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Parent
LD 2052

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to support LD 2052, the Resolve to Study the Use of Technology in Classrooms and Study Safeguards Related to Its Use. With the rapid emergence of AI, the need to more fully understand how technology is affecting learning is even more urgent.

Like many parents and educators, I am increasingly concerned about how technology and screens are affecting students' ability to learn. While technology can play a valuable role in education, the primary reason students are in the classroom is for learning. And learning depends on attention, cognitive engagement and memory. There is growing evidence from cognitive science that screen-based learning environments can interfere with these core processes.

From a cognitive perspective, effective learning requires sustained attention and a manageable cognitive load. Technology through connected devices, even when used for instructional purposes, place the brain in a constant state of alert and increase task switching. This can divide attention, strain working memory and make it harder for students to encode new information into long-term memory. When attention is fragmented, learning suffers. With the introduction of generative AI, there is also the potential for students to bypass parts of the reasoning and learning process entirely. Research also shows that learning with physical materials such as paper, books and hands-on activities often leads to better comprehension and retention than learning through screens. The spatial and tactile aspects of physical learning help support memory and understanding in ways that digital tools/technology cannot always replicate.

There are also important unanswered questions about usage and exposure. In our district, for instance, families are not able to obtain accurate data on how much screen time students actually experience during the school day. We also do not have a clear picture of how that combines with screen-based homework at night. Policy decisions are being made without transparent information about actual usage.

These concerns are further amplified by the rapid introduction of generative AI into classrooms. This technology is evolving quickly, and there is still much we do not fully understand about its effects on learning and cognition.

While LD 2052 does not ban technology or remove local control, it does create a needed shared, evidence-based understanding of how technology is being used, how it is affecting learning and what safeguards make sense. This includes distinguishing between when digital tools are truly necessary and when they are simply the default. Technology should be used intentionally, not everywhere and not for everything. Students learn best in environments that prioritize focus, structure and meaningful cognitive engagement. LD 2052 gives Maine the opportunity to make sure our classroom practices align with how children actually learn.

Thank you for your time and consideration.