

NSW Department of Education

Distance
education
edition



Leading education in a digital world

Schools Digital Strategy 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,
Schools Operation
and Performance



About this green book and our digital strategy

Developing and implementing our school's digital strategy

Leaders in distance education met with the Department's professional services team to develop this green book. 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.



Teachers



Students



Admin & support



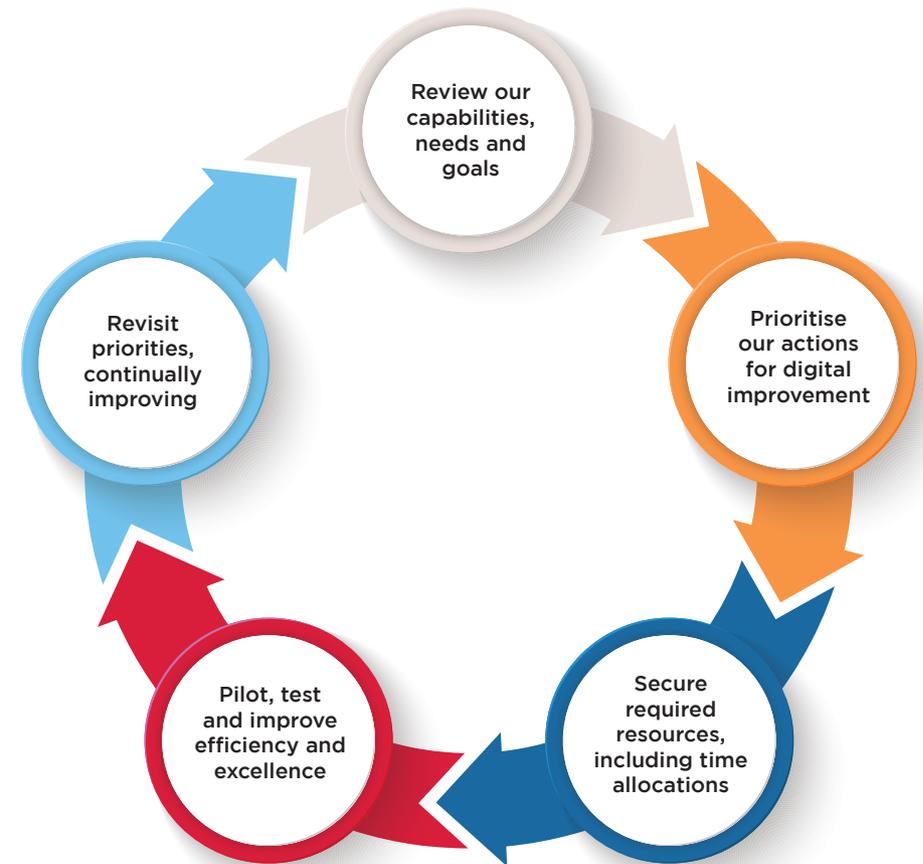
School leaders



Parents

Our SDS journey

Our 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 digital strategy contributes to the big picture

State strategy	SDS outcomes
20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the physical infrastructure to support digital uptake and use in learning spaces. • Connecting schools across the state in collaborative learning experiences.
DoE Strategic Plan 2018–2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Digital NSW</p> <p>A wider government priority is to improve the customer service experience for all citizens who come into contact with government services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

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 student 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 we take 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 digital agency

1.

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

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

2.

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.

3.

Aligning with the Department

- Realign our support relationships with the Department.
- Engage in innovation.

Our digital support priorities

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

1.

Help us move to the new wave of miniaturised digital solutions

We require support to move from heavy video-conferencing infrastructure to lightweight Web-conferencing. This will enable mixed mode delivery, the capacity to record sessions and provide rich digital learning activities that students can watch and engage with in their own time.

2.

Mail room digitisation

Provide us with digital solutions and processes that reduce our dependence on a physical mail room.

3.

Refresh our technology through a special fund

Help us to tap into an emergency funds to migrate from legacy technologies that are still being used, for instance, moving from older Web conferencing services to more current web solutions.

4.

Network equity

We look to the Department to address network contention issues and provide sufficient network access to our students across homesteads and isolated communities.

5.

Digital Tools

Provide digital tools that support student wellbeing, enable our students to negotiate their learning goals, and provide a more seamless digital learning and collaboration that is appropriate to each Stage of learning.

