

PTACHC Technology Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: LINDSAY UNGER, VIVIAN MOLINA, KIMYA DAVANI, SAMARY RAMIREZ,
ANDREW AVERSA
BOARD SUPPORT: KARINA FISHER

Ed tech industry scrambles to fight a wave of bills to limit screen time in schools

Lawmakers in 16 states are debating restrictions on classroom technology, challenging the \$164 billion education technology industry.

School Districts Sue Tech Giants for the Profit-Driven Exploitation of Youth Mental Health

Report: 96% of K-12 Apps Share Student Data With Third Parties

According to the nonprofit Internet Safety Labs, most ed-tech software tools share student data with third parties, in many cases without user consent, and schools should treat data privacy as an enterprise IT problem.

iPads in Kindergarten, YouTube on Breaks: The School Screen-Time Battle

Mounting evidence shows that excessive computer use can harm children, so parents are cutting back at home. Now, the debate has shifted to the classroom.

npr WAMU 88.5
NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

The risks of AI in schools outweigh the benefits, report says

B B C

'A predator in your home': Mothers say chatbots encouraged their sons to kill themselves

Big Tech is paying millions to train teachers on AI, in a push to bring chatbots into classrooms

“

Technology can enhance learning and it can distract from learning. NYU IRL is not about completely disconnecting from the modern world or rejecting the needs of a modern education. Instead, it challenges faculty to adopt intentional strategies about device use in the classroom so that learning—built on human connection—is maximized.”

Mark L. Siegel
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Baltimore's top educator wants to end the iPad kid epidemic

Recent Trends in College Readiness and Subsequent College Performance

- Three-quarters of faculty respondents report that their college students are now less prepared when it comes to critical thinking, problem-solving, and close reading and analysis skills than before the pandemic. There is deep concern among faculty that these challenges are translating into less academic success for students.
- Roughly half of faculty respondents report their course and grading rigor had decreased in recent years, largely due to policy changes, pressure from students and institutional administration, and personal empathy for students struggling with preparation and/or mental health challenges.
- Notably, more than 75% of faculty respondents took the time to offer open-ended survey feedback, suggesting significant faculty interest in the topic. One faculty member notes, *"If I retained standards, I would fail over half of my class. I am curving grades 20% this semester just to get 10% of the class into the A range and 3% into the B range."*

[College Board, Recent Trends in College Readiness, 2024](#)

A focus on improving students' critical reading skills, while essential, is missing from many conversations about student success, Alice S. Horning writes.

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KPMG US is piloting a new intern program focused less on technical skills and more on critical thinking

"Instead, the program will emphasize what the company calls "human-centric" skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and team leadership. The new model reflects what KPMG US says are the capabilities that increasingly distinguish top performers: judgment, adaptability, and the ability to work through ambiguous problems with other people."

01/20/2026

Senate Holds Hearing on the Impact of Screen Time on America's Youth

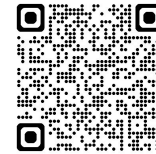
On January 15, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing entitled: **"Plugged Out: Examining the Impact of Technology on America's Youth."** The witnesses included:

- Dr. Jean Twenge, Professor of Psychology, San Diego State University
- Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath, Director, LME Global
- Ms. Emily Cherkin, Author and Founder of The Screentime Consultant
- Dr. Jenny Radesky, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Michigan Medical School

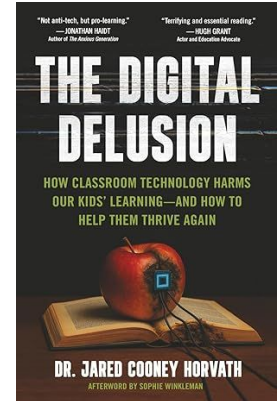


"Gen Z is the first generation in modern history to underperform us on basically every cognitive measure we have, from basic attention to memory to literacy to numeracy to executive function ...even though they go to more school than we did. So Why...it appears to be the tools that we are using to drive learning." - Dr. Jared Horvath (Neuroscientist) at the Senate Hearing

