared Perrine**

Narragansett  
Regional School  
District  
@wiredpilgrim

*Director of  
Technology*



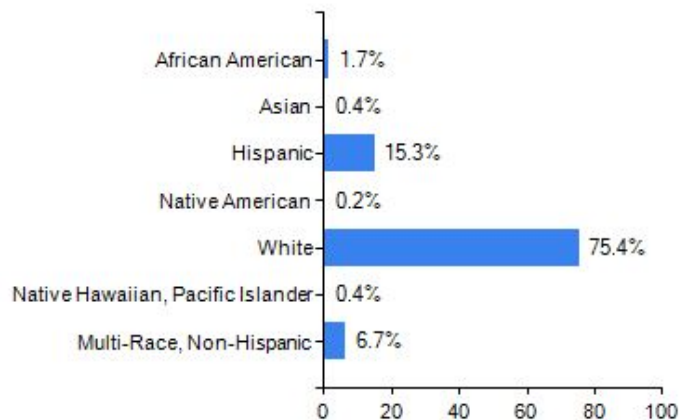




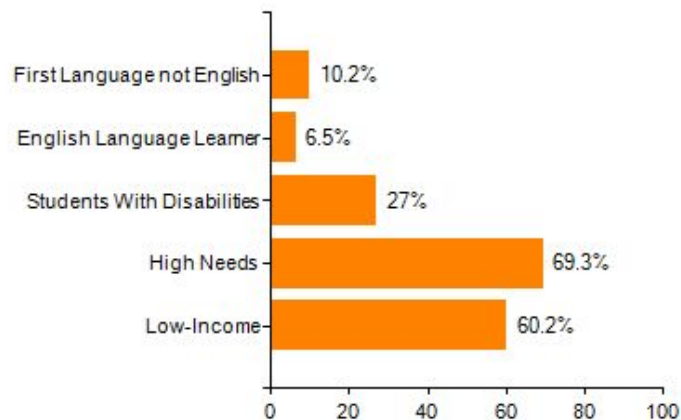
## 2021-22 Enrollment



## Student Race and Ethnicity



## Selected Populations







## 2021-22 Enrollment

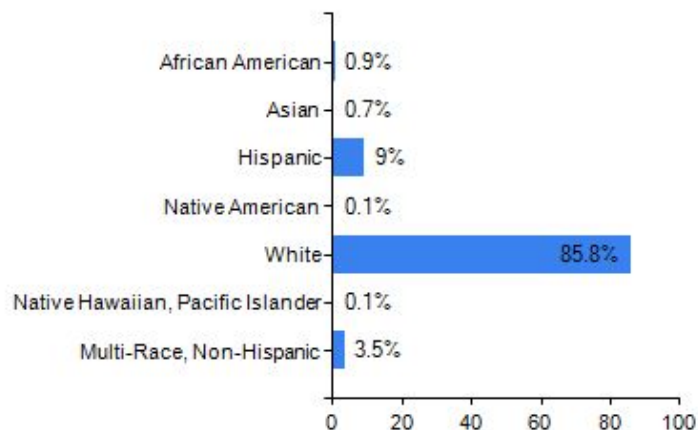
District Type
Public

Number of Schools
3

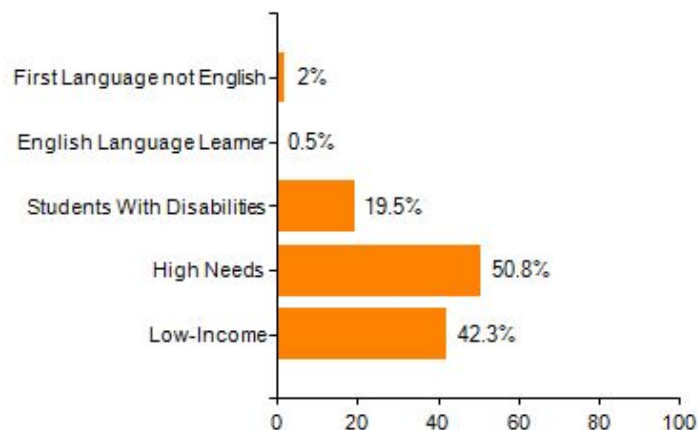
Enrollment
1,393

Grades Served
PK - 12

## Student Race and Ethnicity



## Selected Populations



The average student accessed, on average,

143

edtech tools in 2021-2022 school year.





The average teacher accessed, on average,

148

edtech tools in 2021-2022 school year.



# Digital Equity

- Access to sufficient devices and high-speed internet is a *start*.
- Digital equity as a framework:
  - Calls on educators and leaders to ensure that all students have **access to and ownership of the tools that best support them as learners.**
  - Calls on educators, leaders, and families to **help students develop the skills and competencies** they require to best take advantage of these digital resources.
  - Helps to communicate the value of not simply *using* these tools – but using them to *engage* with learning experiences that are **targeted, authentic, relevant, socially connected, and growth-oriented.**



# What does digital equity look like in practice?



**Targeted & Relevant:** Every student has real-time access to and interaction with materials and experiences that are tailored to their unique needs, strengths, interests, and identities (individual and cultural).



**Actively Engaging:** Students have multiple pathways to engage and create in ways that are meaningful to them.



**Socially Connected:** students should be able to leverage technology to explore their interests and collaborate with peers, teachers, family members, community members, and even experts in the field.



