Why We Need Guardrails on Education Technology

EdTech consists of existing and emerging digital technologies and takes on multiple forms, including: Devices, Learning Platforms, Curriculum & Assessment Apps, SEL & Behavior Tools, AI Tools, Video Learning, Tracking Technologies and Analytics Tools.

EdTech is not a tool - it's an industry. U.S. districts use 2,739 different EdTech tools annually and students access 1,165 tools per month. The U.S. EdTech market is projected to be $250B+ by 2033. Despite massive spending, student outcomes haven't improved. Billions flow into devices, apps, and platforms with almost no requirement to prove they actually help kids learn

EdTech negatively impacts the brain and learning:
- Rapid task-switching, bouncing between apps, tabs, and notifications break concentration and memory, reducing learning efficiency each time attention is interrupted.
- Devices are built for connection, not concentration.
- Schools are becoming drivers of screen addiction. By high school, 41% of students spend more than 5 hours a day with technology.
- The brain comes to expect constant novelty instead of sustained thought.
- Studies show students are off-task 60% of the time while on digital devices during instruction.
- Apps are designed for compulsion leading to engagement, over mastery.
- Learning becomes shallow as brain shifts into "skimming mode" instead of deep reading.
- Screens overload the brain's working memory.
- Cognitive fatigue increases – screens force the brain into the high-arousal mode.
- OECD data shows heavy use of school technology is consistently linked to lower student performance.

Every click, swipe, and pause is a data point; children become a dataset. Their privacy is sold.
- Multiple apps, platforms and devices create a constant data-harvesting environment, producing a perpetual surveillance state, often invisible to parents.
- 96% of EdTech apps share data with third parties including advertising/monetization companies.
- 23% of school apps expose kids to digital ads and 13% use retargeting ads.

Technology should be a tool, not a lifestyle. Strong minds prepare kids – not nonstop screen time. Looking it up isn't learning. Knowledge is what lets kids think and reason.

Recommended Legislation:
- EdTech companies must provide studies that their tools improve student outcome.
- Parents must opt in to companies/organizations receiving access to their children's data, including surveys, behavioral and biometric information.
- Children must not be targeted with advertisements during the school day.
- Classrooms must offer paper alternatives.

For more information: https://m4lacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Ed-Tech-Data-Collection-PowerPoint.pdf

Contact: Ann Streit at moms4liberty.wa.king@gmail.com

FERPA and PPRA

FERPA = Governs sharing of data	PPRA – Governs collecting sensitive data
• Applies to education records • Schools can share data with vendors they call "school officials" • Not parental consent required once a vendor gets that label	• Protects 8 areas (mental health, politics, sex attitudes/behaviors, critical appraisal of family, privileged relationships (lawyers, doctors), religious, income) • Requires parent consent for those categories • The loophole: SEL, biometric and behavior data are **NOT** protected.

FERPA controls who can **SEE** student data | **PPRA** controls what schools can **ASK** students.
Neither law protects modern digital data, biometric data, or EdTech-generated profiles.