The Sethi Ledger

PEOPLE / PRACTICE / POSSIBILITY

Technology / K-12 CIO | Verify the handoff

October 24-30, 2026

Certificate-based intrusions sharpen the case for complete identity containment. New browser fixes and AI workspace capabilities call for verification at each handoff: from update to restart, source to cell, prompt to file and catalog to classroom.

The week at a glance

01 Check certificates and sessions when responding to identity compromise.

02 Verify running browser versions after users relaunch.

03 Trace AI outputs to sources and review whole files before sharing.

04 Confirm education eligibility, accessibility and ongoing costs before rollout.

ABOUT THIS BRIEF

Selected developments published October 24-30, 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

A help-desk call can become lasting identity access

Vendor threat intelligence | investigated incidents
Microsoft Security

THE FINDING

Microsoft investigated two intrusions that began with Teams impersonation and user-approved remote support. Attackers then abused misconfigured Active Directory Certificate Services to obtain privileged authentication certificates. One incident exploited a certificate template; the other relayed authentication to web enrollment. Password resets and workstation reimaging alone do not revoke those certificates or existing Kerberos tickets. A containment exclusion left a privileged identity usable in one case, enabling further theft. The operational lesson reaches beyond phishing training: service-desk verification, certificate configuration and identity containment must work together.

THE EVIDENCE

Microsoft's October 30 incident analysis documents two distinct attack paths and response outcomes. It attributes neither case to a named actor and does not describe a Teams software vulnerability.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

Two vendor-observed cases do not quantify district exposure or prove a specific security product will prevent compromise.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Have the service desk rehearse verification through a known internal channel. Ask the identity owner to review certificate enrollment and containment exclusions, then test a response checklist covering certificates and sessions as well as passwords. Allocate specialist time before declaring recovery complete.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Most relevant to districts and partners operating Windows domains with AD CS.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Help-desk impersonation and AD CS abuse: ESC1 and ESC8
www.microsoft.com · Published 2026-10-30 · Open source

02 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Verify the browser version after the restart

Official security release | desktop browser
Google Chrome Releases

THE FINDING

Google's October 27 desktop Chrome release contains 52 security fixes, including critical issues. The announced stable builds are 156.0.8078.73/.74 for Windows and Mac and 156.0.8078.73 for Linux, rolling out over the following days and weeks. For a district, sending an update policy is only the start: a browser can remain on an older running version until users relaunch it. The notice is a concrete reason to reconcile installed and running versions across managed desktop devices, while testing essential instructional and administrative sites for compatibility.

THE EVIDENCE

The primary release notice lists the affected build family and severity-rated fixes. It does not establish active exploitation of the listed issues.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

This is a desktop release notice. ChromeOS, mobile and other release channels require their own version guidance; availability may vary during rollout.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Use the managed-browser inventory to identify lagging devices and arrange a communicated relaunch window. Prioritize privileged administrative endpoints, verify success after restart, and retain a tested route for reporting compatibility failures without indefinitely deferring updates.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Managed Windows, macOS and Linux desktop Chrome fleets.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Chrome stable desktop security update, October 27
chromereleases.googleblog.com · Published 2026-10-27 · Open source

03 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Polished recruiting messages are not proof of identity

Vendor threat intelligence | observed and assessed activity
Microsoft Threat Intelligence

THE FINDING

Microsoft reports that North Korean threat actors are using AI to accelerate established targeting, recruitment deception, coding and operational workflows. Its examples include front-company campaigns and more than 100 tailored PDF lures; some AI-use conclusions are explicitly assessed as highly likely from observed patterns. Microsoft says these operations remain human-directed. For schools, the relevant exposure includes staff recruitment, contracted technical work and unsolicited coding or interview tasks. Greater fluency and personalization make surface credibility a weaker screening signal, even when the underlying attack still depends on familiar identity and access failures.

THE EVIDENCE

The October 29 report combines observed activity with analyst assessments. It names education-related organizations among broader targeting categories, without measuring K-12 incident prevalence.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

AI attribution and synthetic-media impact are not uniformly confirmed. The report does not establish a new autonomous attack capability or a local district compromise.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Review contractor onboarding with HR and procurement. Independently verify identities and organizations before granting access, keep unsolicited technical exercises off production devices, and require a named district sponsor for vendor accounts. Rehearse escalation when an apparently legitimate recruiter requests unusual software installation.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Enterprise hiring, vendor relationships and technical staff; district relevance is an operational inference.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

AI adoption in North Korean threat-actor tradecraft
www.microsoft.com · Published 2026-10-29 · Open source

04 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

AI spreadsheet citations make review easier, not optional

Product release | vendor benchmark
Google Workspace

THE FINDING

Google Sheets is adding cell-level web-source citations to values generated with its AI function and expanding requests to 3,000 cells. Sources appear in the web interface, giving reviewers a more direct route from an output to the material used to produce it. Google also claims up to 55-times-faster performance than manual entry for a 500-cell task, based on a 95-person internal study. That is a vendor benchmark, not a district labor-saving estimate. A citation improves traceability; it does not establish that the cell accurately represents the source or that the source is suitable for a consequential decision.