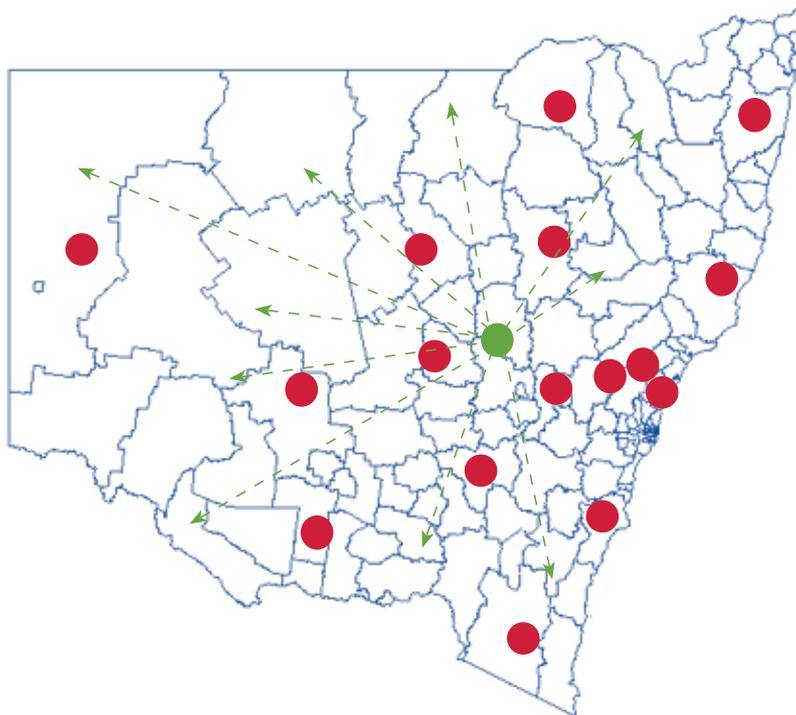
Our distance education cluster



David Foley
Unit Manager
DART
Connections



Hi I'm David Foley, Unit Manager at DART Connections. We provide video conferencing excursions that bring students and teachers together with experts across the globe.



Debbie Murray
Principal
Dubbo School of
Distance
Education



Hi I'm Debbie Murray, Principal at Dubbo School of Distance Education, supporting students across NSW.



DSODE

Quality Learning for our future

Our voice, distance education agency

“

Distance Ed can and has fundamentally shifted rural communities, uplifting them. Digital is critical to all we do.

“

People are proud of Distance Ed students who 'get out' and come back, or at least have to the extent that they have agency, opportunities and choices and in life that are in part made possible through Distance Education. The Access program allows students to stay in the town.

“

By 2030, the Access distance education service should be everywhere. It is sustainable and affordable, measured against social/community improvement and student life outcomes. The kids belong in their communities, the village is raising the child. Every room needs to be able to be used as a connected room. Access program can and does enhance bricks and mortar schools, not just the students at homesteads.

“

Our students need noise-cancelling microphones and easier access to Web conferencing sessions.



Our top ten priorities

- 1. Deploy user-friendly Web-conferencing, integrated tools and content that provides an exceptional learning experience**

Let's migrate to unified Web-conferencing, digital learning tools and content that are 'homestead-friendly' and become a resource to every learning space at every school.



- 2. Access digital content creation tools and resources through a Digital Resources Store**

New digital content creation tools will enable our teachers to easily synthesise and build digital assets for quality, engaging learning activities. We want to search, adapt, publish, share and rate digital learning and teaching resources and strategies that are ideal for our students and context, collaborating with teachers across the state.



- 3. Elevate teacher PL to leverage digital for future-focused learning**

Regular teacher PL will unlock future-focused learning that is backed by digital. Tailored online teacher PL resources and digital learning mentors will support our teachers in the flow of work. Local user groups and Communities of Practice will help us learn from one another.

- 4. Digitise and improve processes that are burdensome**

Help us reduce the double handling of information, for example, transferring Student Records and resolving timetabling issues with participating schools. Reduce the number of clicks and hours involved in program administration. A reduction in paper and postal-based processes will provide quick wins.



- 5. Access a blueprint guide that features technology that works best**

All NSW distance education providers would benefit from a digital catalogue that features pre-qualified, supported, interoperable digital solutions and resources that work in settings like ours.

- 6. Leverage in-school Professional Support to set goals, make plans and solve digital issues**

A new digital maturity plan will support our pursuit of excellence under the Schools Excellence Framework (SEF), drawing upon local and SDS professional team support, integrated with our ongoing 3-year plan.

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

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



- 8. Improve digital timetable synchronisation with participating schools**

Help us better synchronise our lesson schedules with participating school timetables across the state, using LISS or other contemporary standards to improve timetabling interoperability.