Written Testimony



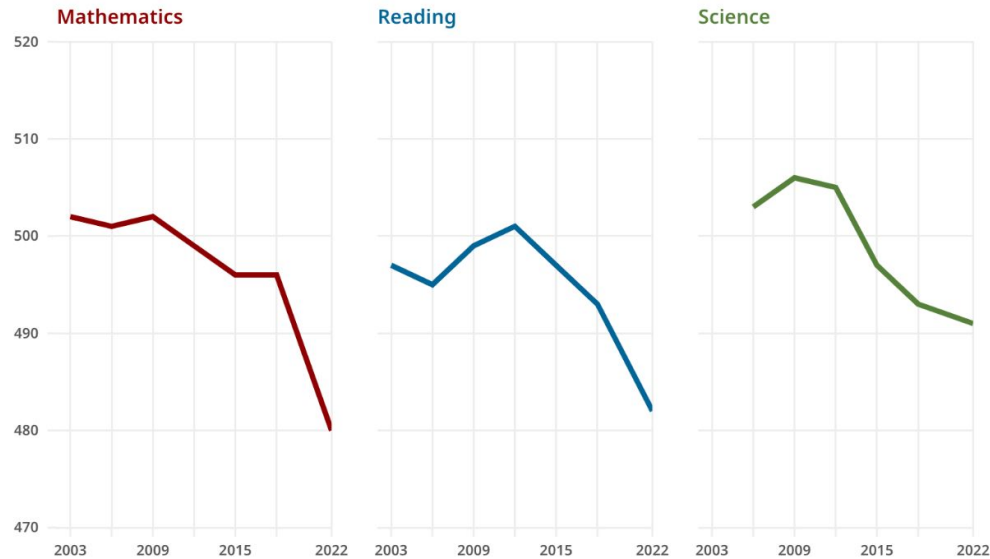
<https://tinyurl.com/33ayb3he>



“PISA is the world’s largest international comparative survey of 15-year-old students, assessing the extent to which they have acquired key knowledge and skills essential for full participation in social and economic life. ” - OECD Website

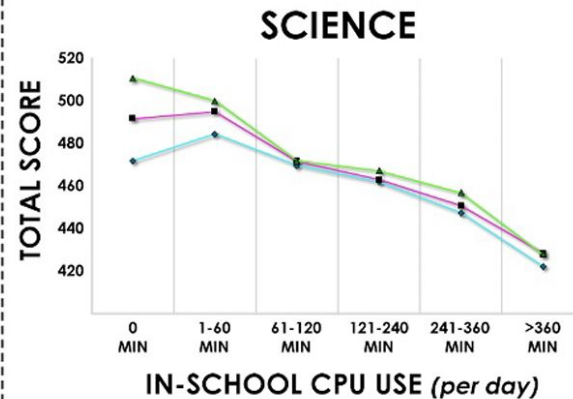
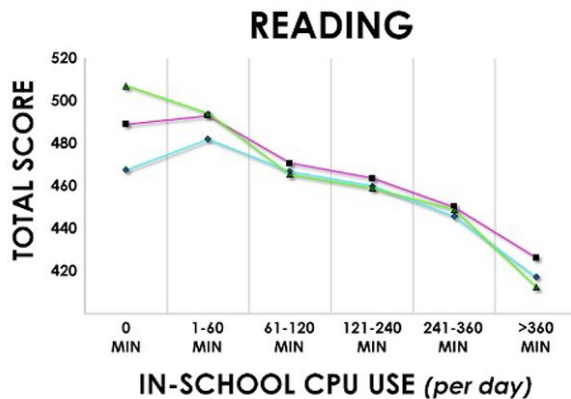
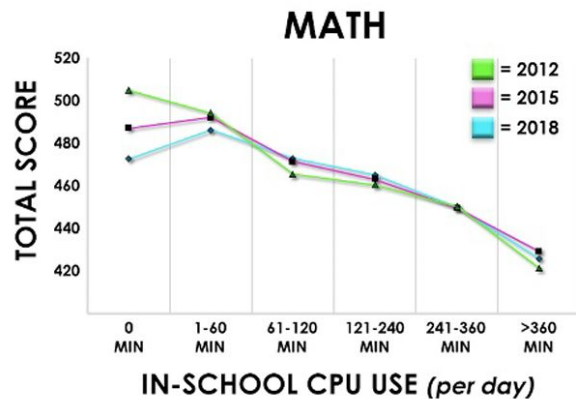
Trends in mathematics, reading and science performance

PISA test scores, OECD average



Source: OECD (2023), PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education.