**Growth Oriented:** Students have access to the technology and tools that enable them to take ownership of their learning, understand their progress, and take steps to acquire essential skills and competencies.



A **vast body of research** spanning more than two decades illustrates how the digital divide has **continuously impacted the students with the most need**, including those from lower-income, rural, and racial minority communities as well as those with learning differences or special needs.



NEW

# Digital Equity

Moving beyond basic technology access to ensure that every student has the tools and supports to thrive as learners



- **Introduction**
- **Getting Started**
- **Digital Equity in the Classroom**
- **Essential Conditions to Support Digital Equity**
- **Taking It Forward**

[Dive Deeper with The Learning Accelerator's Digital Equity Guide](#)

# Foundational Needs

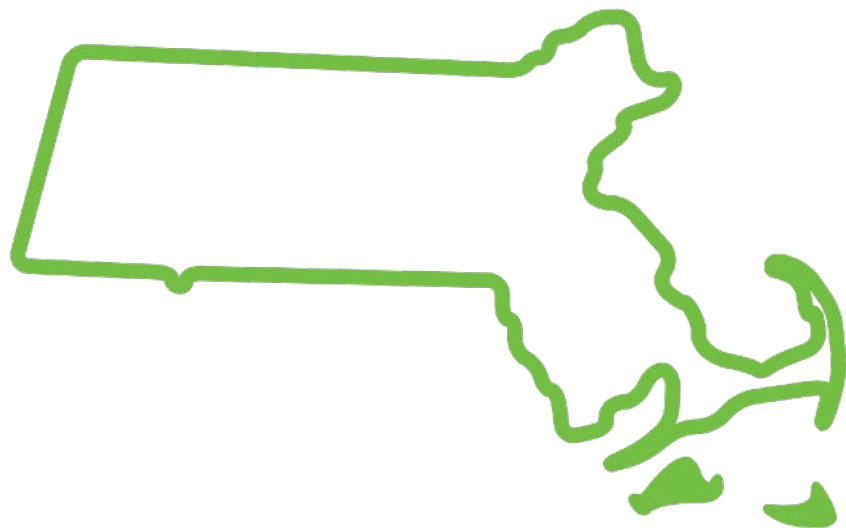
May 2021

- Offered school and system leaders guidance related to **sustaining progress** in access and equity through intentional edtech planning and resource allocation:
  - **School system's vision** for teaching and learning
  - **Edtech staffing plan**
  - **Budget** to fund edtech initiatives, innovations, or programs
  - Your school or system's **procurement policy and procedures**



# 85%

of edtech leaders in MA said  
they either don't have  
processes to select,  
implement, and evaluate  
edtech or the processes are  
informal and need to be  
strengthened.





# Systems Guide Overarching Goal



Create an actionable, user-friendly guide grounded in equity and evidence-based practices for effective and equitable **selection, implementation, and evaluation of edtech** to assist school systems leaders in creating sustainable edtech systems.

- Demonstrated expertise in K-12 edtech.
- Knowledge of current, relevant research, and evidence-based practices.
- Company-wide focus on centering equity in their work.



# Biggest Challenges Around Edtech



- Go to the [Jamboard in the chat](https://bit.ly/AuroraTLA2022) (bit.ly/AuroraTLA2022)
- On a sticky note on the board, write down the biggest challenges around integrating edtech in school(s).



