

Jenny Place
Scarborough, Scarborough Alliance for Thoughtful Tech
LD 2052

Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of LD 2052, a resolve to study the use of technology in classrooms and safeguards related to its use.

I am deeply concerned about the screen-based education happening in Scarborough, Maine and across the nation. Research and observation show that excessive screen use can negatively impact attention, focus, and the depth of learning. This concern is separate from the equally serious issue of student data privacy, as many educational technology companies collect and sell data from our children's devices.

As a member of the Scarborough Alliance for Thoughtful Technology (SATT), we have tried to address these issues at the local level. In response, school administrators have told us that they have other priorities and that we need not worry because the technology team is thoughtful and diligent.

However, our experience tells a different story. SATT was reassured that there was no student-facing AI in the district, only to later identify at least four instances of AI tools accessible on school-issued devices used by students as young as 3rd grade. These included Smart Compose, which completes words and sentences; ChatGPT on school computers; Google AI as a search option; and AI-powered spellcheck and grammar tools in GoogleDocs—features far beyond what most of us encountered growing up and that do not aid in learning. The Brookings Institute released its Global Task Force Report on AI in Education this week and states "At this point in its trajectory, the risks of utilizing generative AI in children's education overshadow its benefits."

This demonstrates that parents and community members are not receiving the information we need to understand how technology is being used or to make informed decisions about its impact on our children. We need accurate, transparent data, and we are not getting it at the district level. LD 2052 is a critical step toward ensuring accountability, transparency, and student well-being.

We need your help.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jenny Place, Scarborough, parent of 2