

Digital Learning Commons Annual Performance Report

September 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004

Introduction

The Digital Learning Commons (DLC) was created in 2002 to improve access to K-12 educational resources by delivering high quality online courses; career and college planning resources; research, curriculum development and library content; digital tools; and training for these online resources to students, teachers and parents in Washington State. During the first two years the DLC will recruit schools to participate; research existing online resources (digital content); negotiate agreements with content providers; determine the appropriate technical infrastructure for delivery and support of resources; and develop and implement a training system that will provide hands-on training to all student and educator users of the DLC.

During the Proof of Concept phase of the DLC (September 2003 through June 2005) the focus is on creating an organization, working with a pilot group of schools, assessing the initial use of services, and determining a scalable structure to enable the DLC to roll out resources to the appropriate K-12 constituents statewide in the next phase.

Year One (2003-2004) Progress

Digital Content/Program

During this time we have closely evaluated the utilization of the resources and sought additional content while developing systems to encourage use and gather utilization data. While the development of initial content was focused on student users (courses, college and career prep, tools and research resources), the second half of the year included identifying and securing appropriate curriculum development and professional development resources for teachers that will be implemented in year two.

Training

We anticipated that face-to-face training would be a critical component of successfully introducing the DLC to participating schools and our initial launch has proven this to be true. During September of 2003, DLC trainers provided hands-on training to 4,700 students and 415 educators at 17 schools across the state. In late spring 2004, DLC staff visited the second year schools to introduce educators to the resources and possible uses for their schools.

Another important element of training is bringing educators and school administrators together to learn in depth about the DLC resources. At the training workshop convened in September 2003, attendees learned from vendor representatives and from one another.

The workshop provided an excellent opportunity to develop and strengthen an important peer-to-peer network around the DLC. In addition, DLC staff and board came away from the workshop with invaluable information about users' experiences with the DLC – information that helped guide the ongoing development of the Commons. Another training workshop for year one school representatives was held in March 2004. The focus continued to be on feedback from them on how the resources are supporting their needs, learning about the resources in more depth, and sharing success stories.

Technology

We learned from the Washington State School for the Blind (one of the pilot schools located in Vancouver, WA) that our initial website design needed a certain amount of reworking to make it fully accessible to users who are visually impaired. Working closely with representatives from the school, we were able to quickly make necessary changes in the website design to increase accessibility. The DLC will continue to be responsive to user's needs.

We were not equipped with a scalable registration process for the first round of online course registrations in September. We selected eCollege who developed a registration process and database to facilitate course registration with any of our seven providers and also track and maintain essential information on registrations over time.

We have found that the technical capacity of participating schools varies tremendously and that the demands on technical resources vary by content provider. Throughout the winter and spring, we conducted a comprehensive survey of participating school's technology and developed technical guidelines and resources for use by schools to facilitate their adoption of the DLC.

Governance/Advisory Committees

This first year of the DLC has been one of organizational development. This was readily apparent in the arena of governance where the focus was on creating necessary committees to support and guide the work of the DLC both internally and externally. Board subcommittees formed in the first year included finance and advocacy. Of equal importance was the role of advisory committees that connected the DLC to its constituents. Several advisory committees provided feedback and guidance to the organization from key constituents for digital content and training. Another important committee helped us look at the complex issue of pricing DLC services in order to develop a sustainable financial model.

It was planned that the founding CEO of the Digital Learning Commons, Louis Fox, would serve in that role through June, 2004. A search committee of the board was formed this spring to find the right candidate to fill this crucial role.

Assessment

Evaluation of the DLC is integral to the success of the organization. Throughout the proof-of-concept phase we collected data on use, performance and satisfaction and have already used the information to improve the services and better meet the needs of our constituents. The resulting assessment reports will be disseminated widely upon their completion at the end of September 2004.

Administration

The focus in year one was on building organization infrastructure including securing appropriate offices, hiring staff, and developing other internal systems. The organization has also developed an effective communications strategy to increase awareness, provide information, facilitate use, and establish a strong identity in Washington's K-12 community. In addition, by the end of November 2004 we will have developed a draft model for generating revenue from delivery of services by the DLC. The nature of this model (membership, flat fee, sliding scale, etc.) will be determined in cooperation with advisors from our constituency.