# Audience

EdTech Systems Guide: Equity-Driven Selection, Implementation, and Evaluation

Lesson 1 of 54

## Welcome + Overview

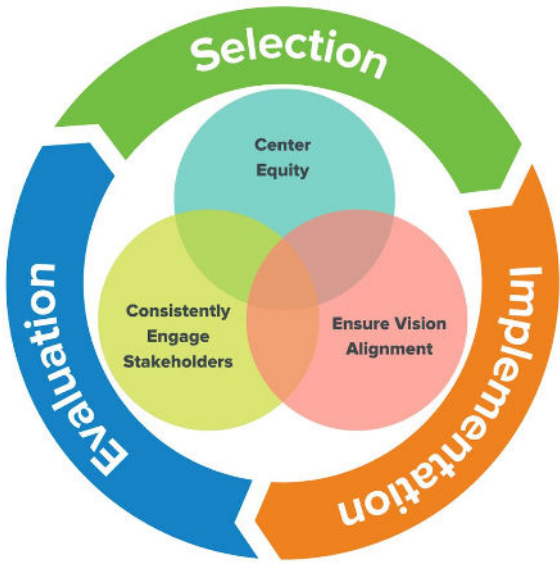
0% COMPLETE

INTRODUCTION

- Welcome + Overview
- Framing
- How to Use This Guide
- Guiding Principles

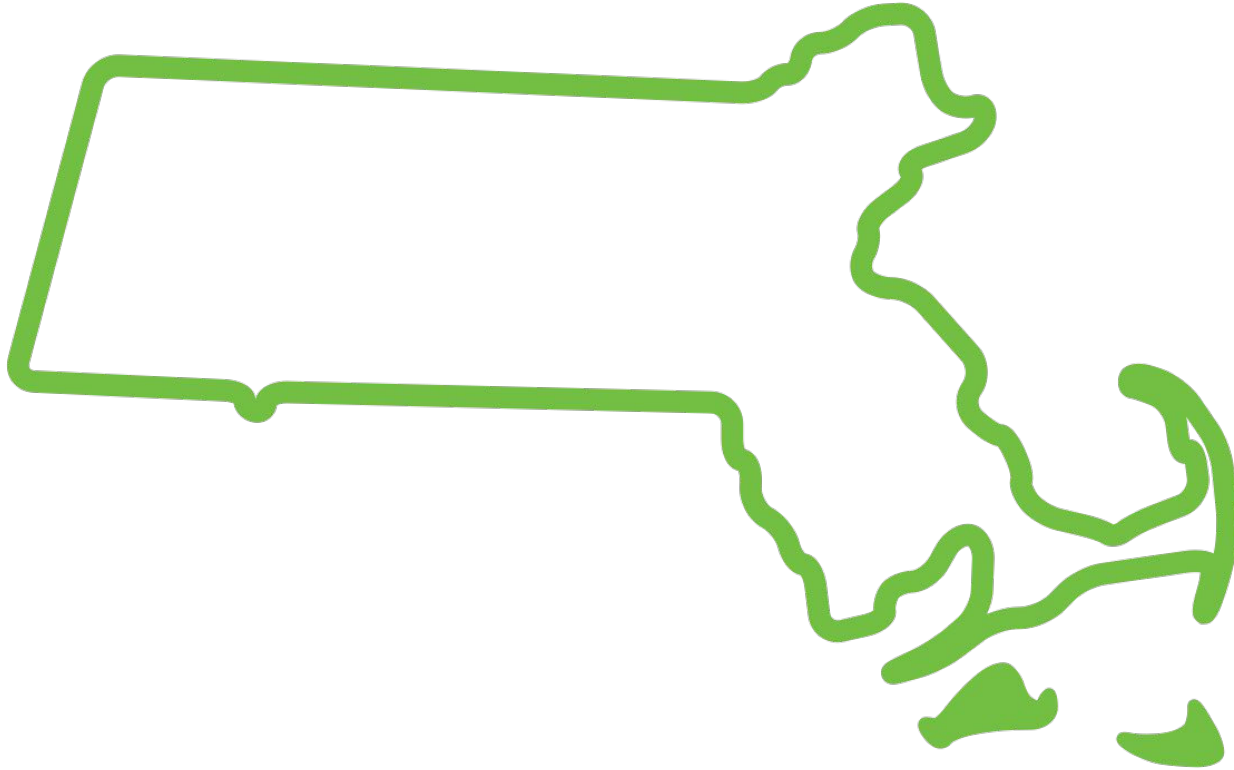
STRATEGY TO CONSISTENTLY ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

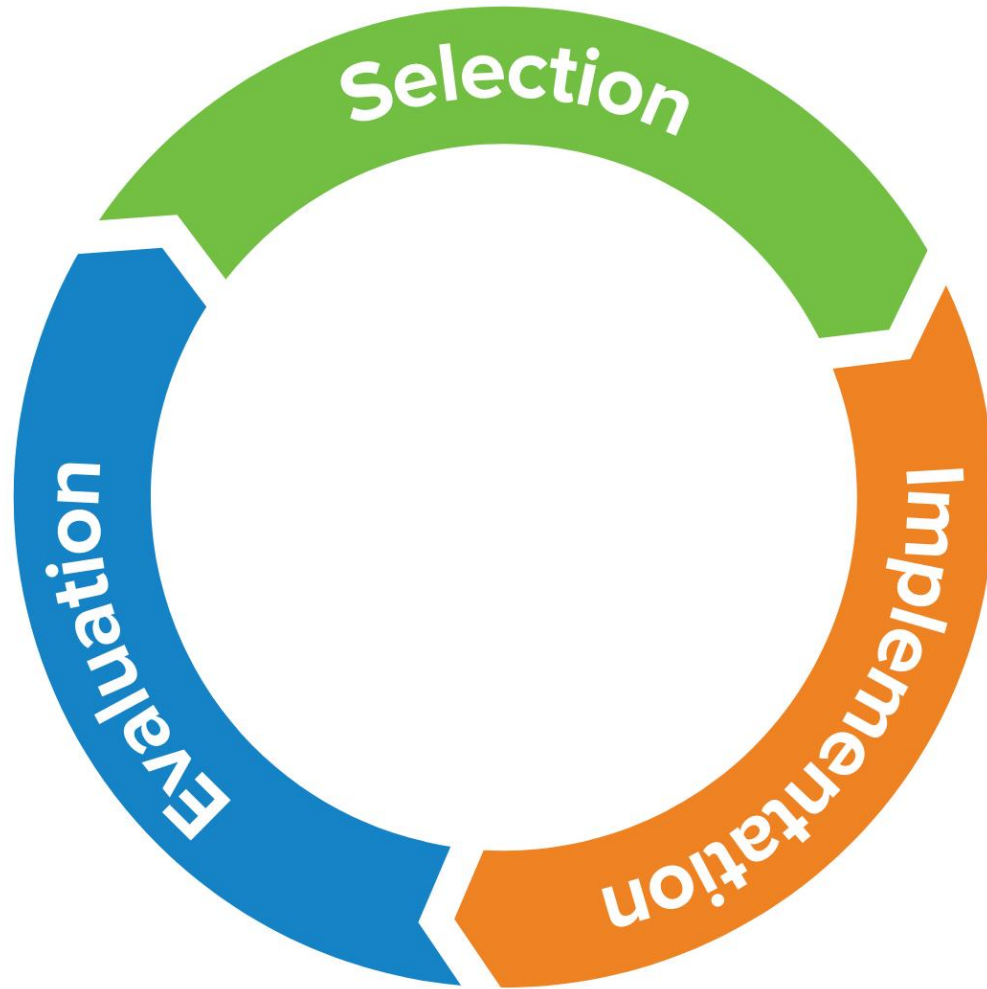
- Consistently Engage Stakeholders
- Step One: Identify Your Key Stakeholders
- Step Two: Determine How and When to Gather Input



