

# Schoolwide eBinder Planning Process Overview

## Decide to Implement eBinders Schoolwide

School administrator reviews AVID's [eBinders.net](http://eBinders.net) website and decides to implement eBinders schoolwide.

**Get  
Ready!**

### Establish a Technology Leadership Committee (TLC)

Assemble an interdisciplinary team to guide the planning and implementation of eBinders schoolwide.

**Get  
Set!**

### Gather Information to Inform Your Plan

- Research and test the tools and skills needed to use an eBinder.
- Assess the school's technology infrastructure.
- Assess the campus culture regarding technology and new initiatives.

### Design the eBinder

- Choose apps and websites to build an eBinder.
- Determine expectations for the use of eBinders.
- Assess training needs and available resources.

### Pilot eBinders

- Test eBinders in an authentic classroom setting.
- Gather information about what works well and what needs to be improved.
- Develop training methods, content, and support resources for pilot teachers and students.

One  
Semester

One  
Semester

**Go!**

### Implement Schoolwide

- Refine your eBinder implementation plan based on lessons learned during the pilot, and then roll it out schoolwide.

## Introduction

The *eBinder Planning Guide* is a tool for teams of administrators and teachers focused on developing a **Schoolwide eBinder Strategy**. Since every school has a unique blend of instructional goals, available technology, and culture, this document is intended to be used as a guide or coaching tool, rather than a lockstep prescription. Based on the best practices of successful eBinder implementations at AVID middle schools and high schools, this document guides teams through the process of researching apps, training staff, piloting, and then implementing eBinders and eCornell notes schoolwide.

This document, together with AVID's [eBinders.net](http://eBinders.net) website, is designed for schools that have a one-to-one (1:1) ratio of students to devices. Ideally, students should carry the same device throughout the school day and take it home each night, just as they would with a paper binder. While there are some aspects of eBinders that all schools would benefit from, such as file organization and saving and sharing work in the cloud, pushing eBinders into a non-1:1 environment typically results in students carrying both digital and paper binders. This is not an effective use of time and resources for students or teachers and will very likely result in greater confusion and less organization.

## Technology Leadership Committee

A key driver of a successful schoolwide implementation is gaining staff buy-in. To help achieve this goal, assemble an ad hoc Technology Leadership Committee (TLC), made up of administrators and teachers from different subject areas and/or grade levels. It is the work of the TLC to follow the process outlined in this document to research, design, and test an eBinder implementation that makes the most sense for your school.

For AVID schools, eBinders are a great way to support the work already being done by the site team in providing opportunities for students to demonstrate the effective use of student-based technologies. It is imperative that the site team and TLC align their work as they drive the schoolwide implementation of eBinders. The TLC cannot operate effectively without coordination and cooperation with the site team and vice versa.

For administrators, building the TLC is a crucial first step in implementing eBinders schoolwide. A brief description of each member's role is listed below.

### **School Administrator**

This role should be filled by a principal, or an assistant principal, who will provide the consistent vision and leadership needed to implement eBinders schoolwide. The administrator leads the TLC as they work through the process outlined in this guide, delegating tasks to committee members and facilitating discussions. The administrator is also responsible for communicating the plan for, and benefits of, eBinders to the appropriate district personnel, and perhaps most importantly, to families and the community.

### **Content-Area Teachers**

Recruit three to five content-area teachers who represent different subjects and grade levels. These are not necessarily the most tech-savvy teachers on campus. They are passionate educators who are respected by their peers and willing to coach others. It is the content teacher's role to work collaboratively with the rest of the TLC and "think outside of the box," as the team looks for creative ways to address the prospective problems that arise with new technology implementations.

### **Technology Specialist**

The technology specialist is familiar with the technology infrastructure on your campus and can make recommendations about what is technically possible for your eBinder implementation. How many students and teachers can your Internet connection support at once? Do the computers need to be updated before they can run a certain note-taking program? The technology specialist should be able to find answers to these types of questions. He or she may already serve in this role as their primary job, maintaining the technology and providing support to teachers and students, as necessary. He or she may be a teacher who knows about IT, or who is confident in his or her ability to track down the answers that you'll be looking for along the way. It's also possible that a member of your district's IT staff can fill this role.

## Phase 1: Information Gathering

### Goals

1. Research and test apps and websites to include in your eBinder.
2. Assess your school's technology infrastructure.
3. Assess campus culture regarding classroom technology.

