



Los Angeles County Office of Education's

Artificial Intelligence Blueprint: A Change Management Approach to Sustainable AI Adoption

Version 1
Revised October 20, 2025



**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Superintendent's Message</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Getting Started</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>LACOE's AI Adoption Framework</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Phase 1: Plan + Prepare</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Phase 2: Trial + Learn</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Phase 3: Scale + Maintain</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>From Blueprint to Toolkit: What's Next</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Glossary</u>	<u>19</u>



A MESSAGE FROM LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

AI Adoption Begins with People



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping our world. The question is not if AI should be adopted, but how to integrate responsibly to support all students and staff.

That's why I'm proud to share LACOE's *AI Blueprint: A Change Management Approach for Sustainable AI Adoption*. This Blueprint focuses on organizational transformation and represents our commitment to a people-first approach to AI adoption. We've developed a replicable process to help local education agencies move from early discovery to scaled adoption by putting people, responsible use and thoughtful processes at the center of the transformation.

At the heart of our model is a focus on AI literacy, cross-functional teams, discovery processes, workflow redesign and experimentation, all built on a strong commitment to data governance, ethical use and bias mitigation.

This plan represents a living document based on LACOE's own 3-year journey to implement AI-enabled tools from the classroom to business offices. As our staff identify practical applications, best practices and implementation-specific tools, we will continue to update this Blueprint and share our learnings with you.

Sincerely,

Debra Duardo, M.S.W. Ed.D.
Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools





GETTING STARTED:

How to Use the Tool

The Blueprint is intended to be a guide, not a playbook. Use it for inspiration, learning by doing and adaptation. It builds on LACOE's 2024 release of its [Generative AI in TK-12 Education Guidelines](#), which provides foundational guidance on the safe, ethical and equitable use of AI tools in school and LEA settings. Those guidelines offer clarity on topics like data privacy, Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (COPPA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and responsible tool use. This Blueprint extends that work by offering a replicable, action-focused implementation change management model.

LEAs can use this tool as a:

1. **Conversation tool** – Engage your teams and staff in discussions about AI
2. **Idea starter** – Plan simple, low-lift AI trials
3. **Source of examples** – See how collaborative models work and how to measure progress

Use this Blueprint for:

Leading systemic organizational change with AI-enabled tools, building buy-in and managing the human side of AI transformation.

Use the Guidelines for:

Requirements, compliance standards, technical implementation tools and operational procedures.

A Note on This Living Document: The field of AI is evolving rapidly. To remain relevant and useful, this Blueprint and the referenced [Generative AI in TK-12 Education Guidelines](#) are considered living documents.

They will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect new learnings, technologies and best practices. Each major revision will be noted with a version number and date.





LACOE'S AI ADOPTION FRAMEWORK:

Grounded in Proven Change Management

LACOE's plan for change is inspired by Dr. John Kotter's research-backed 8-Step Process, which demonstrates that each phase builds the psychological and structural readiness necessary for the next. The organization has organized these steps into three interconnected phases:

1. Plan + Prepare
2. Trial + Learn
3. Scale + Maintain

Why This Sequence Matters: Kotter's research reveals that sustainable change requires a specific progression, urgency must precede coalition-building because people won't commit without first understanding the need. Similarly, a clear vision must be established before empowering action, ensuring efforts remain focused rather than scattered. This sequential approach prevents the "experimentation trap" where well-intentioned but disconnected initiatives fail to create lasting value.

