

Maine remarks

Good afternoon, my name is Andrew Liddell, co-founder of the EdTech Law Center, a consumer protection law firm in Austin, Texas. I am not being paid to be here and am testifying in support of the Resolve. Thank you for having me today.

By the metrics that have traditionally been used to assess educational attainment and youth well-being, the edtech revolution has failed. In the US, beginning in 2012 when one-computer-per-child programs went mainstream, the steady gains in math, science, and reading made over the previous four decades began to rapidly reverse. By 2025, scores had fallen to levels not seen since the 1970s, erasing fifty years of progress. Youth mental health is worse than it has been in decades. And perhaps surprisingly, given that kids spend a greater portion of their day on computers, it is even the case that kids are less computer literate today than they were in 2018.

But why? It's simple: the computers we give to children at school are not designed to help them learn or keep them safe. They are designed instead to serve the business model of the modern internet, in which human behavior is covertly observed and their attention is manipulated for profit. Companies like Google, which pioneered this business model 25 years ago and whose Chromebooks are the *de facto* computer of K-12 education, profit by directing the user's attention wherever it makes Google the most money, irrespective of whether that user is a child in school.

Indeed, a recent court filing references internal Google documents that show the company intentionally targeted schools to close the 80-million-hour gap in viewership hours between any given Thursday, when kids were in school, and any given Saturday,

when they were at home watching YouTube. I have not seen the documents themselves and my firm is not involved in the case. For the record, this is N.D. Cal., case 4:22-cv-0347-YGR, Document 2480, filed November 21, 2025, and the relevant portions appear at blue page numbers 162 to 197, and particularly at blue page numbers 168 to 174. Please read it.

So why are kids doing worse at school? In short, they're distracted, but that's unfair to kids, and ignores the yearslong concerted efforts by some of the most powerful companies on the planet to intentionally manipulate kids' attention away from their studies and toward online videos, games, and social media.

This business model harms more than educational outcomes. My law firm represents families whose privacy rights have been violated by edtech companies so hungry for personal information that they will stop at nothing to get it, including inventing fake theories of consent to rationalize why it's OK to steal from children. And we represent kids who suffer more immediate harms, including young children who have developed debilitating addictions to online video, games, and pornography, and some who have been sexually victimized by adults who found them online, all through computers that their school makes them use and that their parents assumed were safe.

We live in a world where companies like Google know everything about how and how long students use their Chromebooks, while parents, educators, lawmakers, and the public know next to nothing. I therefore strongly support LD 2052 and encourage you to study how computers are actually being used at school.

First, I recommend pulling anonymized logs of network traffic from every school district, which will show which websites are being visited during the school day.

Second, I suggest randomized, controlled, anonymous surveys of classroom teachers, principals, IT administrators, superintendents, parents, and students, which would ask about things like time spent off task playing games, watching videos, or scrolling social media; exposure to violent images and pornography, including the age of first exposure; contact with adult strangers; unwelcome messages from peers; and experience with deepfake pornography and sexual images of themselves and classmates.

As the saying goes, knowledge is power, and it is long past time that we knew more about what is happening on kids' school-issued computers. Thank you.

#

Study re: computer literacy

U.S. Eighth-Graders' Scores Decline on International Assessment of Critical Computer and Information Literacy Skills | IES

<https://ies.ed.gov/learn/press-release/u-s-eighth-graders-scores-decline-international-assessment-critical-computer-and-information>