PISA: ALL COUNTRIES



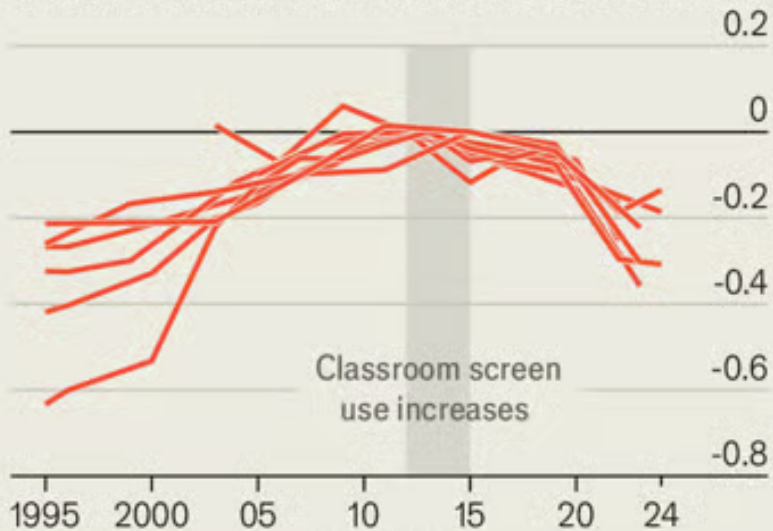
“In 2012, 2015, and 2018 PISA asked students how much time they spent on digital devices during a typical school day. When the answers were compared with test scores...the more time students spent on screens at school, the further their scores fell.” - Dr. Horvath

Pixelated

1

US, average maths scores in national tests

Standard deviations from each test's 2012-15 peak

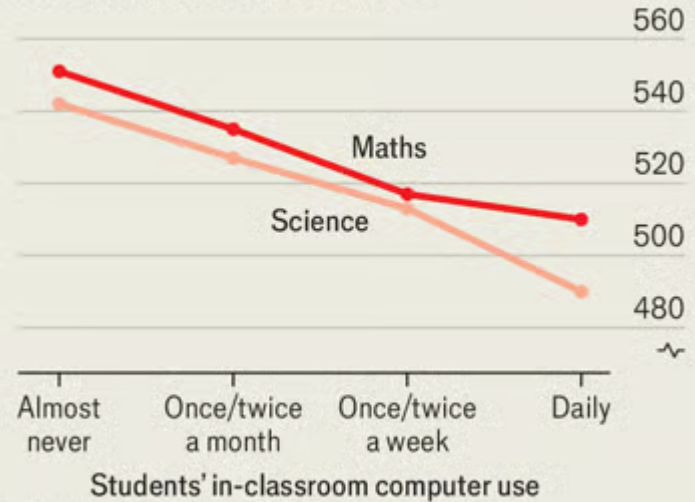


Sources: American Enterprise Institute;
National Centre for Education Statistics

Less than advertised

2

United States, average test scores*
of fourth-grade students, 2019



*Trends in International Mathematics
and Science Study, 1,000=maximum
Source: International Association for the
Evaluation of Educational Achievement

Figures from The Economist, [Ed tech is profitable. It's also mostly useless.](#) Jan. 22, 2026



Student Personal Device Use in Schools

Jump to: [Policy](#) | [Consequences](#) | [Timeline](#) | [Resources](#)

On Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025, the Howard County Board of Education [approved adjustments](#) to Policy 8080 – Responsible Use of Technology, Digital Tools, and Social Media, and the [Student Code of Conduct](#) that is intended to reduce the use of personal devices by students during the student day..



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: William J. Barnes, Superintendent

DATE: February 12, 2026

SUBJECT: Middle School Classroom Chromebook Pilot

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that Ellicott Mills and Hammond middle schools will be piloting a Chromebook model where devices are primarily kept in carts at school starting at the beginning of April and lasting until the end of this school year. The goal of the pilot is to study the implications this change will have on instructional practices, learning, access and breakage rates.

Gemini AI for High School Students

Effective Jan. 27, 2026, all high school students will have [access to Gemini AI](#), an HCPSS-approved digital tool that helps students explore ideas, solve problems, and engage in creative and critical thinking.

PTACHC Technology Committee Description

The Technology Committee exists to advocate for technology use for all students in HCPSS that 1) is safe 2) prioritizes wellbeing, and 3) effectively improves their learning outcomes. This includes the hardware provided to students, the applications leveraged and accessible (EdTech, AI, social media, web browsers, etc) by students on that hardware, and the policies regulating personal device usage. The committee is also invested in supporting the community with educational resources and programming to help parents and caregivers make safe and healthy technology choices for their families since student health and wellbeing at home impact student performance in the classroom.