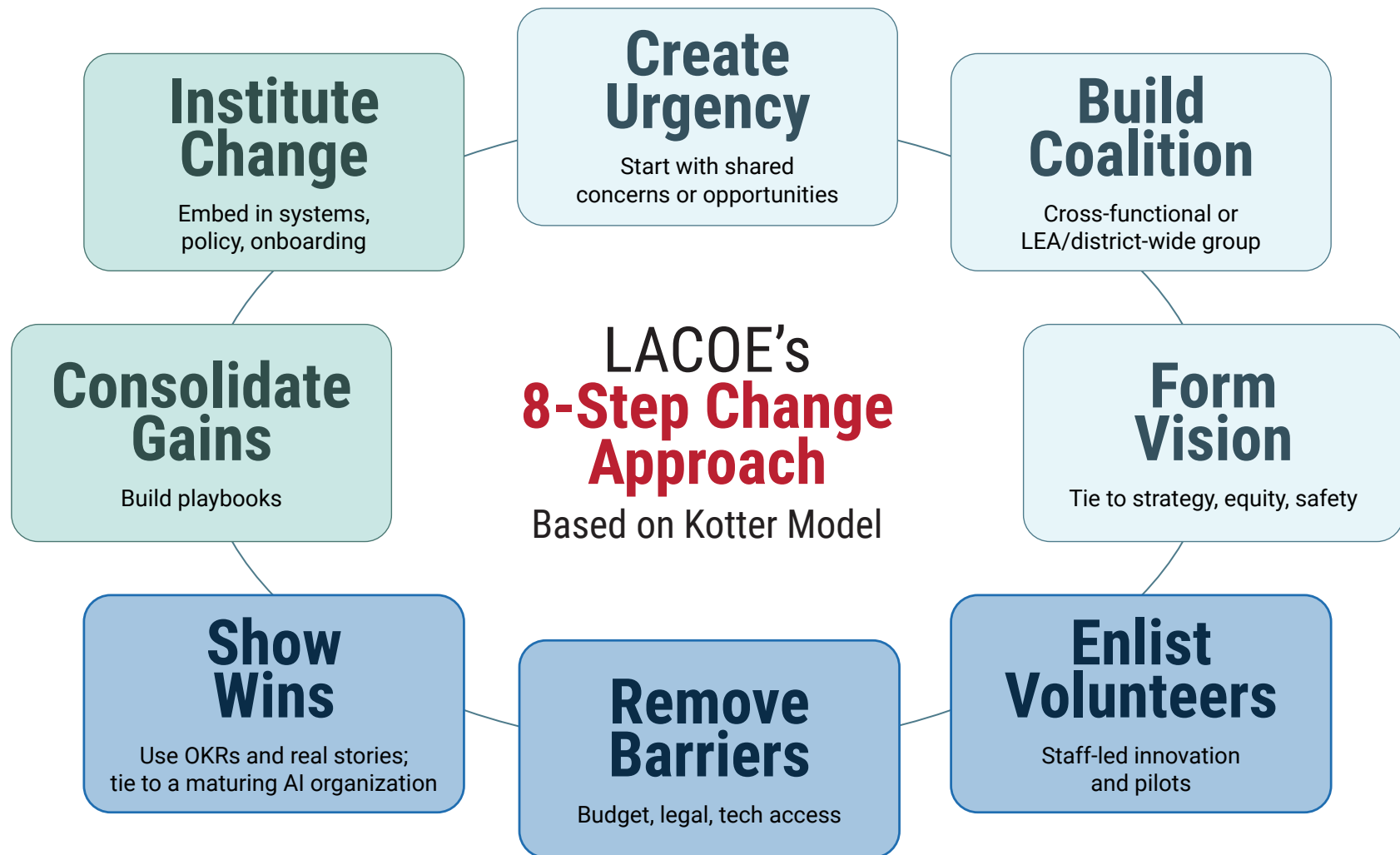
Building From a Strong Foundation: *Plan + Prepare* phase establishes the organization's foundation by building a committed leadership team and crafting a compelling vision that connects directly to how LACOE better serves students and communities. This groundwork is essential. Without it, even the most innovative ideas struggle to gain traction or scale effectively.

Continuous Learning and Adaptation: As the organization moves into *Trial + Learn* and *Scale + Maintain*, some steps will naturally repeat. When teams pilot new approaches, they'll measure progress, share learnings and refine processes based on real outcomes. This iterative cycle ensures that changes don't just happen once, they become embedded in the organization's culture, policies and daily practices.

A People-Centered, Principle-Driven Approach: This flexible framework keeps LACOE focused on what matters most: creating meaningful value for the students and families it serves. By following this proven sequence while remaining adaptable to its unique context, the organization builds sustainable change that strengthens its capacity to fulfill its mission.



Understanding the Connection:



- **Phase 1: Plan + Prepare** - Create Urgency, Build Coalition and Form Vision
- **Phase 2: Trial + Learn** - Enlist Volunteers, Remove Barriers and Show Wins
- **Phase 3: Scale + Maintain** - Consolidate Gains and Institute Change





Phase 1 Plan + Prepare



Phase 2 Trial + Learn



Phase 3 Scale + Maintain

Kotter's 8-Step Change Approach

1. Create sense of urgency
2. Build a guiding coalition
3. Form a strategic vision

4. Enlist volunteer army
5. Remove barriers
6. Generate short-term wins

7. Sustain acceleration
8. Institute change

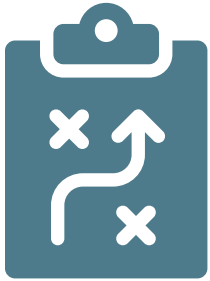
What It Means For AI Adoption

Build the “why” and the “who” before you get to the “what” or the “how.” This is about creating the climate for change based on what is driving the urgency to change.