### Tasks

Workflow	File Organization	Apps	Strategy
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research cloud storage services, like Google and Dropbox, so teachers and students can save and share their work.</li> <li>2. Research class website platforms for teachers to share class information with students.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research best practices for naming files.</li> <li>2. Prototype and test folder structures for classes, teachers, and students.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Test apps and/or websites for note-taking and calendaring.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Technology</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the technology infrastructure in place at your school.</li> </ol> <p><b>Culture</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess your school culture in regards to technology and implementing new initiatives.</li> </ol>

### Considerations

Workflow	File Organization	Apps	Strategy
<p><b>Cloud Storage</b></p> <p>Google Apps for Education (<a href="#">GAFE</a>) is a great place to start as you explore cloud storage options. It's available on all devices and offers a powerful suite of tools that work well for eBinders. Check with your district to see if you already have access to GAFE, or if it is something that could be set up. You can also expand the functionality of GAFE by installing add-ons that automatically create folders and share documents. <a href="#">Dropbox</a> is another popular choice because it is easy to use and syncs with most note-taking apps. It is also possible that your district has its own cloud for teachers and students to use.</p> <p><b>Class Website</b></p> <p>Teachers should have an online presence to communicate with students and their families. A class website allows teachers to post announcements and files for students to download, while serving as a place for students to turn in assignments. If your district provides a website for each teacher, then that may be an option. You might also consider using GAFE or some other free website builder, such as <a href="#">Edublogs</a>, <a href="#">Weebly</a>, or <a href="#">Wikispaces</a> to host sites.</p>	<p><b>File Naming</b></p> <p>The links listed in the associated Resources section are a good place to learn about best practices for naming files.</p> <p><b>Folder Structure</b></p> <p>The way that students set up their folder structure in the cloud becomes their eBinder. Ideally, all classes should use the same—or very similar—folder structure, so students know where to find and save files from class-to-class. Experiment with different ways to organize folders to find out what will work best for your school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider including an Inbox folder for students to quickly save files, and then organize them into the correct folders later.</li> <li>• If your school uses GAFE, there are Google Drive add-ons to help you manage folder organization from an administrative level. They are <a href="#">Hapara</a> and <a href="#">Doctopus</a>.</li> <li>• If you test <a href="#">Evernote</a> as a note-taking and cloud storage tool, research the way that it uses folders and tags to organize files. It works differently than other tools that you may be exploring.</li> </ul>	<p>Have your team research potential apps and websites, and then test them. Record what each does well and any drawbacks that you find.</p> <p><b>Note-Taking</b></p> <p>When testing note-taking apps, check which cloud services they back up to at the outset. An eBinder is much easier to manage when student notes are automatically saved to the cloud service used by your school. If your school uses touchscreen devices, test note-taking apps that support handwriting, as this can be a powerful tool in Math and Science classes.</p> <p><b>Calendaring</b></p> <p>There are three layers of calendar usage to consider in your research: school, class, and personal. The personal calendar is a replacement for a student's planner, in which daily assignments and personal events are recorded. The class and school calendars are managed by adults and are available for students to subscribe to, but not edit. The GAFE calendar is a great option because users can create and subscribe to unlimited calendars. You may need two different calendar tools to achieve both of these goals.</p>	<p><b>Technology</b></p> <p>The term “technology infrastructure” refers to the hardware and software that support the workflow and storage of information at your school. Learn as much as you can about the capabilities of your student and teacher devices, Internet connection, software/apps, and central storage platform.</p> <p><b>Culture</b></p> <p>Getting all staff on the same page with a new, schoolwide initiative involving technology can be a difficult task given the varying skill levels and attitudes that teachers have regarding teaching with technology. Strong administrator leadership is crucial to schoolwide eBinder success. As you build a Technology Leadership Committee, work together to make an accurate assessment of the staff culture on your campus.</p>