Summary of Proposed Project Targets Compared to Actual Outcomes

The original Project Plan had stated targets, and this section will update the proposed goals to what actually was implemented in Year One.

1. Participants:
 - 6 high schools (750-1,000 students) were proposed.
 - 16 high schools (4559 students), 1 middle school (51 students), the Washington State School for the Blind (32 students), and 2 Native American Tribal Schools (85 students) were Year One participants plus 300 educators.
2. Onsite Student Orientation:
 - None were proposed.
 - 4727 students participated and 300 educators.
3. Number of Students Taking Online Courses:
 - 3-5 schools totaling 50 students were proposed.
 - 8 high schools with 236 students and 1 middle school with 3 students participated.
4. Digital Library:
 - Proposed to be available to 750-1,000 students.
 - Actually available to 4559 high school students, 51 middle school students and 300 educators.
5. College and Career Planning Resource:
 - Proposed to be available to 750-1,000 students.
 - Actually available to 4559 high school students and 300 educators.

6. Digital Tools:

- Proposed to pilot digital tools at 1 school with 50 students.
- One high school did participate but with 100 students.

Year One Learnings and Changes to the Year Two Plan

The Year One schools, advisory committees, assessment data and a year of experiences have provided guidance as we move forward into Year Two.

- We have learned that high school students can benefit from the online courses, but may need additional support to be successful. We will be implementing an online Student Mentor program for 2004-05 to support each student who takes an online course.
- We learned that math is a “high need” content area and schools have requested additional resources. We will be adding Math ClassTools to support their WASL prep programs.
- We learned that schools need some assistance in making the connection between their goals and the DLC resources. We will be implementing a DLC Use Plan from each school and will schedule time to meet with the school based DLC Team to help them see how the resources can support their students and their school goals.
- We learned that educators and students need a way to refresh their knowledge of the DLC resources. We will be implementing on-line tutorials, web conferences, video demonstrations, etc. to assist their continuous learning.
- We learned that educators appreciate the opportunity to share ideas with each other. We will be implementing on-line communities for Librarians, Counselors, Principals, Math Teachers using Math ClassTools, Catalyst Leads, Superintendents, and Teacher Mentors.
- We learned that educators learn from hearing about “what is working”. We have added a feature to the website within each resource section called “spotlight” to allow us to highlight success stories and ideas from participating schools.
- We learned that our website is the mainstay of communication. We will be adding a part-time web writer to our team to help us enhance our communications, highlights, spotlights, and online communities.
- We learned that educators enjoy learning within their own environment so it can be meaningful for them. We will be developing site-based workshops to assist schools in further implementation of the DLC resources.
- We learned that many DLC resources support State of Washington education goals, legislation and priorities. We will be developing examples for High School and Beyond Plans via ECOS, Culminating Projects templates via ePortfolio, Individual Learning Plans via ePortfolio, and WASL prep via Math ClassTools and online courses.

Year Two (2004-2005) Proposed Work Plan

Digital Content/Program

In the second year we will examine the lessons learned in year one and refine the digital content to better serve Washington students. Concurrently, we will introduce new resources designed to meet the needs of teachers and parents. During this year we will standardize processes for registering students and for adding new schools to the DLC. Our goal in year two is to increase the numbers of students and educators participating in the DLC to 75,000 for fall of 2005.

Training

Face-to-face training will continue through site visits to all participating schools. We anticipate that the training plan will utilize partnerships with higher education institutions across the state to provide regionally-based trainers. We believe that a decentralized system of regional partnerships will enable the DLC to provide more cost effective, widely available training that is ultimately scalable to a statewide rollout.

We will continue to convene educators and administrators at training workshops to disseminate information, gather feedback and facilitate peer-to-peer networking. During this year we will refine training processes to both address the needs of schools that are new to the DLC while also providing value to schools that are continuing their relationships with the organization.

Technology

Assessment of new schools' technical capacity will be ongoing, as will support for bringing new schools into the DLC. We anticipate that the main focus in the technology arena will be developing a plan for creating a portal and determining what the technical infrastructure needs of the organization are likely to be as we scale to a state-wide roll out.

