

# Setting the Stage for Sustainable Digital Transformation

## A Strategic Approach for SEAs



Digital transformation—which goes well beyond adopting new technology—requires a comprehensive approach that addresses organizational change, strategic alignment, and employee engagement.<sup>1</sup>

The Region 14 Comprehensive Center (R14CC) and its partners are at the forefront of this transformation for state education agencies (SEAs). Our goal is to help SEAs build the capacity to implement and sustain digital initiatives that enhance educational experiences by improving access to high-quality resources and other information essential for students’ success. By combining direct support with capacity-building, we ensure that our state partners benefit from digital transformation and are empowered to create their own digital future.

**R14CC’s approach is based on the four phases outlined in our resource “Building Capacity with Digital Solutions.”**



### First Steps

The foundation for a successful digital transformation begins with the planning and needs sensing phase. R14CC’s user-centered approach involves gathering information about the SEA’s current state, identifying challenges, and uncovering opportunities. As highlighted in our Center’s previous work, planning and needs sensing are crucial for understanding the unique needs and context of each SEA to ensure the development of effective strategies and solutions tailored to the needs of the SEA’s constituents.

“The Texas Education Agency’s collaboration with the Region 14 Comprehensive Center was invaluable during the initial phase of our website redesign project. Their guidance and support helped lay a solid foundation for the project, ensuring alignment with our goals.”

—Holly Satsky, Director of Creative and Production, Texas Education Agency

### Explore the Activities

The following activities can contribute to a successful Planning and Needs Sensing phase. By engaging in these activities, SEAs can better understand their needs and set the course for a successful digital transformation.

#### Planning and Needs-Sensing Activities for Digital Transformation

While some SEAs may have the internal resources to facilitate activities to prepare for digital transformation, partnering with a specialized organization can accelerate progress and ensure that the needs sensing and planning for digital transformation are aligned with best practices. This list is not exhaustive, and the specific activities needed may vary depending on the client and their unique needs.

### Discovery Sessions

Collaborative discussions to align the transformation project with the SEA’s unique context. Discuss goals, explore strategies, understand needs, and set measurable success criteria.

### Branding Workshop

Bring together key SEA staff to unpack the SEA’s identity through a series of interactive exercises. These activities help SEAs focus on a unified brand that resonates with their target audience.

### Website Content Audit

Conduct a thorough review of the SEA’s existing website content to determine what to keep, what to eliminate, what to improve, and what to create.

### Audience Research

Gather audience insights through interviews, surveys, or focus groups to understand how they interact with the SEA’s digital channels. This research helps identify the audience’s needs, preferences, and behaviors, allowing the SEA to tailor content and experiences accordingly.

### Internal Communications Plan

Develop a strategy to communicate project updates and ensure internal team support throughout the process. Identify interested parties, develop messaging, and establish communication channels to keep everyone informed and engaged.

### Interviews with SEA Staff

Conduct interviews with key SEA staff to gain a deeper understanding of the SEA’s culture, identify potential barriers to success, and elevate opportunities for improvement.

### Technology Review

Assess the SEA’s existing technology systems to identify potential integration points with the new project and gain a comprehensive understanding of the current technology environment.

### Digital Marketing Audit

Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the SEA’s digital marketing efforts. SEAs gain valuable insights into their current performance and identify areas for improvement to connect more effectively with their target audience.

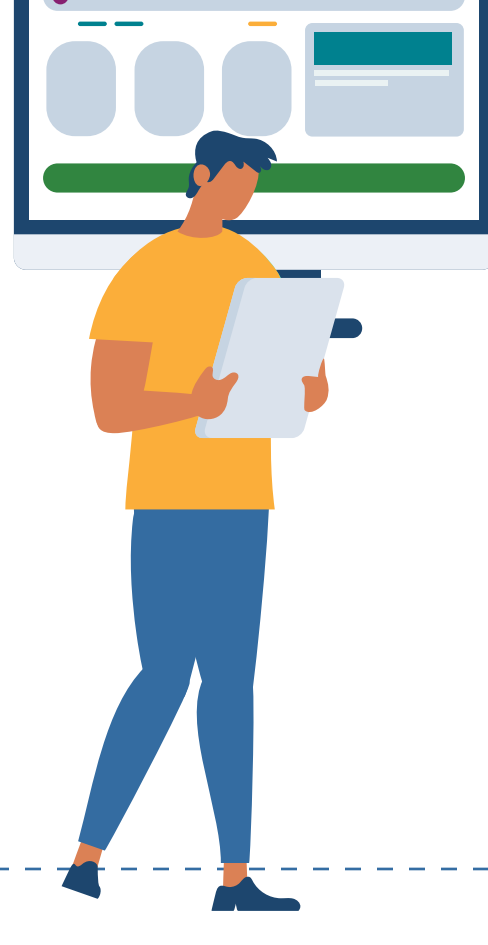
### User Profiles and Journeys

User profiles describe the SEA’s target audiences, including demographics, psychographics, and needs. User journeys detail how each audience interacts with SEA content from initial exposure to desired outcome.