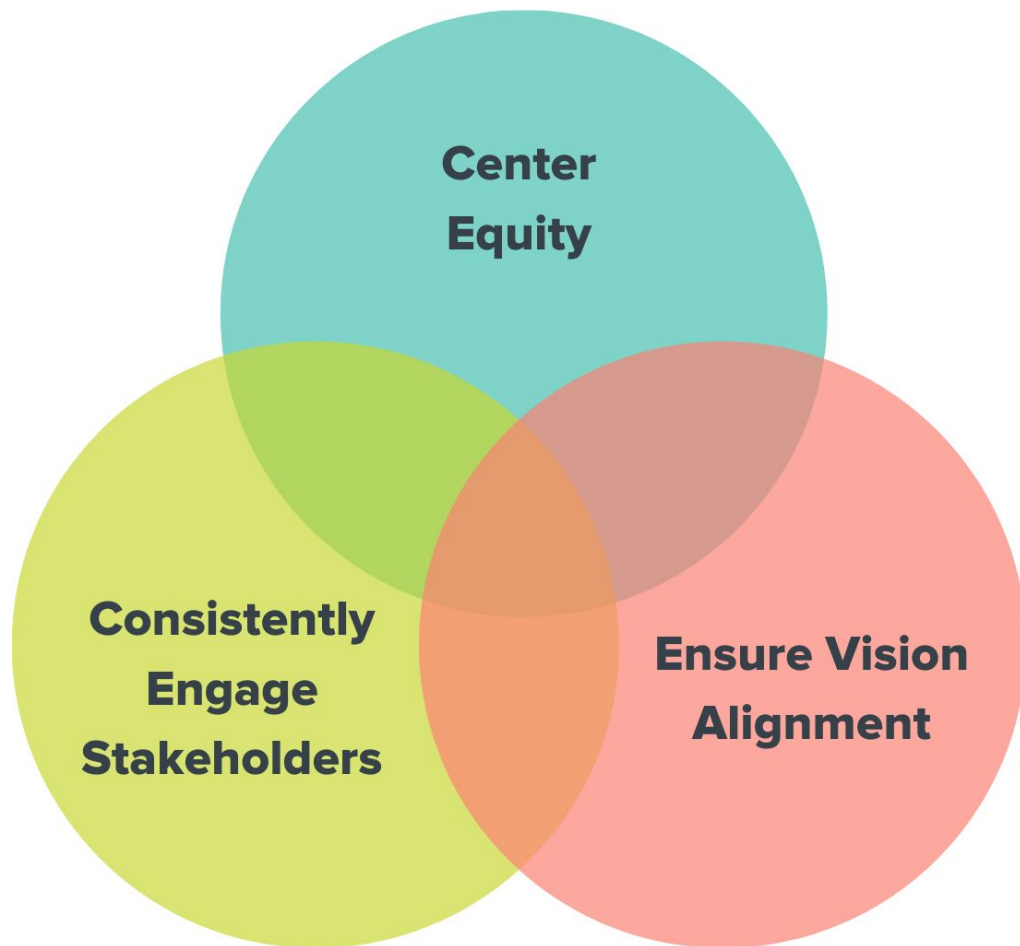
The guide's primary audience is **system-level administrators in charge of overseeing edtech in their district, school, or school system.**

# Audience





# Guiding Principles



# Center Equity

This guide contains multiple “equity pauses,” which provide points to reflect on the equity implications of your edtech selection, implementation, and evaluation systems’ design.



## Equity Pause

When soliciting feedback from your stakeholders, consider power dynamics, as students, families, teachers, and building administrators may feel pressured to respond in a certain way when interacting with a school or system administrator. In addition to recruiting a diverse set of stakeholders for your surveys or focus groups, you can ensure that a more equitable process for soliciting feedback is taken by:

- Reminding participants that the pilot is designed to gather helpful feedback for improvement, rather than to achieve a specific goal
- Indicating how important candid feedback is in the decision-making process
- Reminding participants that there are no “right answers”
- Asking follow-up questions, when needed, to dig deeper into participant thinking





# Ensure Vision Alignment



- The guide consistently asks you to return to your school or system's vision to ensure the edtech work is in service of this vision.
- Look for these questions in the “Before you begin this section...”

Before jumping into this section, be sure that you can answer the following questions:

- *What is your school or system's vision for teaching and learning?*
- *How will edtech enhance efforts towards realizing your vision for teaching and learning?*
- *How are you explicitly keeping equity at the center of your edtech processes?*