Governance/Advisory Committees

The DLC's assessment and planning for content, training and technology will come together in an organization-wide strategic planning effort scheduled to take place in the first half of the year. This planning will guide the direction of the DLC as it prepares for a sustainable statewide rollout in phase two. Board and advisory committees will be engaged in both the ongoing governance of the organization and the strategic planning work.

Assessment

During the summer of 2004 we will conduct a thorough assessment of the first year of operations. During spring and summer of 2005 we will assemble the full proof of concept phase assessment.

Administration

Beside the ongoing work of administering financial, operational, and human resource systems, the main effort during year two will be on solidifying a sustainable financial structure.

Funding will once again be sought from foundations and the State of Washington. The results of the first year assessment and the strategic planning effort will be the basis of the proposals for funding in years three and beyond.

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Pilot Phase Workplan Year One (2003-2004)

	September – December 2003	January – March 2004	April – June 2004
Digital Content/Program	<p><u>Launch website</u> Completed in August, 2003 following WA State Web Presentation Guidelines.</p> <p><u>Register and enroll students in fall courses</u> 100 enrollments for 54 different courses from 6 of our 7 course providers. 14% of the enrollments were in Math and Business courses; 20% of the enrollments were in Science and Vocational/Technology courses; 31% of the enrollments were in the Humanities courses, (including Language Arts); 12% of the enrollments were for Social Studies courses and 20% of the enrollments were for Foreign Language courses. (4423 students registered into ECOS, Career and College Planning resource.)</p> <p><u>Register students for spring classes</u> Spring semester of 2004 brought 258 enrollments in 83 different courses from all 7 of our providers. 27% of the enrollments were for Math and Business courses; 15% of the enrollments went to Science and Vocational/Technology courses; 24% of the enrollments were for courses in the Humanities (including Language Arts); 20% of the enrollments went to Social Studies courses; and 13% of the enrollments were for Foreign Language courses. (As of July 1, 2004, 3350 “uses” of the ECOS resource by students.)</p> <p><u>Identify and begin to recruit additional schools</u> A broad group of stakeholders were asked for nominations: OSPI staff, teachers and</p>	<p><u>Develop and implement procedures for adding new schools (increase to approximately 20,000 users for 04-05 school year)</u></p> <p><u>Identify, select and confirm additional schools to begin in Fall, 2004</u> The winter recruitment of nominees resulted in 120 schools being nominated to participate in the second year of the DLC. 5 regional meetings were held to orient nominated schools to the DLC: 3/25 at Spokane Red Lion Hotel at the Park; Monday, 3/29 at Bellingham School District Office; Puget Sound ESD Seattle office on 3/30; ESD 113 in Olympia on 3/31; final Regional meeting on 4/1 at Vancouver’s Red Lion at the Quay. 96 attendees. Received 35 applications from the nominated schools. Accepted 31 of these for a grand total of 22,769 users including the year one schools.</p> <p><u>Add new content providers</u> <u>Library:</u> The following resources were added to the original Gateway to Educational Materials database: netTrekker, Grolier Online, SIRS, Facts on File, and Ask an Expert. In addition, valuable partnerships have been formed with several other groups developing or supporting K-12 digital libraries including Michigan Teacher Network, the United States Department of Education, the University of Washington's Information School, Washington State Library, and the Information Institute of Syracuse.</p>	<p><u>Register students for summer session</u> <u>Register students for fall and spring sessions</u> As of June 2003, the DLC held about 400 fall semester registrations for about 90 different courses. 16% of the courses were for Math and Business courses; 19% of the courses were in the Science and Vocational/Technology courses; 34% of the courses were for Humanities courses (including Language Arts); 16% of the enrollments were for Social Studies courses and 13% of the registrations were for Foreign Language courses.</p> <p><u>Select digital tools provider(s) to begin in Fall, 2004</u> Catalyst suite of digital tools was selected: ePortfolio, eDiscussionBoard, Peer Review, and WebQ.</p> <p><u>Select professional development resources for clearinghouse</u> The following were selected to begin this section of the Commons in 2004-05: Video Vignettes, Online courses via The Learning Space, ESDs, TeacherEd, and OSPI Certification Guide. In addition, Web Training Events are scheduled by the DLC for in-depth trainings on specific DLC resources.</p> <p><u>Evaluate classroom resources</u> The following were evaluated and selected for 2004-05 use to launch this section of the Commons: WASL preparation in math (Apex Learning Math Class Tools), Lesson Plans (Marco Polo), OSPI Quick Links for WASL and</p>

