THE SETHI LEDGER
AI + K-12 Brief | 2026-10-14

1. Texas seeks $21.2 million to expand school cybersecurity services

Published October 13, 2026; event date not specified. The Texas Education Agency's FY 2028-29 appropriations request seeks $21.2 million to expand cybersecurity services for public schools, including grants, endpoint protection, assessments and regional security operations center services. Separately, its baseline capital request includes $35.5 million for a K-12 data privacy initiative; these are requests, not approved funding.

Why it matters: Districts should track the state budget process and assess whether shared services could address local security gaps. The request's scale also underscores that statewide support remains contingent on legislative action.

Limits: The agency's reported incident and threat-blocking figures are agency claims; the requested funds have not been shown as approved.

Published 2026-10-13. Source: https://insider.govtech.com/texas/news/education-agency-lar-includes-32m-in-it-exceptional-items

2. More than half of New York districts lack formal board-adopted AI policies, analysis finds

Published October 13, 2026; the review's collection and outreach dates are not specified. New York Focus reviewed roughly 680 district websites and board manuals, finding around 270 districts with formal AI policies; more than half lacked a formal policy online. Of roughly 400 districts contacted about missing policies, more than 70 confirmed they had no board policy, and 39 said they planned to develop one during the school year.

Why it matters: The findings give district leaders a reason to check whether guidance is formally adopted, accessible and clear about staff as well as student use. The reported variation also highlights the procurement and governance challenges of AI tools already entering schools.

Limits: The online review may not capture internal guidance, and the contacted districts' responses do not establish the status of every district without a policy listed online.

Published 2026-10-13. Source: https://nysfocus.com/2026/10/13/ny-schools-lack-ai-policies

3. 23 attorneys general urge FCC to maintain E-Rate amid review of possible cuts

Update: Published October 13, 2026; the FCC's August request for comments preceded the letter. Washington led 23 attorneys general in urging the FCC to maintain E-Rate, which the release says provides more than $3 billion annually in school and library internet discounts. The coalition argues that eliminating or reducing support would shift broadband costs to states and districts; the FCC has solicited comment on potential program changes, including possible elimination.

Why it matters: Districts that depend on E-Rate should model the budget and connectivity effects of reduced discounts and follow the FCC proceeding. The letter is advocacy, not an FCC decision or a guarantee of future funding.

Limits: This is a state attorney general press release presenting the coalition's position; no final FCC action is reported.

Published 2026-10-13. Source: https://pubt.io/view/872E55BDE785FC37FDC8F1847B73DC8A71B78CE3

4. Spring Hill staff propose nearly $2 million replacement of grades 6-12 devices

Published October 13, 2026; staff made the proposal Monday, with no calendar date specified. Spring Hill staff proposed replacing all student devices in grades 6-12 for the 2027-28 school year, recommending MacBook Neo laptops for grades 9-12 and iPad 11 models for grades 6-8. The estimated cost is almost $2 million, including AppleCare and cases; the article reports a staff proposal, not an approved purchase.

Why it matters: The proposed grade-based device mix and bundled protection costs are relevant to refresh-cycle and total-cost-of-ownership reviews. Leaders should distinguish staff testing and favorable feedback from a completed procurement decision.

Limits: The source does not report board approval, final specifications or funding details.

Published 2026-10-13. Source: https://www.olathereporter.com/school_news/spring-hill-considering-comprehensive-2-million-replacement-of-student-devices/article_c3ad8bfe-f14d-4257-b863-b4684f1ac483.html

5. Chesapeake disables student email accounts after cybersecurity incident

Published October 13, 2026; the incident was reported Monday evening, with no calendar date specified. Chesapeake Public Schools said several individual Grassfield High School student email accounts were compromised and some recipients received threatening or inappropriate messages. The district disabled the affected accounts, said it was working with law enforcement and reported no credible threat to the school community at that time.

Why it matters: The incident is a reminder to include student accounts in identity-security monitoring and incident communications plans, not just staff systems. Account disablement and investigation are reported; the cause and scope remain unknown.

Limits: The report provides no confirmed attack vector, account count beyond "several," or details on data access.

Published unknown. Source: https://www.wtkr.com/news/in-the-community/chesapeake/some-chesapeake-public-schools-student-emails-compromised-in-cybersecurity-incident

6. Pennsylvania districts face trade-offs as online testing and classroom screen use expand

Publication date not provided; Pennsylvania's required online testing began this spring, following a change announced in 2024. PennLive reports that some districts are reducing elementary device use while others say online testing and instructional needs keep devices central. One district superintendent reported a decline in third-grade reading proficiency from 69% in 2025 to 62% in 2026, but statewide results were not yet public in the article.

Why it matters: Districts should weigh assessment readiness, instructional choices and the ongoing costs of devices rather than treating online testing as proof that all instruction must move onto screens. The reported district score change alone does not establish that testing format caused the decline.

Limits: The article reports individual district accounts and incomplete statewide assessment results; it does not establish a causal link between device use and achievement.

Published unknown. Source: https://www.pennlive.com/education/2026/10/some-pa-schools-want-to-reduce-screen-time-but-standardized-testing-is-getting-in-the-way.html