The Sethi Ledger

PEOPLE / PRACTICE / POSSIBILITY

TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO • WEEKEND RESEARCH SUPPLEMENT

Keep school services ready

September 26, 2026 to October 2, 2026

This week brings AI workflow migrations, changing cross-tenant calendar infrastructure and new school-facing tools. The operational priority is to confirm eligibility, test the actual user experience and assign an owner before a release becomes a district commitment.

The week at a glance

01 Inventory Gems and dependent flows now. Education retirement is no sooner than June 2027, but migration work and October rollouts start much earlier.

02 Coordinate Exchange sharing with partners. Separate availability, MailTips and calendar-sharing readiness instead of assuming a single migration date.

03 Verify installed browser versions and managed student access. Published release notes are the start of an operational check.

04 Give locally built AI tools a service owner, cost boundary and review path. Simpler APIs or setup screens do not remove those responsibilities.

ABOUT THIS BRIEF

Selected developments published September 26, 2026 to October 2, 2026. Findings are assessed for relevance to K-12 technology leadership, evidence quality and practical implications. Each summary identifies important limitations.

01 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Plan the Gems migration now

Vendor release and retirement roadmap
Google Workspace Updates

THE FINDING

Google has announced the transition from Gems to reusable skills in Gemini and Workspace. Workspace rollout begins October 5 for Rapid Release and October 19 for Scheduled Release; Gemini-app rollout begins October 13. Education Gems retirement is no sooner than June 1, 2027, including Classroom and supported LMS integrations. Existing Workspace Studio flows using Ask a Gem continue for now, but new flows cannot add that step. Skills do not currently synchronize between Gemini and Workspace, so a migration may require two maintained copies.

THE EVIDENCE

The September 30 announcement lists Workspace skills for users over 18, with Google AI Pro for Education among eligible add-ons. Gemini-app skills have broader availability and all-age eligibility.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

A vendor roadmap, not completed tenant migration. Education and business retirement dates differ; draft auto-migration is not a tested replacement workflow.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Assign instructional technology and automation owners to inventory Gems, shared classroom links and Ask a Gem flows. Budget staff time for rebuilding and testing, and check license eligibility before promising access. Keep an owner and version for each skill; run a small migration rehearsal before updating teacher training materials.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Google Workspace education tenants; app, age, license and rollout track all matter.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Skills rollout and education Gems transition
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-09-30 · Open source

02 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Protect partner calendar sharing

Vendor guidance / dated material revision
Microsoft Exchange Team

THE FINDING

Microsoft's September 29 revision separates the rollout dates for replacing EWS-based cross-tenant sharing. Worldwide Free/Busy was scheduled to complete September 23, MailTips September 29 and Calendar Sharing October 15. GCC, GCC High and DoD rollouts are paused in the published tables. Administrators are told to wait until the feature reaches both their own and their partner's environments. This matters as gradual Exchange Online EWS disabling begins October 1: a replacement's announcement is not proof that every affected sharing function is ready.

THE EVIDENCE

The Exchange team's revised guidance covers configured cross-organization Exchange Online sharing. It describes a temporary EWSEnabled=True continuity option through final EWS shutdown on April 1, 2027.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

Dates are rollout guidance, not observed tenant state. Within-organization sharing and several hybrid/on-premises scenarios are outside this migration's scope.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Have the messaging lead inventory partner relationships and check Message Center before changing settings. Test availability, shared calendars and out-of-office information with a real partner. If continuity requires the documented extension, use a time-bounded, reviewed exception with a migration owner. Reserve support capacity for coordination across organizations.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Districts using Exchange Online sharing with other Microsoft 365 tenants.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Cross-tenant sharing: September 29 revision
techcommunity.microsoft.com · Published 2026-09-29 · Open source

03 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Check the browser actually updated

Vendor security release notes
Microsoft Learn

THE FINDING

Microsoft's security release notes list Edge Stable 154.0.4258.53 on October 1, following desktop version 154.0.4258.48 and Android version 154.0.4258.38 on September 29. The entries say these releases incorporate Chromium security updates. At review time, detailed CVE entries were still pending. The operational task is straightforward: confirm which managed devices have installed the current update and completed the restart needed to use it. A deployment assignment or downloaded installer alone does not establish that an active browser is patched.

THE EVIDENCE

These are Microsoft's dated security release records. Desktop Stable and Android have separate version numbers; the October 1 desktop release supersedes the earlier desktop entry within this coverage week.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

The cited entries do not identify specific newly exploited vulnerabilities. They also do not report the district's installation state or application compatibility.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Ask endpoint operations for installed-version and restart compliance, with exceptions for shared labs and rarely connected devices. Test the student information system, assessment platform and key extensions in the update ring. Give unresolved devices an owner and deadline; use help-desk volume to spot regressions before broadening deployment.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Managed Edge desktop and Android fleets; check each platform independently.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Edge security releases: October 1 and September 29
learn.microsoft.com · Published 2026-10-01 · Open source

04 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Review the new student entry point

Vendor education feature release
Google Workspace Updates

THE FINDING

Google's October 1 release makes the Gemini student hub available to Workspace for Education users of all ages. It brings study notebooks, flashcards and practice quizzes into a common entry point. The hub is governed by the existing Generative AI settings in the Admin console, with no separate end-user setting. Google's availability notice includes Workspace customers outside the European Economic Area. The change can make already enabled learning tools easier for students to discover; it does not demonstrate educational effectiveness or replace a district's decision about permitted use.