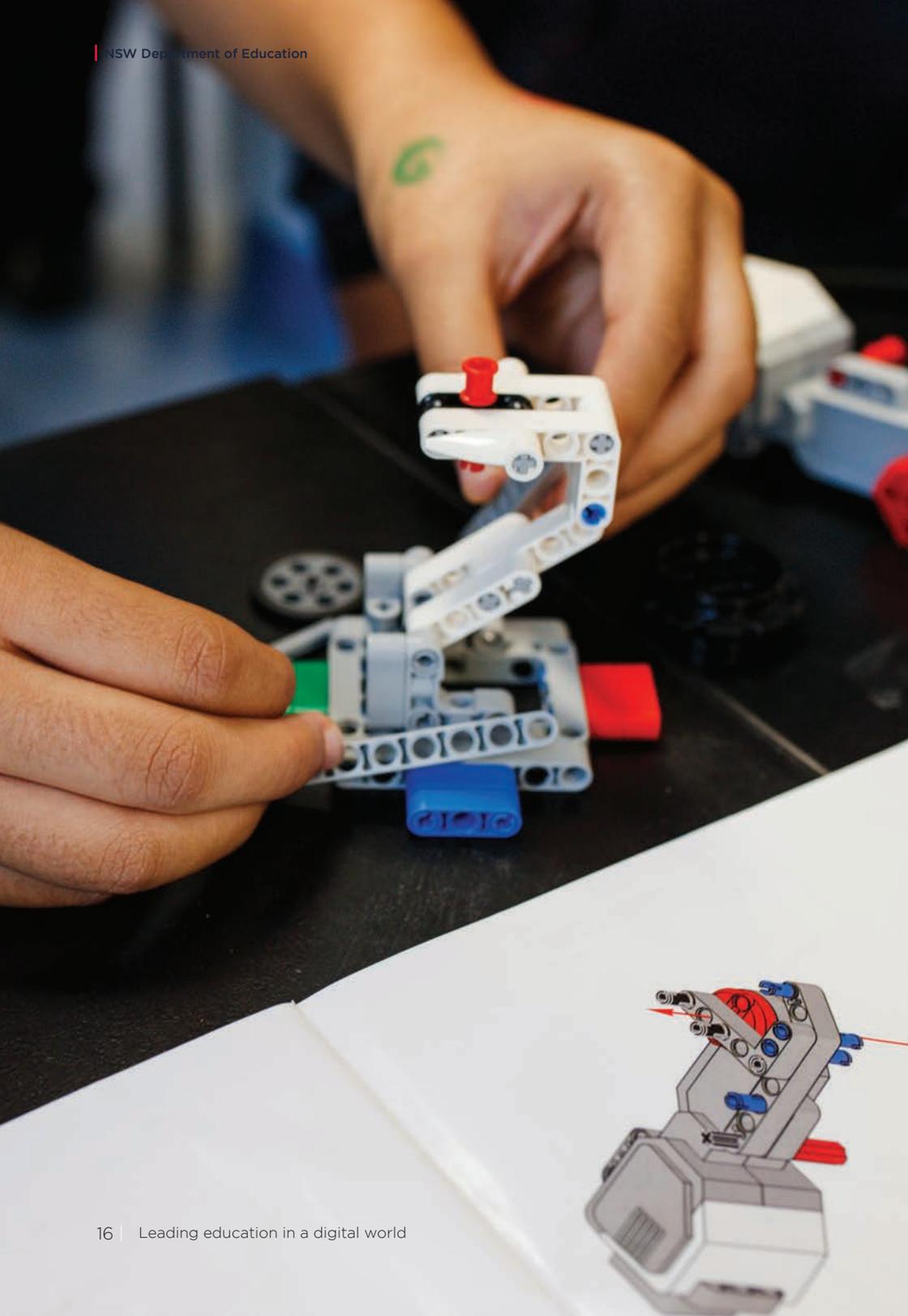
- 9. Effective collaboration environments**

Effective collaboration environments are required for rural and distance education. Mainstream social media is very important for communication with our community, and for staff Professional Learning.

- 10. Refresh our technology through a special fund**

Help us to tap into an emergency funds to migrate from legacy technologies that are still being used, for example, smart-boards, laptop and tablet refresh.

*Our school will work on these digital priorities in partnership with the Department's professional support team.



How we'll achieve our vision



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 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



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

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.



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.

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.

What this means for distance education



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

Student 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 we 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 PD, 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



Re-orient the service model to support teaching and learning

A re-oriented 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.