# Guide Outline

## Introduction

Welcome + Overview

Framing

How to Use This Guide

Guiding Principles

## Strategy To Consistently Engage Stakeholders

Identify Your Key Stakeholders

Determine How and When to Gather Input

Summarize Findings from Stakeholder Engagement

Reflect and Iterate on Stakeholder Engagement

## Selection

Determine Your Needs

Sourcing Edtech Tools

Piloting Solutions

Making Your Selection

## Implementation

Communicating Your Decision

Conducting Your Initial Rollout

Sustaining Support

## Evaluation

Determining When and How to Evaluate

Executing Your Evaluation Plan and Determining Next Steps

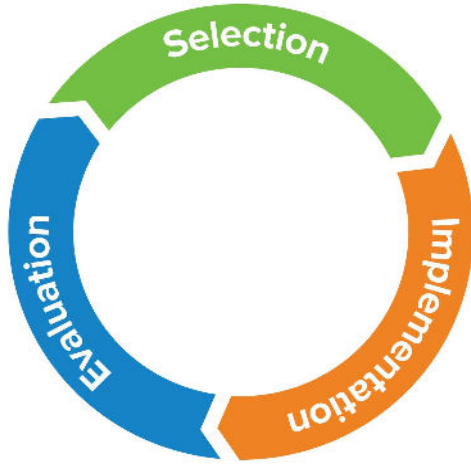
## Appendices

Comprehensive Guiding Principles Reflection

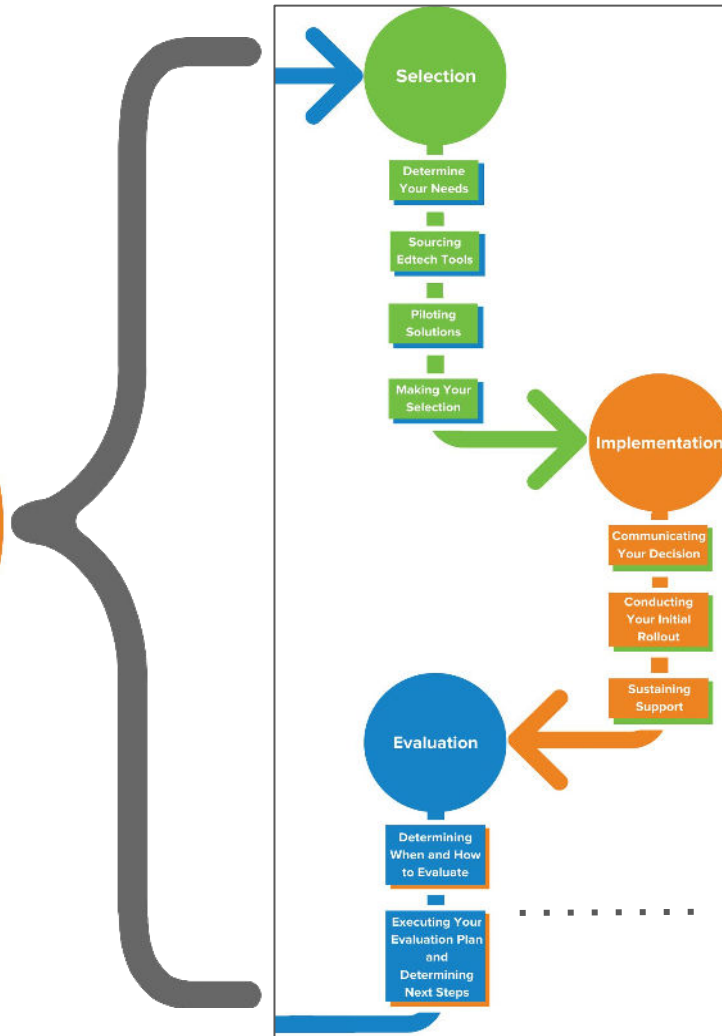
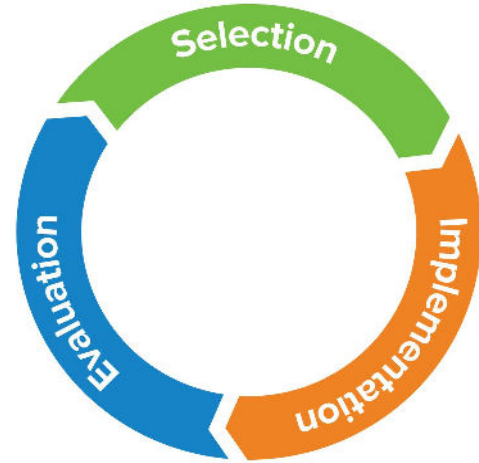
Throughline Compilation