Translating the vision into tangible action. This is where LACOE empowers teams, encourages experimentation with new AI-assisted workflows and creates visible successes that build crucial momentum.

Make it stick. This is about embedding successful practices into the daily work of the organization and then anchoring them in the culture through professional learning and communications.





PHASE 1: PLAN + PREPARE

Acting on Sense of Urgency to Create the Climate for Change

This foundational phase builds alignment and a shared understanding of the “why” and “who” before the introduction of AI tools and the “what” or “how.” It’s important to share the “why” with staff to inspire them, build momentum and counter initial lack of interest and skepticism.



STEP 1

Create a Sense of Urgency: Leadership Driving Change

Successful AI Adoption demands decisive leadership. At LACOE, this urgency began in December 2022 when Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Debra Duardo recognized shortly after the release of ChatGPT that society had reached a turning point. AI was no longer a distant possibility but an immediate force that was going to change public education. She called on her team to act without delay, start hosting and launching professional learning opportunities and build a plan for responsible AI adoption.

That urgent call to action set a chain of change in motion: a Joint Board Resolution to establish comprehensive guidelines for evaluating, piloting, procuring and using AI technologies; the formation of a multi-agency task force to develop the [Generative AI in TK-12 Education Guidelines](#) and most recently, the AI Governance Council.

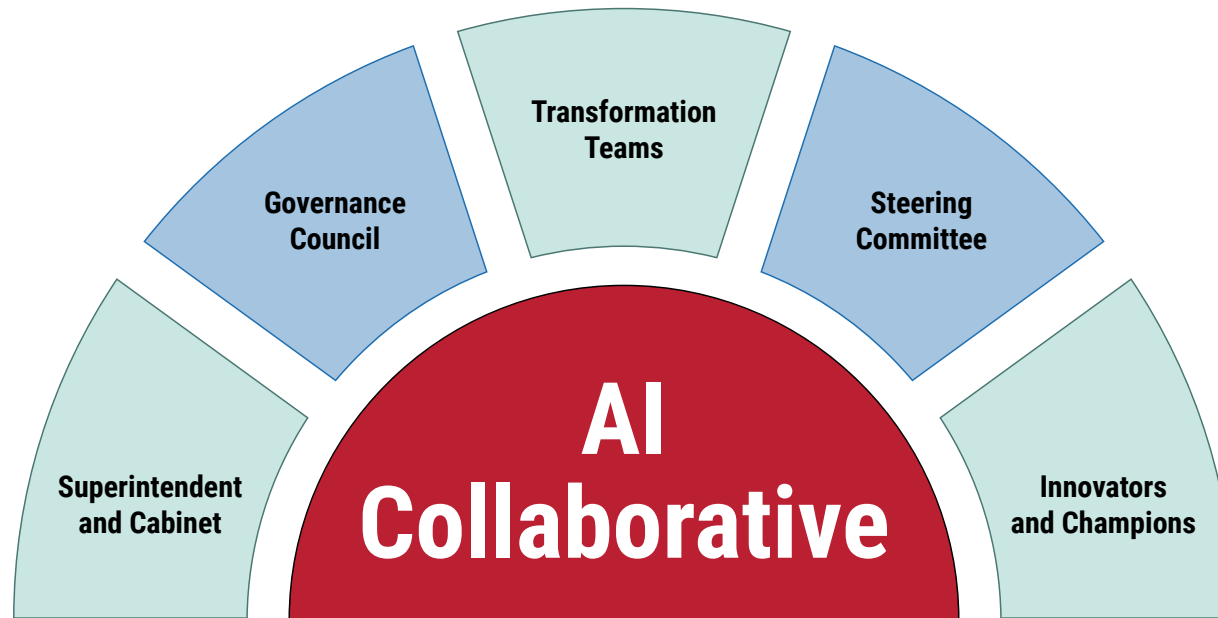
What began as an early recognition of AI's disruptive potential became a systemwide movement to prepare, adapt and lead.