### R14CC Is Leading the Way: Digital Transformation in Practice

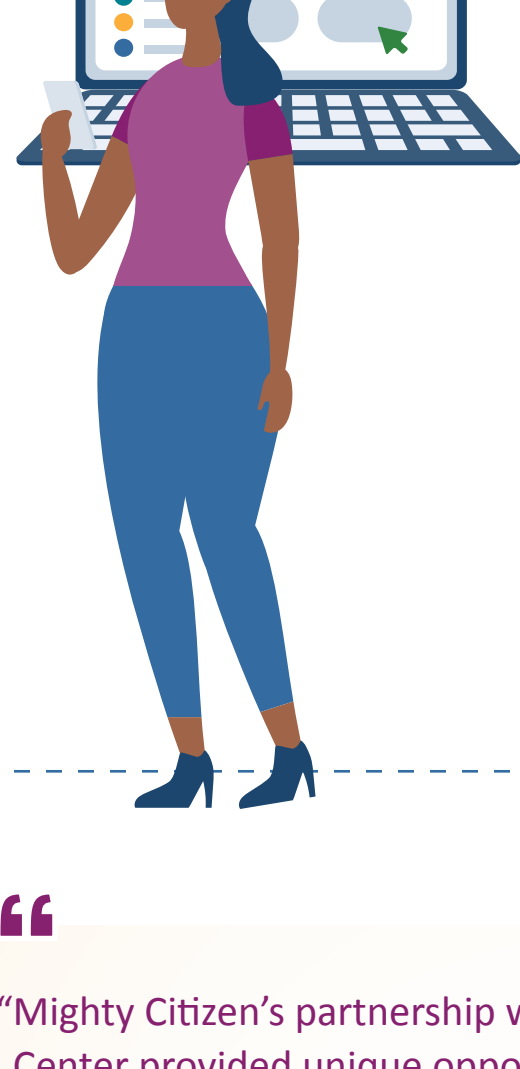
#### Louisiana Department of Education

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is transforming its digital presence to enhance its ability to serve its educational community more effectively. In collaboration with the R14CC and its partner, **Mighty Citizen**, a full-service agency specializing in branding and digital transformations for mission-driven organizations, the LDOE is conducting interviews, developing a new brand identity, redesigning the website, and implementing a comprehensive communications strategy. These enhancements aim to improve accessibility, information organization, and communications effectiveness. These changes will empower school systems, educators, families, and students by providing the resources they need to succeed, contributing to the improvement of education in Louisiana.



#### Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) was ready for a digital makeover. To ensure the new website would meet the needs of its users, TEA collaborated with R14CC and our digital transformation partners at **Mighty Citizen** to research the current state of TEA’s online presence. The team gathered information and observations from TEA’s constituents through focus groups and surveys and analyzed TEA’s existing website content, technology infrastructure, and digital marketing efforts. The insights gained enabled TEA to develop a clear and informed request for proposals to develop the new website. This data also allowed the agency to evaluate potential vendors based on their ability to meet specific needs and align with TEA’s goals. We provided TEA with an internal communications plan to ensure a smooth transition to the new website.



“Mighty Citizen’s partnership with the Region 14 Comprehensive Center provided unique opportunities to lead in-depth discovery processes with the Louisiana Department of Education and the Texas Education Agency as these state agencies began redesigning their websites. Our strong collaboration resulted in website redesign recommendations grounded in innovative digital transformation best practices. The website development plans for these state agencies focus on technical aspects of user experience, website implementation, and communication approaches for long-term success and sustainability.”

—Nick Weynand, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Mighty Citizen

**Footnote 1:** Neha Chhabra, “Digital Transformation and Organizational Change,” December 2023, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376514351\\_Digital\\_Transformation\\_and\\_Organizational\\_Change](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376514351_Digital_Transformation_and_Organizational_Change).