THE SETHI LEDGER
AI + K-12 Brief | 2026-09-29

1. Dayton renews SchoolAI contract for $78,650 as it continues chatbot testing

Dayton schools renewed their SchoolAI contract for $78,650 for the current school year and say they will continue using AI at the alternative school, with more social-emotional chatbots likely. The district's consultant said the pilot's evidence was based on perceptions and was difficult to measure; he said it was not ready for a districtwide student-facing rollout.

Why it matters: The renewal is a district implementation decision, not evidence that the chatbot improves student outcomes. Leaders considering similar tools should weigh the limited evaluation evidence alongside student-data access and oversight arrangements.

Limits: The article reports no demonstrated efficacy; the evaluation relied on chat logs and feedback, and the consultant described measurement as limited to perceptions.

Published 2026-09-28. Source: https://www.npr.org/2026/09/28/nx-s1-5759718/ai-schools-experiment-research

2. Manhasset plans AI literacy instruction and teacher-directed tools for grades 7-12

Manhasset school officials outlined an AI approach at a Sept. 24 board meeting: the district plans to emphasize foundational skills, AI safety, bias and digital citizenship in grades K-6, with no routine student-facing generative AI use. Students in grades 7-12 are to receive AI literacy instruction and teacher-directed access to approved tools; the district says it will monitor classroom use and gather feedback.

Why it matters: The plan differentiates instruction and access by grade rather than treating AI use as uniform across the district. Leaders should track how approved-tool access, monitoring and feedback translate into classroom practice.

Limits: The article reports the district's plans and approach, not evidence that the measures have been implemented or evaluated.

Published 2026-09-28. Source: https://www.longislandpress.com/2026/09/28/manhasset-schools-ai/

3. RSU 9 superintendent details possible E-Rate risks to network services and costs

Superintendent Christian Elkington outlined RSU 9's reliance on federal E-Rate in a Sept. 14 memorandum to the board. The memo details five years of E-Rate purchases, Networkmaine services and possible operational and financial effects if E-Rate funding were reduced or eliminated; the district says replacing Networkmaine could require several specialized vendors. The memo provides no specific estimate of the district's potential added costs.

Why it matters: The memo gives district leaders a service-level view of infrastructure

dependencies, but it does not quantify a replacement budget. Mapping covered services and alternatives could help inform contingency planning without treating a possible funding change as certain.

Limits: The funding reduction is hypothetical, and the article says the memo does not estimate RSU 9's specific costs if support disappears.

Published 2026-09-28. Source: https://www.sunjournal.com/2026/09/28/farmington-area-school-district-weighs-potential-costs-of-funding-changes/

4. Spokane restores staff access to PowerSchool after Sept. 20 cybersecurity incident

After a cybersecurity incident notified to district officials Sept. 20, Spokane Public Schools' IT team made what a spokesperson called "significant progress." PowerSchool is back online for staff, and students and parents were expected to regain access Wednesday; payroll is also operating. A third-party forensic team was still determining the incident's scope, and the district had not established whether personal information was affected.

Why it matters: Restoring core systems is a material operational update, but the investigation remains incomplete. District leaders should distinguish service recovery from incident resolution and avoid assuming either data exposure or its absence before verified findings are available.

Limits: The district had not characterized the incident or determined its full scope; the article reports no confirmed personal-information impact.

Published 2026-09-28. Source: https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2026/sep/28/some-of-spokane-public-schools-online-infrastructu/

5. Fairfax school board unanimously bans license plate readers on school property

The Fairfax County School Board voted unanimously Sept. 24 to prohibit installing, procuring or leasing automated license plate readers on school-board property. The board said the ban does not affect internal video, speed or school bus stop-arm cameras. The measure is preemptive: the district had no ALPRs and was not planning to install them.

Why it matters: The vote sets a clear procurement and installation boundary for a surveillance technology before district deployment. It is specific to school-board property and does not determine what county authorities may do elsewhere.

Limits: The policy is preemptive; Fairfax County Public Schools had no ALPRs and no plans to install them at the time of reporting.

Published 2026-09-28. Source: https://www.ffxnow.com/2026/09/28/school-board-bans-flock-style-license-plate-readers-on-fcps-property/