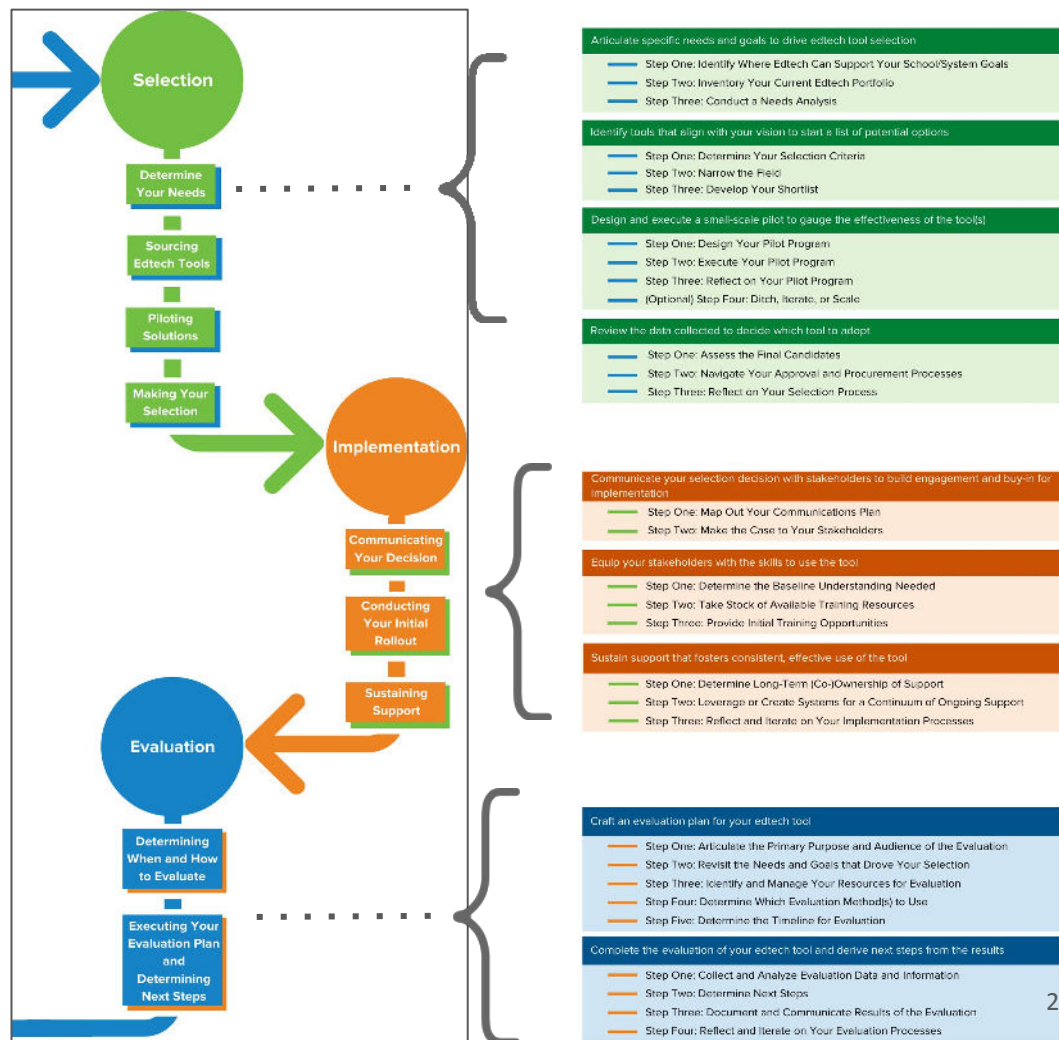
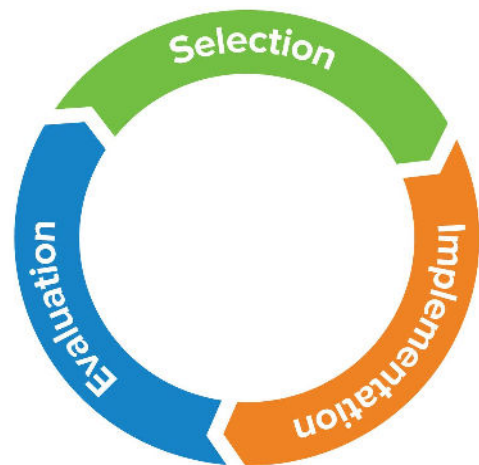
# Cycle Content Overview



# Cycle Content Overview



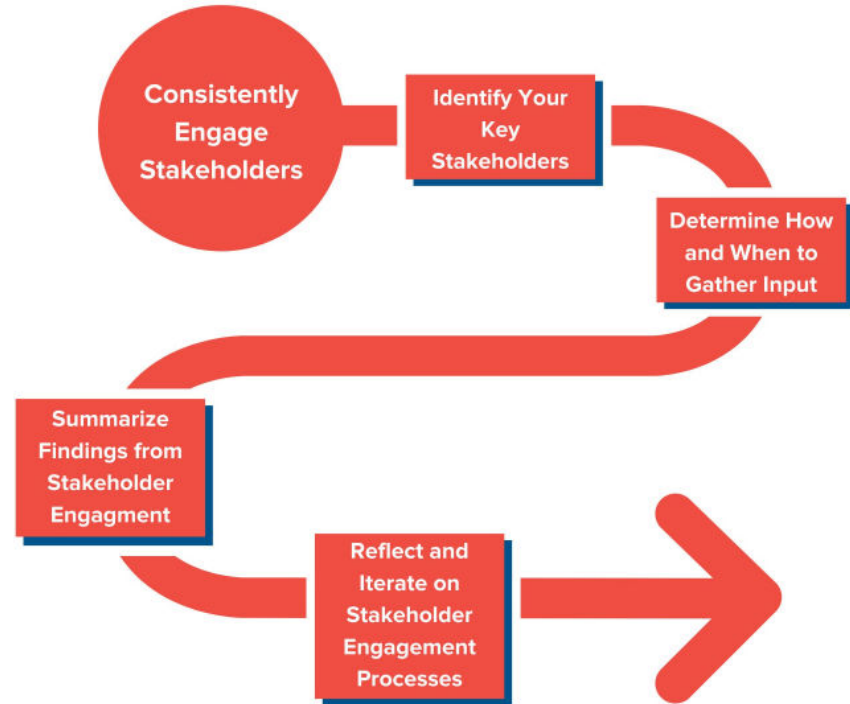
# Cycle Content Overview



# Additional Content Elements:

## Strategy to Consistently Engage Stakeholders

- Additional activity tied to guiding principle:
  - Offers strategies to engage stakeholders that can be used throughout the activities outlined in the guide.
  - Referenced – and should be returned to often.



