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Scarborough, Scarborough Alliance for Thoughtful Tech
LD 2052

Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

Thank you for your time and for the work you do on behalf of Maine's students and families. I am writing in strong support of LD 2052.

I am a mother of four children living in Scarborough, and I am increasingly concerned about both the amount of time my children spend on screens during the school day and the quality and effectiveness of that screen use.

As part of the Scarborough Alliance for Thoughtful Technology, parents have been in ongoing communication with district leadership. We have requested actual screen-time data by grade level, yet we have been provided only with estimates. Estimates reflect intention or best practice—not reality. Without concrete data, parents cannot meaningfully understand, evaluate, or engage with how instructional time is actually being spent. We have also been told that tracking this information is not a priority and that educational technology is a rapidly shifting field where “nothing will ever be perfect.” This response is deeply concerning.

My children often come home excited to talk about the “learning games” they play on their Chromebooks. While these apps are frequently promoted as making learning fun, educational games often prioritize engagement over depth of learning. When platforms are designed to keep children clicking, leveling up, and earning rewards, the brain focuses on incentives rather than understanding. Learning in these environments is often shallow and short-lived. Enjoyment matters, but fun is not the same as effective. In many cases—especially for younger students—hands-on activities, discussion, and pencil-and-paper tasks outperform digital games.

Beyond privacy concerns, many of these platforms rely on gamified learning models that mirror the attention-economy strategies used in commercial apps: quick rewards, constant novelty, avatars, badges, and point systems. Research suggests that excessive exposure to these designs can undermine reading stamina, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation, particularly for young children. Gamified systems shape behavior, attention, and motivation in ways that deserve far more scrutiny than they currently receive.

This situation is not unique to Scarborough. Across the nation, parents are being asked to trust systems they cannot see and tools they cannot evaluate. At the same time, many administrators continue to operate under the assumption that educational technology is inherently beneficial. Many parents once believed this as well. However, as more research and reporting emerge, it has become clear that this assumption warrants serious reexamination.

We cannot improve what we do not measure. LD 2052 is a necessary first step toward transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making. Parents and policymakers deserve access to accurate, concrete data about how educational technology is being used in our schools so that we can make choices that truly support student learning, safety, and well-being.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to Maine's families.

Kim Cooper,
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