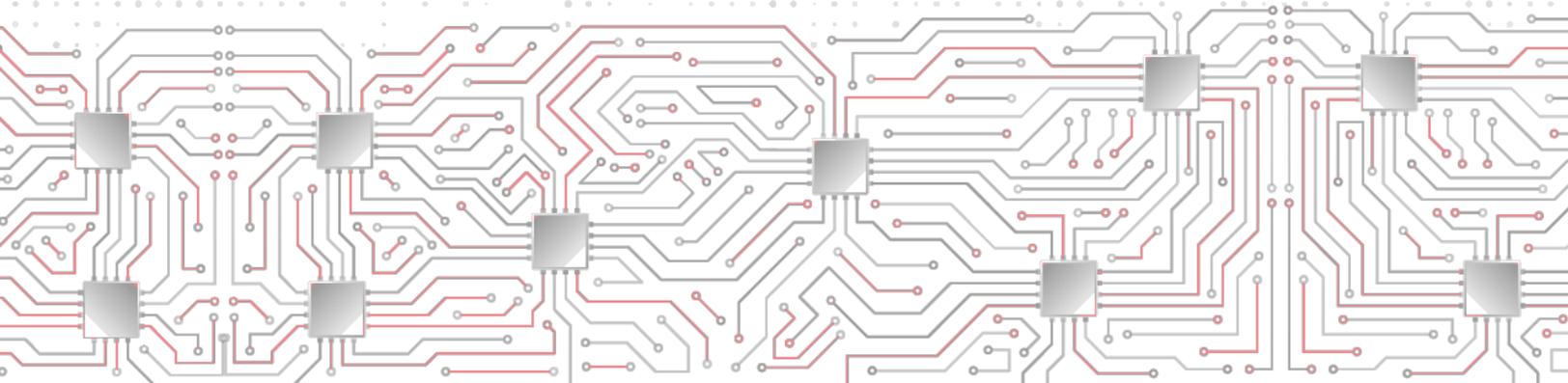# STEP 1

GOALS

STEP 1: GOALS

DEVELOP AND COMMUNICATE GOALS FOR IMPLEMENTING A ONE-TO-ONE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE IN YOUR DISTRICT.

Why should districts and schools set goals for implementing a one-to-one technology initiative?

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the value of **integrating digital learning tools** into the instructional programs of K-12 schools was becoming increasingly clear: when used correctly, these tools—everything from laptops and tablets to learning management systems—can foster innovation and improve communication. More recently, with the onset of the pandemic and the associated necessity of virtual learning, this technology has become indispensable to continuing learning.

Despite the obvious advantages of a one-to-one technology initiative, school districts need to be deliberate in articulating what exactly they hope to achieve by placing a device in the hands of every student. According to the Center for Digital Education, the number one trait of districts that have moved successfully to one-to-one was first defining "an instructional shortcoming in their schools."[2] In other words, the first question a district needs to ask is, "**How can our instructional program be improved?**" After determining the needed improvement, districts should determine if and how a one-to-one technology initiative would support the improvement: "How can technology help us make this improvement?"

What are common goals for one-to-one initiatives?

If the needs of a school district's instructional program can be best met with expanded access to digital learning tools, the district should then develop, adopt, and communicate goals for implementing a one-to-one initiative. Often these goals will involve **improving the delivery of a district's existing curriculum** through increased stakeholder communication, instructional differentiation, and/or access to more learning resources. Examples of goals pulled from Mississippi school districts' web pages and student handbooks include the following:

- **Communication**: "Improve communication and widen our sense of community by expanding the way teachers, students, and parents are able to interact with each other." (Vicksburg Warren School District)[3]
- **Differentiation**: "Provide greater access to educational opportunities and differentiated instruction by utilizing access to technology for anytime, anywhere learning." (Madison County Schools)[4]
- **Access to digital content**: "Provide greater access to digital content in a variety of formats and modes." (Vicksburg Warren School District)[5]
- **Access to digital tools**: "Integrate digital tools for students to develop products demonstrating their understanding." (Pass Christian Public School District)[6]

Goals may also pertain to **expanding a district's curriculum** to include skills and subjects that necessitate increased access to technology. Examples include:

- "Teach digital citizenship." (Madison County Schools)[7]
- "Develop a new set of knowledge and skills for the 21st-century learner." (Pass Christian Public School District)[8]
- "Exit New Albany High School with the skills needed to compete in a global economy." (New Albany School District)[9]

What makes a goal useful?

The examples above are simple, general statements of purpose. These are good for quickly communicating why a district is embarking on a one-to-one initiative, but goals are most useful when they are supported by specific, measurable objectives. For instance, for "Teach digital citizenship," a district could list the particular skills that are necessary to becoming a "digital citizen." The district could then describe how each skill will be measured, so that its one-to-one initiative can be routinely evaluated for effectiveness and adjusted for optimum student outcomes.

Who should be involved in goal setting?

Most important in the process of setting goals is the inclusion of key stakeholders. District or school leadership is often tasked with setting goals for a one-to-one initiative, but they must consult teachers, students, technology staff, parents, school board members, and even community members if they want to secure universal buy-in and build a culture around the integration of technology (see Step 6 for examples of methods to foster stakeholder support). Once developed and adopted, districts must clearly communicate these goals to everyone, particularly students and teachers. Many districts publish their goals in a technology handbook that is disseminated to students directly as well as readily available online. For more information about communication strategies and tactics, see Step 6.