

Education technology is effective when it is **centered on learning, students are protected online, and transparent, local decision-making guides implementation.**

Centered on Learning: Education technology should be centered on student learning needs, guided by teachers, and built with evidence-based practices that prioritize active learning and prepare students for the digital world.

- Education technology helps teachers differentiate instruction, assess student understanding in real time, and create time for personalized small-group and individual instruction.
- Education technology helps prepare students for the workforce, as employers expect students to be fluent with digital collaboration tools, online research, data literacy, and increasingly, AI.
- Education technology enables students with disabilities, families with language barriers, and students without home access to fully participate in modern learning environments.
- Schools promote healthy digital habits and balance, helping students know when to use technology for learning, when to take breaks, and how to manage distractions while maintaining well-being and offline connections.
- A 2021 Institute of Education Sciences [report](#) found that the vast majority of public schools surveyed said digital tools help students engage more actively in learning (93%), become more independent (92%), learn at their own pace (90%), think critically (85%), and collaborate with peers (83%).
- *CoSN and our members are focused on education technology that advances learning, ensuring it is used appropriately and not to access recreational activities such as social media.*

Students Are Protected Online: A strong framework of federal and state laws, school policies, and security safeguards protect students online. This includes both online protection as well as physical and administrative data safeguards.

- Students are protected by federal law, including the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), as well as at least 40 state laws that establish clear requirements for data collection, parental consent, security, vendor obligations, breach notification, and data deletion.
- For example, CIPA requires schools receiving E-Rate support for internet access or internal connections to adopt and enforce internet safety policies that include technology protection measures (filtering); blocking access to obscene material, child pornography, and content harmful to minors; monitoring the online activities of minors; and educating students about online dangers and appropriate online behavior.
- School districts also implement local safeguards, including vendor contract vetting, cybersecurity protections, and clear policies governing how student information is stored, accessed, and deleted.
- *CoSN establishes clear expectations for education technology leaders through nationally recognized frameworks — such as the [Trusted Learning Environment \(TLE\) Seal](#) and [TLE State Partnership Program](#) — research, and professional development. All of these resources help districts strengthen privacy, cybersecurity, and governance practices.*

Led Locally: School districts, working with parents, teachers, and students, are best positioned to purposefully implement education technology that serves local needs.

- Districts nationwide already [demonstrate](#) that technology for learning can be used responsibly, safely, and effectively when implemented intentionally alongside classroom management practices, content filtering and monitoring, educator training, and clear expectations for appropriate use.
- Proactive, transparent communication with parents/guardians about how, when, and why technology is used strengthens trust, reinforces healthy digital habits beyond the classroom, and ensures alignment between family expectations and school policies.
- Because districts vary widely in resources and student needs, decisions about device rules, screen-time expectations, and instructional technology are best made locally rather than through one-size-fits-all mandates, which may unintentionally harm students.
- *As a national association representing thousands of school districts and millions of K-12 students, CoSN brings real-world perspectives about how technology is successfully deployed, managed, and used for K-12 learning.*