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	<p>principals of current schools, superintendents of Educational Service Districts, the Director and Board Chair of every professional educational organization in the state, the Governor’s staff and legislative staff, course providers, the DLC Board, and others. This resulted in about 120 schools being invited to participate in the second year of the DLC (letter of Feb 20, 2004).</p> <p><u>Research additional content providers</u></p> <p><u>Library:</u> The DLC selected the Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM), a national project funded by the Department of Education made up of over 500 consortium contributors, and over 30,000 high quality lesson plans and websites as its core resource when the DLC opened the doors in September 2003. While DLC educators and school librarians found the re-branded GEM search engine a valuable asset when looking for quality lesson plans, curriculum units, and other Web based education materials it was clear the DLC library needed further development to become a world-class K-12 digital library. The GEMCats, a working group consisting of DLC pilot school librarians, has been guiding the development of the DLC Gateway since its formation in late September, 2003.</p> <p><u>Courses:</u> Participating school staffs were asked for suggestions for online course expansion.</p> <p><u>Teaching Resources and Professional Development:</u> The Professional Development Working Group began searching for high quality</p>	<p><u>Career and College Planning:</u> The following resources were added to this section: Education and Career Opportunities System (ECOS), WOIS Washington State College and Universities search and resources, Workforce Explorer, and Employment in Your Area.</p> <p><u>Courses:</u> Aventa Learning was added to the list of online course providers starting spring semester 2004. Aventa Learning serves schools looking to deploy programs of virtual learning, technology supplements in the classroom, and credit recovery. Aventa also provides AP courses (for students who qualify) and some general studies courses (suitable for a general high-school population).</p> <p><u>Evaluate available digital tools</u> Conducted a cost comparison study, surveyed participating schools for possible uses, and evaluated products.</p> <p><u>Evaluate professional development resources</u> The Professional Development Working Group gathered recommendations and reviewed content.</p> <p><u>Conduct meetings at all schools (new and continuing) to insure full utilization of DLC resources</u> Developed a DLC Use Plan document to guide schools with the integration of DLC resources into their school improvement plans. Held meetings at each school with their DLC Team to</p>	<p>EALRs reference, Best Practices (What Works Clearinghouse), and Data Summaries (Washington School Research Center).</p> <p><u>Evaluate and select parent resources</u> The parent site carried the Library Resources and Career and College Planning Resources just like the student section. The following were added to expand the Parent Resources for 2004-05: America’s Career Resource Network, Listing of school counselors for all DLC High Schools for quick reference, OSPI Quick Links for Parent guides, WASL and EALRs information, Students with Disabilities resources, Tufts University Child and Family Web Guide, and Cadena Community Technology Center in Spanish.</p>
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	resources and reviewing those suggested. <u>Career and College Planning:</u> DLC Staff and DLC school staff discussed and reviewed possible additions.	brainstorm utilization ideas.	
Training	<p><u>Provide training to all student and educator users</u> Provided “hands on” orientations on the DLC resources to approximately 5000 students and educators at their school sites in Fall 2003. Utilized 24 student instructors from the University of Washington in addition to the DLC Staff.</p> <p><u>Host a training and evaluation conference for participating schools</u> 9/28-30, 2003 86 attendees: staff, vendors, board, presenters, principals, superintendents and staff from 16 first year schools and their (10) school districts.</p>	<p><u>Develop teacher/mentor training</u> The University of Washington’s Distance Learning Design under the Extension Program was selected to create an online Teacher/Mentor training module. The module, comprised of 6 units, covers the roles and responsibilities of the DLC Teacher/Mentor as the primary on-site support for online courses students within their schools. Provider-specific tasks, guidelines and policies will be gathered into an online Web resources collection to serve as an up-to-date online handbook and Teacher/Mentors participating in the training will be eligible to earn 6 hours of Educator Clock Hours from the Puget Sound Educational Service District.</p> <p><u>Conduct follow-up training visits to year-one schools</u> Site visits were conducted on request. Additionally, extensive communication and follow-up meetings were conducted at the Tribal Schools to facilitate their progress and implementation.</p> <p><u>Host training and evaluation conference</u> 3/21-23, 2004 75 attendees from 14 first year schools,</p>	<p><u>Continue to develop and refine training materials for successful school participation</u> Designed educator DLC orientation workshops for use May-June 2004. Developed a video explaining the DLC and featuring year one participants. Designed student DLC orientation workshops for use Sept.-Oct. 2004. Designed school based DLC Team meeting agendas and outcomes for Spring 2003 and Fall 2004.</p> <p><u>Conduct on-site training for new students, teachers and staff at schools</u> DLC Staff conducted 31, 2 hour, “hands on” orientation sessions at each newly selected Year Two High School totaling 1000 participants. Site based DLC Team meetings were held at each school also. Began scheduling Fall Educator Workshops at all 48 DLC Schools and Fall Student Trainings at all 48 DLC Schools totaling 25,000 participants.</p> <p><u>Continue to develop new training plan</u> Survey data collected for all Educator and Student training sessions and changes to the training design and curriculum are made continuously.</p>