THE EVIDENCE

Announced October 28; gradual rollout began October 20. Enabled by default for eligible Gemini-in-Sheets users. Education availability lists Google AI Pro for Education.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

The speed study uses English prompts and a specific task. Publication this week does not mean every tenant received the feature this week.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Pilot on a low-risk public-data task. Require sampled source-to-cell checks, retain the reviewed result and estimate correction time before scaling. Have procurement confirm eligible licenses and usage limits before turning a demonstration into a staffing or budget assumption.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Eligible Sheets users on the web; useful for administrative research and data preparation.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Sheets: cell-level web citations and larger AI requests
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-10-28 · Open source

05 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

File creation moves inside the Gemini conversation

Product release | file creation and editing
Google Workspace

THE FINDING

The Gemini app now lets users generate, preview and edit files directly in chat, including documents, spreadsheets and presentations. PDF preview and editing work on web and mobile; the other listed formats are web-only. Google says the capability is available now to all ages who already have Gemini app access, across supported languages. There is no separate administrative switch for this feature, although administrators can control access to the app. For districts, file production and sharing review must now account for a conversational starting point as well as traditional document editors.

THE EVIDENCE

The October 29 Workspace notice includes all Workspace customers, individual subscribers and personal accounts. Users can transfer outputs to Drive or supported editors.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

Availability is not a guarantee of accuracy, accessibility or appropriate handling of confidential records. The announcement does not validate district-specific retention and sharing configurations.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Update guidance for student and staff accounts together. Test where generated files are stored, how permissions behave after transfer and whether accessible output survives export. Use representative non-sensitive documents and spreadsheet checks before approving an administrative workflow.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Users already entitled to the Gemini app; format support differs by device.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Create, preview and edit files in the Gemini app
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-10-29 · Open source

06 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Whole-deck edits need a whole-deck review

Product release | bulk presentation editing
Google Workspace

THE FINDING

Gemini in Slides can now change several slides or an entire presentation from one prompt, including content, layout and style. Changes apply directly to native editable slides, with a summary in the side panel and undo or version history available for review. This can shorten routine updates to staff and board presentations, but it also broadens the scope of an unintended edit. Launch support is English-only. Google lists no separate administrative control and includes Google AI Pro for Education among eligible plans; this is not a feature entitlement for every education account.

THE EVIDENCE

Announced October 30, with an extended rollout starting October 29. Promotional higher creation limits run through at least December 1, after which per-user limits apply.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

Rollout can exceed 15 days. Vendor functionality does not demonstrate time saved after quality assurance; English-only support limits immediate use in multilingual workflows.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Keep a dated approved copy before bulk editing. Assign one owner to compare every slide, including numbers, source notes and accessibility, before distribution. Budget against ongoing license and usage terms rather than the temporary promotional allowance.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Eligible Slides accounts preparing internal, family-facing or governance presentations.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Edit entire presentations with Gemini in Slides
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-10-30 · Open source

07 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

Interactive explorations enter the education workspace

Product release | interactive learning resources
Google Workspace

THE FINDING

Google has added a library of interactive visual explorations to the Gemini app, with scenes that users navigate layer by layer. The student hub includes Education Fundamentals, Standard and Plus; the direct app experience is listed for all Workspace customers and other eligible account types. Six languages are supported, while other language settings currently receive English. The release offers a potential instructional resource without a new education add-on listed for the hub. It also creates a practical support obligation: schools need to check usability, access and instructional fit on the devices and assistive technologies students actually use.

THE EVIDENCE

The October 28 notice says web and mobile access are available now. Audio narration and direct access from chat are described as forthcoming, not current capabilities.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

No separate feature control is listed; app access remains the administrative boundary. The release supplies no evidence of learning gains or district accessibility compliance.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Have curriculum and accessibility staff jointly test a few scenes on standard student devices. Verify keyboard and assistive-technology access and prepare an equivalent alternative. Confirm account access before announcing availability to families; document support needs before expanding use.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Gemini users; six supported languages are English, Indonesian, Hindi, Brazilian Portuguese, French and simplified Chinese.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Immersive explorations in the Gemini app
workspaceupdates.googleblog.com · Published 2026-10-28 · Open source

08 / TECHNOLOGY / K-12 CIO

A textbook catalog needs a librarian's judgment

Product announcement | textbook-source catalog
Google / Gemini Notebook

THE FINDING

Google says students can now add hundreds of textbooks to Gemini Notebook at no charge through a new catalog. Providers include OpenStax, Open Textbook Library and S Chand Publishing. The service presents answers with inline citations and links to the underlying source, and can turn textbook content into study guides, quizzes and flashcards. This creates a useful discovery route for course materials, but catalog availability should not be confused with district curriculum approval. The announcement concerns providers in the United States and India; it does not by itself establish every user's regional or account eligibility.

THE EVIDENCE

The October 29 announcement directs users to Add sources, then Textbooks. It expands the earlier option to add eligible purchased Play Books ebooks.

LIMITS TO KEEP IN VIEW

The announcement does not specify all age, administrative or licensing conditions. Source grounding is a vendor description, not independent proof that every generated answer is correct.

WHAT LEADERS CAN DO

Ask library and curriculum staff to verify the exact edition, course alignment and accessibility of a small selection. Test answer-to-source fidelity and quiz quality. Confirm local account access and applicable terms before promising a free replacement for existing materials.

SCOPE / CONTEXT

Learners with access to the catalog; suitability varies by course, edition and account.

READ THE ORIGINAL SOURCES

Gemini Notebook adds hundreds of textbooks
blog.google · Published 2026-10-29 · Open source

FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION

The week ahead

This week: Reconcile desktop Chrome versions after restart and review the identity-response checklist for certificate and session containment. Confirm the service desk's trusted callback procedure.

Within 30 days: Test new Gemini file, spreadsheet and presentation workflows with public or synthetic data. Assign an owner for permissions, source fidelity, accessibility and correction time.

Before expansion: Have curriculum and library teams approve selected interactive resources and textbook editions. Confirm account eligibility and ongoing usage terms, then publish support guidance only for capabilities verified in your tenant.

KEEP READING

Visit The Sethi Ledger · Explore the archive