## Phase 1: Information Gathering

### Guiding Questions

Workflow	File Organization	Apps	Strategy
<p><b>Cloud Storage</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How much free storage space does each service provide?</li> <li>2. Does your district provide cloud-based storage that you can use? If so, will it work with your other eBinder apps?</li> <li>3. How easy is it to share files with someone else?</li> <li>4. Can multiple people edit a document? ...At the same time?</li> <li>5. How easy is it to set appropriate levels of access permissions for files and folders to support teachers grading binders?</li> </ol> <p><b>Class Website</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How easy is it to create and edit a website using each platform?</li> <li>2. Does the platform provide free website hosting? If not, what are the fees?</li> <li>3. What customer support resources are available for each platform? Are they highly rated by other users?</li> <li>4. How do the features of each platform compare?</li> <li>5. Look for examples of effective and engaging teacher websites. What elements do they include that teachers, students, and families at your school could benefit from?</li> </ol>	<p><b>File Naming</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Computers auto-sort files alphanumerically (i.e., numbers and symbols precede letters). How might this affect your long-term file naming strategy? Will similar file names need to be used next month? ...Next year?</li> <li>2. When students turn in a digital assignment, how would teachers like the submissions to be listed? ...By assignment name? ...By student name? ...By date? ...By period? Rank these in order of importance. As a staff, come to consensus on a file naming convention that all will agree to use.</li> </ol> <p><b>Folder Structure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you find any examples of student folder organization being used by other schools? How might they apply to your implementation?</li> <li>2. How will sharing files between teachers and students, as well as each teacher's ability to digitally grade student work, affect student folder structure?</li> <li>3. What will be the common folder structure for classes on your campus? How will you work with school staff to come to consensus?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you have money to spend on apps? If so, what is your budget?</li> </ol> <p><b>Note-Taking</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which apps have a fully featured toolset, while also being easy to use?</li> <li>2. Which cloud service(s) does each app back up to?</li> </ol> <p><b>Calendaring</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can calendars be shared or subscribed to?</li> <li>2. Can a single user create multiple calendars within one account?</li> <li>3. How can events be color-coded to improve organization?</li> <li>4. Can multiple calendar events be viewed at the same time?</li> <li>5. How do reminders (i.e., alerts) work?</li> <li>6. If you test an assignment tracking app, like <a href="#">myHomework</a>, will it work with your school's daily schedule? Does it support A/B days, block scheduling, etc.?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Technology</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What type of devices will teachers and students be using? ...iPads? ...Chromebooks? ...PCs?</li> <li>2. Do students take their devices home? If so, do they have Internet access? How reliable is it?</li> <li>3. If students do not have reliable Internet access at home, how can the school guarantee offline access to assignments, so students can complete homework?</li> <li>4. What expectations do you have for students using their eBinders at home?</li> <li>5. Does your school have wireless Internet? If so, does it have the bandwidth and coverage to support everyone on campus using their devices at the same time? Are there an adequate number of access points to allow Internet access from anywhere on campus?</li> <li>6. How are broken devices repaired or replaced?</li> <li>7. What is your schoolwide strategy for dealing with students downloading and using non-relevant apps?</li> </ol> <p><b>Culture</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How tech-savvy is your staff?</li> <li>2. What level of experience does each teacher have in teaching with technology?</li> </ol>

### Resources

Workflow	File Organization	Apps	Strategy
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Classroom by Google</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Edublogs</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Edublog Awards</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">Edmodo</a></li> <li>5. <a href="#">Wikispaces</a></li> <li>6. <a href="#">Weebly</a></li> <li>7. <a href="#">GAFE Administration</a></li> </ol>	<p><b>File Naming</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">File Naming: A four-part video series</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">An Elevator Pitch for File Naming Conventions</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Digital Recordkeeping Best Practices for Directory and File Naming</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">File Naming and Version Control</a></li> </ol> <p><b>Folder Structure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sample folder structures on <a href="#">eBinders.net</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Going Paperless with Evernote – Webinar Replay</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Google Drive add-ons</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. App listings on <a href="#">eBinders.net</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Ways to Evaluate Educational Apps</a></li> </ol>	<p><b>Technology</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Test your school's upload and download speeds</a></li> </ol> <p><b>Culture</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Administrators</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Technology Together: School Analysis Scaffold</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Technology Together: Initial Teacher Technology Use Survey</a></li> </ol>

## Phase 2: Designing

### Goals

1. Choose tools to build your eBinder.
2. Determine expectations for the use of each tool.
3. Test your apps and file organization system with a small group of staff and students.
4. Assess training needs and available resources.

### Tasks

Workflow	File Organization	Apps	Strategy
<p><b>Cloud Storage</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose a cloud storage service for schoolwide usage.</li> <li>2. Determine minimum expectations for use of the cloud by staff and students.</li> </ol> <p><b>Class Website</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose several suggested website platforms for teachers to use.</li> <li>2. Determine minimum expectations for teacher/class websites.</li> </ol>	<p><b>File Naming</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine a schoolwide file naming system.</li> </ol> <p><b>Folder Structure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine a schoolwide folder organization structure.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose apps that your site will use for:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Note-taking</li> <li>b. Calendaring</li> <li>c. Cloud storage</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Determine minimum expectations for use of each app.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Training</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine the training needs of your staff based on your assessment of the school culture, technology infrastructure, and the tools (e.g., apps, file names, workflows, etc.) that you've chosen to build into your eBinder.</li> <li>2. Assess the resources available to provide training.</li> </ol>