STEP 2

Build a Guiding Coalition: The AI Collaborative @ LACOE

Change requires a coalition of internal staff willing to guide and support the initiative. At LACOE, this meant the development of several groups, organized into a structure for leadership and collaboration. The AI Collaborative @ LACOE, a cross-departmental body with distinct roles and responsibilities, guides the work.



- **Superintendent and Cabinet:** Sets the vision, oversees major milestones and approves resources for scaling.
- **Governance Council:** Provides ethical guardrails, accountability and cross-functional oversight for AI projects.
- **Steering Committee:** Steers day-to-day implementation, measurement and tracks progress.
- **Transformation Teams:** These are the project-based teams that actively test, measure and implement new AI-assisted workflows and then document for use in other parts of the organization.
- **Innovators and Champions:** Engage in AI tool testing, peer training and feedback to help build AI literacy. Innovators focus on operations, while Champions center on instruction.



STEP 3

Form a Strategic Vision: LACOE's Vision and Guiding Principles and Tie to Measurement

With a team in place, the AI Governance Council developed a clear Vision Statement and Guiding Principles to outline a clear direction and key principles of the AI-enabled tool adoption process. Critically, LACOE also established its Measurement Framework during this phase to ensure that progress could be tracked from day one.

Vision Statement: LACOE champions a human-led, future-ready workplace where responsible AI augments operational excellence, advances equity and builds the capacity of students and staff to thrive in an AI world.

Guiding Principles:

- **Responsible AI is Mandatory:** Use AI to augment, not replace, human processes, keeping humans in the loop and ensuring compliance.
- **Equity-Centered Design:** Design and apply AI tools in ways that identify and address bias to ensure all students and staff receive the support and opportunities they need.
- **Transparency and Thoughtfulness:** Build trust through clear policies, transparent use of AI and thoughtful communication.

Essential Guardrails for Responsible Use:

Strengthening safeguards is a core objective of responsible AI adoption. The AI Governance Council ensures all projects adhere to these fundamental commitments:

- **Privacy, COPPA and FERPA:** All AI use must ensure compliance with COPPA, FERPA and other privacy standards to protect personal and sensitive data. Policies around data use, student privacy and vendor partnerships must be clarified.
- **Human-Centered Approach:** AI is intended to assist and augment work, not replace it. A human must always be responsible for reviewing, editing and approving AI-assisted outputs.
- **Cybersecurity and Compliance:** Cybersecurity and compliance leads must be engaged in the review of key AI tools and use cases to ensure system integrity and adherence to local policies.



Table of Measurement Frameworks

In any change process (as reinforced by the Kotter change framework), people must see that their efforts make a difference. LACOE uses a combination of three frameworks to guide implementation, track growth and align efforts with its strategic plan.

[LACOE's three-year implementation plan](#) uses Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) to outline key tasks and measurements. Another approach would be to use a similar Key Performance Indicator (KPI) model.

Tool/Framework	What It Is	How LACOE Uses It	Why it Matters for Change
The Logic Model (Goal-setting as part of the strategic plan)	Think of a logic model as a recipe for a project. It lays out the ingredients (Inputs), the cooking steps (Activities), the finished dish (Outputs) and the result you were hoping for, like a happy family dinner (Outcomes). It's a simple planning tool that shows a clear path from your investment to your expected impact.	Leadership uses the Logic Model to evaluate new projects and ensure that the investments of time and resources are directly aligned to the organization's overall strategy.	Ensures that every initiative starts with a clear purpose and a shared understanding of what success looks like, which is the foundation for any successful change.
SMARTIE Goals with OKR Framework (Setting Clear, Measurable Goals)	A simple but powerful way to set a big goal and then list the specific, measurable steps you will take to get there. OKR = Objectives + Key Results framework and SMARTIE = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound, Inclusive, Equitable. These frameworks support one another and help to demonstrate if you're making progress.	Teams across LACOE use SMARTIE goals to define and align their goals and actions with other departments, and track their progress at a regular cadence.	OKRs and SMARTIE goals break down large, intimidating items into manageable steps. It helps generate short-term wins, build momentum and make the long-term vision of change feel more attainable.
The CoSN Framework (Charting long-term growth + progress on AI)	The CoSN (Consortium for School Networking) framework is like a growth chart for a school LEA's AI readiness. It provides defined stages of maturity, from early exploration to full integration, so a LEA can see where it currently stands and what the next level of development looks like.	LACOE uses the CoSN framework as an external guide to understand where we are now and where we want to go, ensuring our internal planning aligns with research-based best practices.	Provides a shared language and an objective way to measure long-term progress. This is essential for instituting change in the culture and ensuring that AI adoption becomes a sustainable, system-wide practice, not just a series of isolated projects.