# Additional Content Elements:

## Special Considerations Call Out Boxes

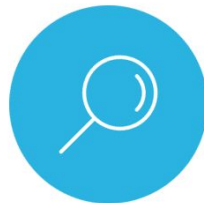
- Embedded throughout the guide to highlight:
  - Context-related considerations
  - Considerations for English Learners
  - Considerations for Special Education
  - Equity Pauses

### Thinking About Your Context

#### How centralized is your selection process?

If you have a team of individuals screening tools based on the rubric you developed in alignment with your non-negotiable criteria, consider holding a “norming” meeting, where all screeners align on how to complete the rubric, potentially even scoring one as a group. This will ensure that screeners are making similar decisions that will promote data validity. Additionally, consider developing a process for making edtech product index determinations for tools rated differently by various team members. Will you weigh someone’s rating more than another’s? If so, why? Will you allow team members to veto tool selection?

If you are managing this process largely by yourself, you may need to limit the number of networks, organizations, or repositories you search. Consider reaching out to a school or system similar in size and configuration to learn from their experiences and recommendations. META, MassCUE, and the MA EdTech Leaders Network can help establish these connections.



### Considerations for English Learners

Edtech tools that incorporate linguistic diversity and language differentiation or translation can allow students and their families access points into systems with which they may not otherwise be able to engage. We strongly recommend considering the needs of linguistically diverse students early in the tool selection process to ensure that the selected tools can meet this group’s unique needs. Consider making linguistic accessibility a *non-negotiable* selection criterion.

### Considerations for Special Education

In the marketplace, several edtech tools do not offer adequate accessibility functions. Selecting tools that follow [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) principles and provide accessibility functionality will ensure that all students can engage with tools (e.g., closed-captioning, color and contrast, speech recognition, predictive text, magnification, keyboard shortcuts) meaningfully. As mentioned above, accessibility features should be one of your *non-negotiable* selection criteria.

### Equity Pause

If using tools to support student learning, it is important that the full spectrum of diversity represented by students is present in any examples, stories, or characters portrayed so that students can see themselves reflected in an affirming way. When developing your selection criteria, consider the extent to which tools are designed to reflect the identities and experiences of a diverse set of students and what opportunities tools may provide for educators to tailor pre-existing content to better reflect students and their lived experiences.





# Additional Content Elements:

## Throughline Example

- Embedded within each step to provide a real-life example of the step in practice.
- Also compiled into an appendix.

### Throughline Example - Determine Selection Criteria

There are a number of criteria that Ms. Gonzalez knows new tools must meet, including accessibility, translation services, student data privacy protections, and some sort of evidence base. Further, she knows the budget that she and the middle school math department have to spend on a new tool. Finally, based on her needs analysis, she understands that any tool selected must include a data dashboard to help teachers differentiate instruction.

Working alongside the middle school math department, she and her team develop a rubric for selection criteria aligned with Elm Valley's math curriculum. With a draft version of the rubric developed, she engages in an equity pause and realizes that they have not yet included any selection criteria related to a tool being designed in a culturally responsive way. She adds to her list of selection criteria that examples used must allow EVSD's students to see themselves reflected in the tool before finalizing the list. After the rubric is completed, Ms. Gonzalez meets with her team members to designate who will be responsible for researching the tools. They also align on expectations for how to use and complete the rubric.

Action: Use the spreadsheet provided on [page 6](#) of the accompanying workbook to identify your selection criteria.



File Attachment Block

No file added

CONTINUE

## Throughline Compilation

### Introduction

#### Throughline Example - Introduction

Elm Valley School District (EVSD) is a fictional school district in Anytown, Massachusetts that serves 4,000 students. The district comprises 3 elementary schools (Pre-K-5th), 2 middle schools (6th-8th), and 1 high school (9th-12th). Their technology department has grown in recent years to a team of five under the leadership of Ms. Gonzalez, a certified MIFAA CTO, who has overseen the district's edtech initiatives for the past 10 years. Elm Valley, like any other school district, has a significant list of competing priorities for the coming school year, and Ms. Gonzalez and her team are tasked with ensuring that edtech supports these priorities.

### Selection

#### Determine Your Needs

#### Throughline Example - Identify Where Edtech Can Support Your School/System Goals

In recent years Elm Valley School District (EVSD) has seen a decrease in middle school math performance across the board, despite having adopted a popular new curriculum. EVSD's Superintendent recently partnered a report that outlines the district's goals for the next five years, and one of the core instructional priorities is to "increase math proficiency for students in grades 6-8."

Ms. Gonzalez, EVSD's edtech director, has been actively participating in a working group with the superintendent and the head of the middle school math department to determine both a vision for teaching and learning in middle school math and the role that edtech could play in accelerating outcomes. Together, the working group has articulated an operational outcome related to their above goal as "middle school math teachers and students will have access to an evidence-based supplemental tool that provides ease to help teachers plan for differentiated instruction and increases the individualized practice sets to which students have access."

#### Throughline Example - Inventory Your Current EdTech Portfolio

Ms. Gonzalez, Elm Valley's edtech director, knows that in order to determine what additional edtech tools the school district would need, she first needs to understand what tools are already being used. With her current focus on the working group addressing the middle school math priority, she works with her team to determine how to inventory the edtech used in middle school math classrooms across the district. She purchased a tool two years ago that aggregates usage data on major tools linked to the tool's platform, so the team is able to quickly pull info. modern about the usage of edtech purchased tools. However, the middle school math department has been encouraging their teachers to "reflect what works" for the past several years while trying to address the falling performance. She knows there are edtech tools being used in these classrooms beyond the ones that she can see through the weekly monitoring data, and wants to gain insight into those harder-to-track tools.