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		<p>their districts, DLC staff, board. Pre-meeting held with representatives from tribal schools.</p> <p><u>Begin to develop scalable plan for on-site training (utilizing regional hubs)</u> Regional training partnerships developed with Eastern Washington University, Heritage University, and Western Washington University to join with the partnership already established with the University of Washington. Selected three Student Instructors who participated in the fall orientation sessions to restructure the student orientations, rewrite the training curriculum, develop a Student Instructor Conference for the 04-05 trainers, translate curriculum and DLC materials into Spanish, recruit and select college students from the partner universities, and prepare some video demonstration lessons.</p>	
<p>Technology</p>	<p><u>Begin redesign of website to meet accessibility standards</u> First Round completed Fall 2003 when The DLC created an easy-to-use and accessible website at www.learningcommons.org. Students, educators and parents have access to all of the DLC resources through this website.</p> <p><u>Develop integrated registration process</u> The DLC built an online course catalog, showing off the 250-300 courses offered through the DLC. School registrars can enroll students through an online registration system. eCollege was selected as the vendor for the DLC online courses registration system. Implementation</p>	<p><u>Complete redesign of website to meet accessibility standards</u> Additional modifications were made Spring 2004 when the site was redesigned to further enhance usability, as well as highlight images of students and educators from schools participating in the DLC.</p> <p><u>Begin to research portal technology</u> Technology specifications have been developed and research completed on various possibilities.</p> <p><u>Develop technical requirements and resources for participating schools</u> DLC Technology staff worked closed with</p>	<p><u>Assess technical infrastructure needs for DLC</u> Developed a DLC Technology Plan. Expansion of the infrastructure will take place over the summer of 2004 and again in October 2004.</p> <p><u>Continue to research portal technology</u> A pilot portal project was designed to simplify the sign-in procedure for the DLC Library resources to gain experience with this concept. Implementation began Spring 2004.</p> <p><u>Survey schools on technical resources and capacity</u> Each DLC school, both Year one and</p>

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	<p>began with Spring 2004 registration period.</p>	<p>technology staff at DLC schools and districts to ensure the entire range of DLC offerings was available to students and educators in those schools. Technology requirements and resources are developed and posted on the website. They also are listed with each online course and by course providers to assist staff and students.</p>	<p>Year two, have completed a technology survey as part of the “application” process.</p>
<p>Governance/Advisory Committees</p>	<p><u>Appoint board sub-committees and user advisory groups from key stakeholders (library advisory committee, advocacy committee)</u> The Board created the Finance and Advocacy Subcommittees. Advisory committees include: Professional Development, Sustainability, Library, and Technology.</p> <p><u>Create Schools Advisory Committee; appoint co-chairs</u> The Sustainability Committee has taken on some of this role.</p>	<p><u>Appoint CEO Search Committee</u> Completed and board member Ed Lazowska was the chair.</p> <p><u>Appoint principals & superintendents advisory committee</u> The Sustainability Committee has taken on this role.</p> <p><u>Appoint Finance Committee</u> Chris Hedrick is the chair as Board Treasurer.</p> <p><u>Appoint Mentor Advisory Committee</u> The school based Teacher Mentors are all part of this committee. A Student Mentor Advisory Committee was created to help design this new service to support students taking online courses to begin Fall 2004.</p> <p><u>Research financial models to determine cost sharing plan</u> Several possibilities were developed by the Sustainability Committee, and work is still continuing.</p>	<p><u>Hire CEO</u> Judy Margrath-Huge was selected and began mid August.</p> <p><u>Create Parent Advisory Committee</u> Delayed until Fall 2004.</p>