### Considerations

Workflow	File Organization	Apps	Strategy
<p><b>Cloud Storage</b></p> <p>Some teachers may use the cloud with their students more than others, depending on their level of comfort with the technology. Communicate minimum expectations for all teachers regarding cloud usage. This will raise the proficiency level of the less tech-savvy teachers on campus, while also standardizing, and therefore simplifying, usage for students as they move from class-to-class.</p> <p><b>Class Website</b></p> <p>Ideally, every teacher will use the same website platform and template so that finding information is easy for students and families. While different subjects will have different needs for a website, every site should include the same basic information. Things like contact information, class syllabi, and a personal description are all key elements of a good class website.</p>	<p>Creating a useful file naming system and folder structure can take several iterations before you get it just right. Put together a few different samples and test them with students and staff to find what will work best.</p> <p><b>File Naming</b></p> <p>For a schoolwide file naming system to work, the names need to be short enough that students and teachers will take the time to create them, while simultaneously descriptive enough that it's clear what the file is. In addition, the order of the different parts of a file name affects how your computer sorts them in a list. Design your file naming system so that it is easy to understand and lists files in a way that is useful for teachers and students.</p> <p><b>Folder Structure</b></p> <p>Use a "digital shake test" when grading eBinders by checking that all files are organized in folders.</p>	<p>Before you decide on the final suite of apps, assemble a small group of students and staff members to quickly test them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine a plan for testing to ensure that you receive feedback on the core app functions and processes necessary for a schoolwide implementation.</li> <li>• Make changes, if needed, based on their feedback.</li> <li>• Use student and teacher feedback to inform your training plan for staff and students.</li> </ul>	<p>Compare your Phase 1 findings about the technology infrastructure and school culture with the skills and attitudes that your staff will need to implement eBinders schoolwide. Based on this comparison, determine what opportunities exist for training and support.</p> <p>Address the various levels of prior knowledge and experience that your staff will bring to the table regarding teaching with technology. Whole-staff professional learning may be appropriate to train all involved in some aspects of an eBinder. However, it's important to consider other training methods, as well. Small-group, differentiated instruction is a powerful way to teach learners of various skill levels, while also nurturing personal relationships and building confidence. To support teachers after their initial training, consider a coaching model that utilizes tech-savvy teachers and students already on your campus.</p>

## Phase 2: Designing

### Guiding Questions

Workflow	File Organization	Apps	Strategy
<p><b>Cloud Storage</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are your minimum expectations for how students and teachers will use the cloud?</li> <li>2. What is the recommended system for sharing files? ...For students to turn in assignments? ...For teachers to give feedback to students?</li> </ol> <p><b>Class Website</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What minimum information will every class website include? Does your district already have a list?</li> <li>2. Are there any suggested, but not required, features for teachers to include on their class websites? ...Discussion forums, files for students and parents to download, examples of student work, etc.?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How will you assess eBinders?</li> </ol> <p>Based on your testing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you need to adjust your file naming system or folder structure?</li> <li>2. What parts of file organization do you need to specifically address with training?</li> </ol>	<p>Based on your testing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are there any apps that need to be replaced?</li> <li>2. What features of each app need to be specifically addressed with training?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What training opportunities exist?</li> <li>2. How much time do you have to spend on eBinder training?</li> <li>3. How much money do you have to spend on eBinder training?</li> <li>4. Do you have access to a training space that will meet your technology needs? ...Reliable Internet access, a projector and screen (if needed), easy access to outlets for charging devices, reconfigurable furniture, etc.?</li> <li>5. Do you have tech-savvy teachers who could be coaches to fellow teachers?</li> <li>6. How much instructional time can be allocated to training students in how to use their eBinders?</li> <li>7. How do you plan to support teachers after they have received training?</li> <li>8. How can students play a role in providing tech support to staff and fellow students?</li> </ol>

### Resources

Workflow	File Organization	Apps	Strategy
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">ISTE Standards for Coaches</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">ISTE Standards for Teachers</a></li> </ol>

## Phase 3: Piloting

### Goals

1. Test eBinders in an authentic classroom setting.
2. Gather information about what works well and what needs to be improved.
3. Develop training methods, content, and support resources involved with the pilot for teachers and students.

### Tasks

1. Develop training for pilot teachers.
2. Identify pilot teachers and classes.
3. Train teachers.
4. Conduct pilot.
5. Provide support.
6. Review lessons learned and iterate your implementation plan.