THE EVIDENCE

Google lists the release as available now for Rapid and Scheduled Release domains. The announcement describes navigation and access, not a new district-wide learning evaluation.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

Account type, geography and admin configuration affect access. All-age eligibility is not a finding that every activity is suitable for every grade.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Have instructional technology test a managed student account in each relevant age group and organizational unit. Update help pages to show the approved entry point and when students should use it. Budget support time for access questions and have teachers review generated study materials before recommending them broadly.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Workspace for Education students outside the EEA, subject to existing Gemini controls.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Gemini student hub availability
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-10-01 · Open source

05 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Keep automation edits reviewable

Vendor API release
Google Workspace Updates

THE FINDING

Google announced APIs for creating, reading and managing comments in Docs, Sheets and Slides, plus suggested text edits in Docs. Automated tools can therefore propose a revision for a person to review, or attach feedback to a spreadsheet cell or slide element. Rollout started September 30 and may take up to 15 days. The related Model Context Protocol servers remain in developer preview. That distinction matters when a vendor describes an integration as production-ready: the ordinary API release and an agent-facing preview are different deployment choices.

THE EVIDENCE

The release covers all Workspace customers and personal accounts. There is no feature-specific admin switch, but administrators can control which applications access Workspace data.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

The announcement does not certify a third-party tool, guarantee review quality or quantify staff savings. Suggested changes still require appropriate permissions and a responsible reviewer.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Pilot one low-risk workflow, such as policy proofreading, with suggestions instead of automatic replacement. Require an identifiable author, bounded permissions and a human acceptance step. Measure review time and incorrect suggestions before buying broader automation. Confirm whether the supplier uses the released APIs or preview MCP servers.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

District document workflows and third-party Workspace integrations.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Comment and suggestion API release
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-09-30 · Open source

06 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Local AI tools need service owners

Primary implementation report
FullScale / Megan Benay

THE FINDING

FullScale reports that 13 Rural AI Strategy Lab teams have launched small implementation pilots, and 12 designed their own AI tools. Examples include a differentiation resource for four high-school teachers, a postsecondary planning tool for approximately 45 tenth-graders, and an instructional planning tool for three elementary teachers. Teams began with local problems, then developed prototypes and measurement plans. For CIOs, the material development is the emergence of locally built services that may handle academic records and instructional decisions. Launch establishes an operational responsibility; it does not yet establish learning gains or a sustainable support model.

THE EVIDENCE

This September 30 account comes from the program operator. It describes pilot scope and planned mixed quantitative and qualitative evaluation; outcome findings are still to come.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

Selected participants and illustrative examples, not a representative district survey. Costs, security assurance and comparative effectiveness are not established by the announcement.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Create a lightweight intake for educator-built AI tools: name the service owner, data sources, access rules, expected monthly cost and exit plan. Pair the teacher designer with IT support before students depend on the tool. Require a small outcome measure and a support log before funding expansion.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

U.S. rural school and district teams; small pilots across instruction and pathways.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Rural AI Strategy Lab pilot launch
www.fullscalelearning.org · Published 2026-09-30 · Open source

07 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Test cross-platform room meetings

Vendor general-availability release
Google Workspace Updates

THE FINDING

Google has moved Android/AOSP room interoperability with Microsoft Teams from preview to general availability. Supported Google Meet hardware can join Teams meetings, and Android/AOSP Teams Rooms devices can join Meet meetings. The October 1 announcement gives a one-to-three-day rollout for Rapid and Scheduled Release domains. This could simplify district meetings with outside partners that use another platform. It is a device-specific release: it should not be interpreted as universal feature parity across all room systems, operating systems or meeting services.

THE EVIDENCE

The vendor identifies Android/AOSP-based room devices and points administrators to the controls for joining third-party conferencing services. Eligibility is tied to the supported hardware environment.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

The release supplies no district cost comparison, uptime measurement or guarantee that every meeting feature behaves identically across platforms.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Have the collaboration team test one supported room with a partner before changing meeting instructions. Check joining, audio, content sharing, captions and guest support. Keep a fallback connection method and capture the help-desk steps. Use the test to assess whether existing equipment can serve the need before purchasing another room stack.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Districts with supported Android/AOSP Meet hardware or Teams Rooms.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Meet and Teams Android room interoperability
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-10-01 · Open source

08 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Check the license before the shortcut

Vendor security feature release
Google Workspace Updates

THE FINDING

Google's new simplified client-side encryption setup combines Cloud HSM keys with Google Identity through the Admin console. The vendor says this reduces the setup work previously needed to arrange a key service and identity provider, while retaining the standard route for custom configurations. However, the October 1 announcement lists Enterprise Plus with Assured Controls or Assured Controls Plus as the eligible offering. It does not list Education editions. A district should therefore confirm contractual eligibility before planning this as an available education-tenant shortcut.

THE EVIDENCE

Google lists the option as available now. Its claim of setup in minutes is a vendor description, not a measured implementation time for a district.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

Simpler setup does not establish affordability, recoverability or suitability for a particular data workflow. This release does not expand all Education CSE entitlements.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Ask the security architect and licensing lead to confirm eligibility and total cost first. For an eligible environment, test key access, recovery and administrator separation with a small data set. Have records owners check the effect on everyday collaboration and support before adopting a more complex protection model.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Enterprise Plus environments with the named add-on; education eligibility requires confirmation.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Simplified client-side encryption setup
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-10-01 · Open source

FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION

The week ahead

01 This week - collaboration and identity leads: Map Gems, Ask a Gem flows and Exchange partner-sharing relationships. Record dependencies, license limits and migration owners.

02 Next update cycle - endpoint operations: Check Edge installed versions and restart compliance. Test essential district web applications and resolve exceptions.

03 Before broader access - instructional technology: Test the Gemini student hub with managed accounts, then update grade-appropriate guidance and support instructions.

04 Before scaling automation - CIO and finance: Require a named owner, a small acceptance test, a monthly cost estimate and an exit path for each local tool or integration.

KEEP READING

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