PHASE 2: TRIAL + LEARN

Engaging & Enabling the Organization to Discover How to Drive Change

This phase brings the vision to life by empowering staff, removing barriers and creating opportunities for tangible, low-risk wins that build belief and momentum. LACOE has taken multiple approaches to AI adoption, from enabling staff across roles to use Gen AI tools in their everyday work, such as emails and spreadsheets, to the development of high-powered use cases to systemically use AI-enabled tools for workflow redesign, led by AI Transformation Teams.



STEP 4

Enlist a Volunteer Army: A Subset of the AI Collaborative @ LACOE

How this is coming to life:

- **AI Governance Council:** This advisory body brings together cross-functional expertise to guide the design and implementation of LACOE's AI adoption process. Council members provide strategic guidance on ethical considerations, compliance requirements and best practices, ensuring that all initiatives align with our commitment to privacy (COPPA and FERPA), human-centered design and cybersecurity standards.
- **AI Innovators and AI Champions:** These early adopters bridge leadership vision and daily practice. Innovators focus on operational applications in business processes and administration. Champions concentrate on instructional applications in classrooms. Both groups test tools, provide peer training, offer feedback and help build AI literacy across the organization.
- **AI Transformation Teams:** Through a series of discovery sessions, these teams have identified opportunities for workflow transformation where current, more manual tasks could be modified with AI-assisted workflows. This involves suggesting steps in current workflows that could be streamlined and/or improved using AI tools to replace manual work. These workflow transformations are currently underway and are in the early stages of implementation and testing.

The first three Transformation Team tests are underway

The Technology Help Desk and Human Resources team, the Procurement Team and the Public Affairs and Communication teams. At the time of this publication, these three teams have launched AI-tool-enabled workflow redesign experiments to improve operational efficiency, testing, learning, iterating and measuring progress and will have completed testing in January 2026.



Reminder on SMARTIE Goals:

LACOE-wide SMARTIE goals were introduced as part of the AI transformation process, in line with LACOE's [Strategic Plan Framework](#) for the next three years. SMARTIE stands for Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive and Equitable. This framework breaks down large goals into manageable steps and helps generate short-term wins.



STEP 5

Enable Action by Removing Barriers: LACOE's Generative AI Guidelines

Barriers may include fear of the unknown, lack of skills, lack of understanding, systemic and/or policy barriers and comfort with old routines. There are various approaches to counter these barriers.

To address barriers concerning policies or systemic organizational barriers, it is necessary to set clear guidelines and expectations to enable a “safe environment” in which people can test and learn about new ways of working and the tools they can safely use. That is generally accomplished through the creation of policies and guidelines that people can reference. For LACOE, that was the establishment of the [Generative AI in TK-12 Education Guidelines](#).

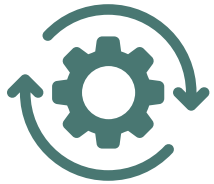
To address the other barriers, a robust discovery process can be employed. It starts with listening to staff concerns and identifying their pain points. At LACOE, this started with the Transformation Teams. Before those teams could begin their work, a key barrier was removed by first listening to identify use cases based on their pain points. Discovery sessions were conducted with staff across the organization to map current processes and co-identify real-world opportunities where AI-assisted workflows could have the most positive impact to augment or assist the team's efforts with workflow transformation and AI tools. This means that the Transformation Team's efforts are grounded in real needs, not abstract ideas.

STEP 6

Generate Short-Term Wins and Drive Progress through Goals: LACOE's Transformation Teams

With clear use cases defined, each Transformation Team developed a SMARTIE Goal for their test. This allows them to track their progress against the specific, measurable outcomes defined in Phase 1. Making these successes visible and celebrating them is critical for building the belief and momentum needed for long-term change.





PHASE 3: SCALE + MAINTAIN

Implementing and Sustaining Change

This phase embeds successful practices into the organizational culture and builds a foundation for long-term, responsible growth.



