

Theresa Katler  
Saco  
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I am very concerned about the amount of time my children are required to be on a screen to have access to a public education in Maine. My 6 yo comes home crying with a headache which she attributes to screen time. I followed up with her concern and have discovered that the majority of teaching for her is done on a large screen in her classroom. Individual learning in math and reading is done on an ipad. Additionally, as it has been quite cold indoor "recess" is watching a movie. Movement breaks are screen based. Extracurriculars are screen based including gym which is done watching YouTube videos. Breakfast time (morning check in) and dismissal are also done in front of the screen. During dismissal the movies have been too scary for my child and she begged her teacher to show something educational instead. She is now performing below grade level with attentional deficiencies despite receiving daily at home practice including in the summer.

My 12 year old is required to use and take home a personal laptop for all of her instruction and homework. The laptop has few school restrictions and parental controls are not allowed. Even though she is an advanced and conscientious student she loses track of time on programs (school based and otherwise) resulting in absurd screentime hours despite my husband and I diligently observing, modeling, and communicating with her about this issue. If we want her to leave the laptop in school instead of bring it home every night she's required to wear a red tag on her laptop bag akin to a scarlet letter which is socially shameful and usually indicates a student has broken school rules.

During the pandemic I homeschooled my 12yo without a screen she was at least a year ahead of her peers who did virtual school when school was reopened. I now see that virtual school is happening in our physical schools. Did we not all sacrifice enough to learn in the pandemic that virtual school was an abject failure of our duty to educate our next generation of citizens? Why are we doing this?

It is no wonder why Maine's ranking has plummeted since giving every kid unstudied access to a 1:1 device. This is a shameful waste of taxpayer money. Shipping huge amounts of money out of Maine for "technology" that is making our kids fall further and further behind.