Main Objectives:

- liaise with the BOE and HCPSS Central office to advocate for tech use that aligns with our motion
- recommend formal positions to represent PTACHC on tech-related policy considerations
- create and/or disseminate educational materials and programs to PTA member schools regarding safe and healthy tech use

Action 1: Review this motion with your PTA to vote in May

PTACHC advocates for technology use for all students in HCPSS that 1) is safe 2) prioritizes wellbeing, and 3) effectively improves their learning outcomes.

Action 2: Advise your PTA that a survey is coming that requires timely distribution support

Survey Goals:

1. To assess to what extent the HCPSS community perceives that the district-issued technology in HCPSS 1) is safe 2) prioritizes wellbeing, and 3) effectively improves their learning outcomes
2. To identify points of advocacy and education for the PTACHC Technology Committee

Digital Education Resources

Digital Education Resources

Research and tools compiled by the PTAC/HC Technology Committee
technology@ptac-hc.org

Learn about how technology impacts development, wellbeing, and education

• Books

- [The Anxious Generation](#) - Published in Spring 2024, this book has had a global impact. It lays out the impact of technology on childhood and how it is causing an epidemic of mental illness. The author also created a [website](#) with all the data/graphics supporting his book and he did a [talk at NYU](#) where he answered "Why is Gen Z Different?", covering many of the topics in his book.
- [The Digital Delusion](#) - Published in December 2023 and written by a former teacher turned neuroscientist, this book lays out the research on how EdTech is failing our education system and what we can do about it. Watch [this webinar](#) with the author where he discusses the book shortly after its release and his [vocal testimony](#) as an expert witness at the Senate hearing on children and technology in January 2026.
- [Better Than Real Life](#) - Published in 2025 by a child and adolescent psychologist, this book discusses how persuasive design is integrated into technology and social media, pulling kids away from developmentally healthy activities at home and at school.

• Movies

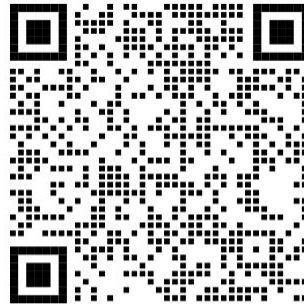
- [The Social Dilemma](#) - excellent documentary on Netflix where tech executives talk about how their products were made to be addictive and are dangerous to kids. Focus is primarily social media. The execs share their own limitations for their children.
- [Childhood 2.0](#) - popular documentary on the challenges kids face - cyberbullying, online predators, suicidal ideation, and more - in a tech-based childhood

• Podcasts

- [ScreenStrong Families](#) - Host Melanie Hampe, BSN, features guests who simplify medical science regarding tech use and provide practical solutions.
- [Scrolling to Death](#) - Podcast that started off focusing on the negative mental health impact of social media but the topics are now much more robust. She brings on various types of professionals to share their expertise on mental health, child development, classroom behavior, EdTech, government policies, etc. all related to children and tech

Learn practical ways for managing children's technology use

- [Family IT Guy](#) - website made by a cyber security expert with NSA experience. Provides extensive guides on how to set up protective settings on various forms of platforms and devices.
- [Parenting in a Tech World](#) - This is a facebook group moderated by Bark. It's a community of parents raising issues and seeking advice on how to navigate the digital lives of their families. It's extremely eye opening to the challenges parents are facing and practical in terms of the advice circulated.
- [Disrupt Young Minds](#) - focus around helping parents navigate the risks of kids encountering porn online. Also has a [video series](#) developed by a pediatrician with useful tips for helping children with digital overuse.
- [Protect Young Eyes](#) - organization dedicated to equipping parents with research and resources about digital safety
- Parental control products:
 - [Safe Vision app](#) - manages YouTube content so only "whitelisted" sites are available rather than full access to youtube
 - [Game Safe](#) - an app that monitors gaming chat features to alert parents of potentially unsafe/inappropriate conversations
 - [Bark](#) - best known for their Bark phone, which gives parents a very high level of control over the phone but they also make monitoring software parents can apply to other devices
 - [Stronon Mesh Router](#) - a wifi router designed for parents who want enhanced parental controls.
 - To avoid reliance on device-level parental controls, add an extra layer of protection by using a router with advanced parental controls.



t.ly/UKxJ3

Join the Technology Committee!
technology@ptachc.org