STEP 7

Sustain Acceleration and Anchor New Approaches: Aligning LACOE's Progress

In Step 3, the AI Governance Council (as part of the AI Collaborative @ LACOE) endorsed the process for change and enabled accountability to change via measurement frameworks. As the teams within the AI Collaborative move forward, a dashboard will be created to view SMARTIE goals and OKRs for each action item being taken as part of the AI change process.

LACOE will document and codify successful use cases, creating a record of proven practices for replication and for demonstration of progress.

Additionally, LACOE will be capturing the progress made as evidence to link back to the CoSN AI Maturity Framework to ensure actions are captured to demonstrate maturity and are aligned with long-term organizational growth.

STEP 8

Institute Change: LACOE's Ongoing Commitment

This is a continuous cycle. At LACOE, the value of new workflows is to embed them into our standard operations through professional learning, policy updates and budget alignment, making responsible AI-assisted adoption part of “how we think about our work, modify our work and now do our work.” Additionally, this work aligns with the 3-year LACOE strategic plan where the vision is to demonstrate LACOE's focus measurable impact.

Overarching SMARTIE Strategic Plan Goal:

By June 30, 2028, 50% of L.A. County's local education agencies will report that 80% of their students, staff and families are equipped with the guidance, training and resources needed to implement responsible, equitable and impactful AI use and literacy as a result of LACOE's AI initiative guidance, training and resources as measured via survey data.





FROM BLUEPRINT TO TOOLKIT: What's Next?

This Blueprint captures our strategic change management process. LACOE will be developing a companion toolkit to provide templates, example use cases and ways to select pilots for testing.

Learning and Sharing in Real-Time – This is not a theoretical model; it is a live documentation of our implementation journey. We are sharing our process as it unfolds, embracing a “learn by doing” philosophy. The lessons, resources and use cases that will populate the toolkit are being generated in real-time by the work of our Transformation Teams. We believe in sharing our progress—and our challenges—as we go, rather than waiting for a perfectly finished product.

Start Today

- Enlist a small group of staff invested in AI change and draft a vision + guiding principles
- Draft basic AI guidelines with a cross-departmental group of people, which includes compliance or cybersecurity
- Identify and/or appoint one AI Champion and/or AI Innovator to discover a simple use case for testing (e.g., drafting a parent newsletter or creating a lesson template)

Start small – It could be first designating a single AI Champion, or it could be gathering a few early adopters to explore the possibilities to get started with AI exploration and integration. Just getting started somewhere is the goal.

Connect with Us – For questions or for guidance on getting started, you can contact LACOE’s EdTech and Innovation Team for more details.

edtech@lacoed.edu

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AI Champions: Early school-based adopters who engage in testing, peer training and feedback to build AI literacy, often with a focus on instructional applications.

AI Collaborative: A structured, cross-departmental framework that provides vision, ethical oversight, professional learning and accountability for AI adoption.

AI Innovators: Early adopters who engage in testing, peer training and feedback to build AI literacy, often with a focus on operational applications.

Change Management: A framework to create a positive and supportive adoption process by focusing on the human side of change.

COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act): A U.S. federal law that imposes requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age.

CoSN AI Maturity Framework: A framework developed by the [Consortium of School Networking](#) (CoSN) that provides [a tool](#) for defining stages of AI maturity for an LEA, used by LACOE as an external guide for planning and growth.

Dr. John Kotter's [8-Step Change Model](#): A widely respected framework designed to help organizations implement change that lasts by building momentum and embedding new ways of working into the culture. See step definitions below.

- **Step 1: Create sense of urgency** – Help others see the need for change and the importance of acting immediately.
- **Step 2: Build a guiding coalition** – Assemble a group with enough power and credibility to lead the change effort.
- **Step 3: Form a strategic vision** – Develop a clear vision of the future and strategies for achieving it.
- **Step 4: Enlist volunteer army** – Rally a large group of people who are committed and eager to drive the change forward.
- **Step 5: Enable action by removing barriers** – Remove obstacles and empower people to take initiative and act on the vision.
- **Step 6: Generate short-term wins** – Plan for and achieve visible, early successes to build momentum.
- **Step 7: Sustain acceleration** – Use the credibility from early wins to press harder and drive bigger changes.
- **Step 8: Institute change** – Anchor new approaches into the culture so they become the way things are done.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act): A U.S. federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

Transformation Teams: Project-based teams that actively test, measure and implement new AI-assisted workflows in a structured, time-bound trial, which were prioritized through a discovery process and identification of AI-able workflow changes.