To gather this information, she decides to go straight to the source. Ms. Gonzalez meets with her team to develop a survey to send out to the district's middle school math teachers. Because she knows how the focus on math has



# Additional Content Elements:

## Companion Workbook

- Provides templates, related activities, and steps outlined within the guide.
- To be used alongside the guide to make action steps and recommendations actionable.
- Visual ties back to the guide to make navigation between the two easier.



### MA DESE EdTech Systems Guide Supplementary Workbook

**Step One: Identify Your Key Stakeholders**  
Your edtech decisions will have an impact and be impacted by several key stakeholders. Use the table below to identify your key stakeholders based on the questions listed in the guide and below.

Guiding Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who will implement the tool?</li> <li>Which departments, grade levels, campuses, or roles will be the primary drivers of the tool?</li> <li>Who will monitor and support its usage and implementation?</li> <li>Who will engage with the tool (e.g., students, parents)?</li> </ul>

There are a few suggested groups to consider already populated in the table; should they not apply to your context, feel free to remove or replace them with more appropriate stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Group	What impact might have on these?
Students	
Families	
Teachers	
Staff	
IT/EdTech Department	
Academics/ Curricular Department	

### MA DESE EdTech Systems Guide Supplementary Workbook

**Step One: Determine Long-Term (Co-)Ownership of Support**  
Use the space below to think about the stakeholders and departments who may be implicated as possible long-term owners of your edtech tool and its related supports, and make a pro and con list for each of them taking on ownership of the edtech tool post rollout.

Possible Owners	Rationale	Pros	Cons

Now, use the spaces below to determine which of these will be responsible for long-term ownership and how you will create opportunities related to the tool and its related supports.

How can you create opportunities for...

### MA DESE EdTech Systems Guide Supplementary Workbook

**Step Three: Conduct a Needs Analysis**  
Use the spaces provided below to capture your findings as you conduct your needs analysis.

Could any of the edtech tools in your portfolio be adapted or used in a way that you see in step one?

What are some of the specific functionalities or features missing that new edtech tool would need to demonstrate?

**Equity Pause**  
You may notice that some of your school or system's current practices or policies that you are centering on may not be as equitable as you would like. To ask yourself why that might be, to the tool designed with some communities in mind and not others? Is it that the stakeholders you are centering cannot see themselves reflected in the tool? Are there other systemic barriers that prevent some from engaging with educational successful tools? The answers to each of these questions can enable you to proactively add selection criteria to your list to prevent you from running into the same issues with new edtech tools.

### MA DESE EdTech Systems Guide Supplementary Workbook

**Step Three: Document and Communicate Results of the Evaluation**

List the major takeaways from the evaluation. Some things to consider listing are:

- What was the recommendation for next steps and the rationale?
- What were the major insights you learned from stakeholders?
- What were the biggest successes/benefits and challenges/drawbacks of the tool?
- What advice do you have for future implementations of this tool?

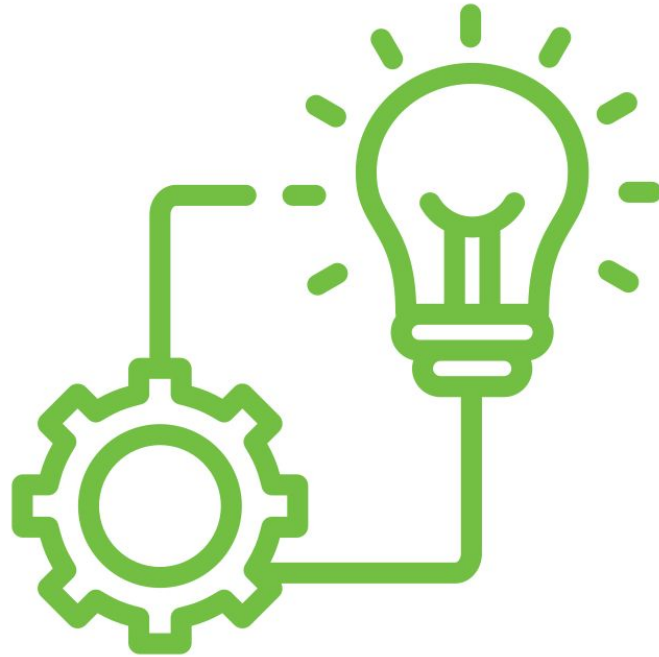
Identify who you will be messaging the evaluation's findings to, how you will do it, who will do it, and when they will do it. Some suggested stakeholders are pre-populated along with space to add your own.

Stakeholder Group	How will you message the findings?	Who will message the findings?	When will they get the message?
Students			
Families			
Teachers			
Staff			
IT/EdTech Department			
Academics/ Curricular Department			

12

49 31

## How are schools using this guide?



# What We Heard



# Questions and Answers



# Closing



**A document itself never  
made change.**



**Start small and  
scale.**



**Share your best  
practices!**



This presentation was created by  
Jin-Soo Huh in October 2022. For further information,  
please contact [jin-soo.huh@learningaccelerator.org](mailto:jin-soo.huh@learningaccelerator.org).

For further information about The Learning Accelerator  
and for access to free and open tools to support your  
work, please visit [www.learningaccelerator.org](http://www.learningaccelerator.org).