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Pilot Phase Workplan Year One (2003-2004)

	September – December 2003	January – March 2004	April – June 2004
Assessment	<p><u>Produce assessment plan</u> Assessment consultant developed a plan consisting of these critical questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whom does the DLC best serve? How are they best served? 2. What are the conditions within a school that promotes the successful use of DLC resources for individual students, teachers, parents, and schools? 3. What effect, if any, does access to online courses have on student academic performance and test scores more broadly? 4. What kind of policies and arrangements make for the most effective relationship between the DLC and participating schools? 5. What is the best fiscal model for the long-term success and sustainability of the DLC? <p><u>Develop assessment database and access system</u> <u>Develop system to track use of DLC resources</u> Phase one of the database and access system was developed.</p> <p><u>Develop and administer user surveys</u> Surveys were developed for educators and students. Administration set for Spring 2003.</p> <p><u>Build on-line document library</u> A shared, on-line document library was established for the DLC.</p>	<p><u>Develop assessment information management system</u> Phase two was developed in consultation with assessment advisor.</p> <p><u>Implement assessment plan</u> Visitations, focus groups, interviews, and assessment management system data gathering processes were implemented to support the assessment questions.</p>	<p><u>Aggregate statistics on content use and progress and develop report</u> Report completion date – October 1, 2004.</p>

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<p>Administration</p>	<p><u>Hire Chief Operating Officer, Program Director, Program Manager, Programmer</u> All hired.</p>	<p><u>Develop communications strategy and materials</u> Utilized a strategic communication planning process with staff, board, and constituents to develop a DLC Communications Plan and appropriate collateral materials.</p> <p><u>Hire Curriculum Director, Technical Director, Administrator, Webmaster</u> All hired plus a Training Manager and a Special Projects Manager.</p> <p><u>Move into offices</u> Completed the move to the Corbet Building.</p> <p><u>Submit year two applications to Foundations</u> Completed.</p>	<p><u>Implement cost-sharing plan for year one schools</u> The Sustainability Committee recommended that the Year One schools continue receiving the DLC resources free of charge since they only had 4 months to utilize the DLC at the time that charges would need to be planned for their 04-05 school budgets. That recommendation was accepted by the DLC Board in order to gain appropriate data for the cost-sharing plan.</p> <p><u>Implement communications strategy</u> The DLC implemented the new logo, collateral materials, and updated website and PowerPoints in late June, 2004.</p>
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DIGITAL LEARNING COMMONS
Pilot Phase Workplan Year Two (2004-2005)

	July – September 2004	October – December 2004	January – March 2005	April – June 2005
Digital Content/Program	Drop-Add period for Fall classes Review and refine DLC content Adjust plans based on assessment Implement parent resource content Implement classroom resources	Identify and recruit additional schools Drop-Add period for spring classes Implement professional development content Implement on-line tools	Develop and implement procedures for adding new schools Identify, select and confirm additional schools to begin in Fall (increase to approximately 50,000 users for 05-06 school year) Conduct meetings at all schools (new and continuing) to insure full utilization of DLC resources	Register students for summer session Register students for fall and spring sessions
Training	Conduct ongoing on-site training Implement training plan	Convene pilot schools training and evaluation conference	Convene pilot schools training and evaluation conference Evaluate and revise training model	Conduct on-site training for new students, teachers and staff at schools
Technology	Develop technical infrastructure plan Develop implementation plan for portal technology	Present technical infrastructure plan Present implementation plan for portal technology		
Governance/Advisory Committees	Begin strategic planning for implementation phase	Complete strategic planning for implementation phase		
Assessment	Conduct first year assessment of utilization, training, student performance, services, service delivery, etc. Analyze data and prepare first year assessment report		Begin pilot phase assessment	Continue pilot phase assessment (complete in August, 2005)
Administration	Identify and meet with potential new funders Review and refine communications strategy Prepare for and conduct financial audit of fiscal period ending June 30, 2004	Submit proposals for funding to foundations, state government	Implement cost sharing plan for all schools	