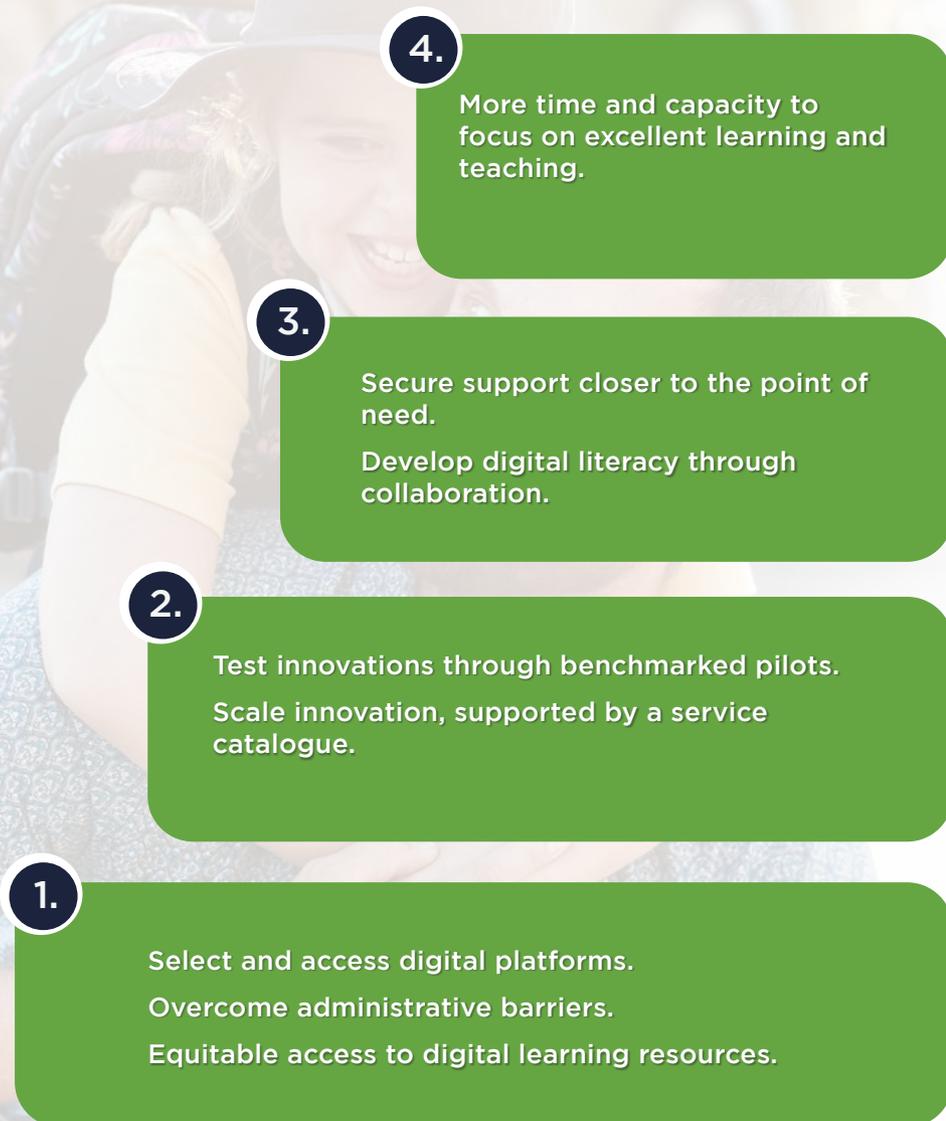


Scale continuous innovation at the edge

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 maturity journey

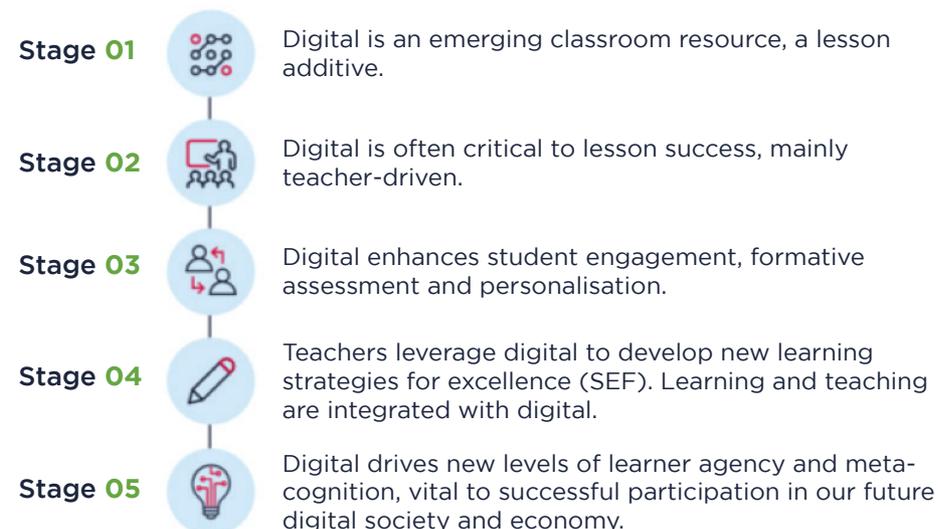
For distance education, digital is a means not an ends. We will pursue digital maturity so we have more time and capacity to focus on excellent teaching and learning. Here is our distance education digital maturity journey.



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:







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