### Considerations

#### Develop training for pilot teachers

Work together with your Technology Leadership Committee to create learning objectives for the pilot training. Then, choose a format for the training that will meet the needs of your participants, while also achieving your learning objectives. Training pilot teachers is also a good way to test how you will eventually train your entire staff. When planning the training, consider using a blended learning approach, in which face-to-face instruction is supplemented with digital resources, such as short videos, links to websites, podcasts, etc. These could be found online, or you can make them yourself. A blended approach offers several advantages: anytime/anywhere access for learning or review, a consistent message delivered to all users, and online resources that can be used to teach students and staff. Providing these online resources is an effective way to support less tech-savvy teachers who may be apprehensive about teaching their students how to use the eBinder. As you develop training and support materials, keep in mind that effective technology training includes plenty of hands-on experience, collaboration, feedback, and reflection.

#### Identify pilot teachers and classes

To help achieve the goals of the pilot, recruit a small, cross-curricular group of core subject-area teachers who have experience teaching with technology and are fairly tech-savvy. Then, conduct the pilot with one or two classes per teacher.

#### Train teachers

Be sure that staff and students understand the goals of the pilot and are prepared to deal with the inevitable hiccups along the way.

#### Conduct pilot

The timing and length of the pilot depend on when you plan to implement eBinders schoolwide. Determine your target “go live” date, and then backwards plan from there. We suggest that you run the pilot for at least one semester, so you are able to collect enough data to inform your schoolwide implementation. Additionally, consider the amount of time that you will need after the pilot to analyze the lessons learned and make any necessary changes to your eBinder before training staff.

During the pilot, be sure to document what is working well and what needs to be improved before going schoolwide. Everyone involved in the pilot should take part in this, including students and their families, to benefit from as many perspectives as possible.

#### Provide support

Create a coaching system to support teachers and students as questions arise during the pilot. Part of this will be tech support and part will be helping teachers use eBinders effectively with their curriculum. In addition to periodic formal meetings to monitor the progress of the eBinder implementation, consider leveraging the Technology Leadership Committee to support teachers and students, as needed, during the school day. Providing just-in-time support will also address the cultural aspect of an eBinder implementation by providing personal learning opportunities when they're needed most. Include students on the support team, as well. They are great at discovering new ways to use technology and can help with some of the more mundane tasks, like running updates.

#### Review lessons learned

The Technology Leadership Committee then reviews the pilot and discusses lessons learned. Use these lessons to refine your plan and move forward with the schoolwide implementation.

## Glossary

Access Permissions	Most file systems have methods to assign permissions or access rights to specific users and groups of users. These systems control the ability of the users to view or make changes to the contents of the file system.
Access Point	An antenna that allows wireless devices, such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones, to connect to a wired network using Wi-Fi.
Bandwidth	The amount of data that can be transferred digitally.
Blended Learning	A method of learning that combines face-to-face with online learning experiences.
Cloud Storage	A service that stores data remotely and makes it available on devices with an Internet connection.
Coverage	The area on your campus where wireless Internet access is available.
Device	In the context of the <i>eBinder Planning Guide</i> , the type of computer or tablet being used by students and staff.
Digital Shake Test	A shake test refers to a method of checking three-ring, paper binders, in which the binder is held upside-down and gently shaken to see if any papers fall out. A digital shake test is a quick look through a student's file organization to see if any files have not been saved to their correct folders.
eBinder	A collection of apps and/or websites that work together to organize digital Cornell notes, class documents, assignments, and events to maximize accessibility and collaboration.
Folder Structure	The overall organization of files and folders.
Google Drive Add-Ons	Apps that can be installed on your Google Drive account to add functionality.
Iterative Process	A process of repeated cycles of development, in which lessons learned from previous cycles are applied and tested.
Learning Objectives	Statements that describe who the learner is, what the learner will be able to do, to what degree of success, and under what conditions.
One-to-One	A ratio describing the number of students per device, which is often written as 1:1.
Schoolwide AVID	AVID is schoolwide when a strong AVID system transforms the Instruction, Systems, Leadership, and Culture of a school, ensuring college readiness for all AVID Elective students and improved academic performance for all students based on increased opportunities.
Tags	Keywords associated with a file that describe the content of the file and are used to search.
Information Technology Infrastructure	In the context of the <i>eBinder Planning Guide</i> , the composite hardware, software, network resources, and services available to support the operation and management of your eBinder implementation.
Website Host	Stores a website on its servers and makes them available on the Internet.
Website Platform	In the content of the <i>eBinder Planning Guide</i> , an online service that provides templates and plug-ins for educators and students to create individual or classroom websites—with examples of well-known platforms including Facebook, Google+, Edmodo, and blogging platforms, such as WordPress.