EdTech Fact vs. Fiction

Educational technology, or "EdTech," is digital technology used to facilitate learning. A vast amount of technology is being used in today's classroom, in part because the tech industry has made many bold claims that it will improve student learning. But does it really?

Claim #1: Technology enables personalized learning

Technology allows students to work at their own pace, getting a customized learning experience, because algorithms in the computer program adapt the task to the child's skill level.

Reality: Personalized learning is best created by a person. No algorithm can attend to a child's mental state, physical wellbeing, or varying needs throughout the day, all of which impact ability to learn. A teacher is able to interpret and respond to the needs of the whole child.

Claim #2: Technology inspires communication, collaboration, and creativity

Students can stay connected, work together, and share ideas no matter where they are. Online communities bring students together.

Reality: Screens are a barrier to social skills. Children are less connected with those around them, not more. **Children's mental health has been declining** with excessive use of technology.

Claim #3: Technology is more engaging than traditional tools

Children are more engaged in the learning process, especially because of gamification.

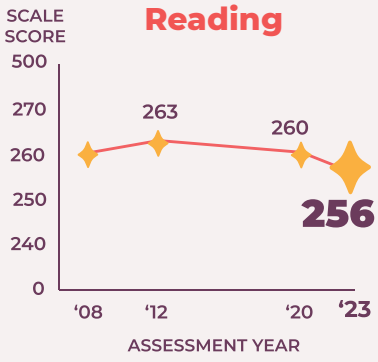
Reality: Students are driven to distraction. Students often are less engaged in learning activities and more distracted by the many other websites working to rob their attention (Roblox, YouTube, Minecraft, Netflix).

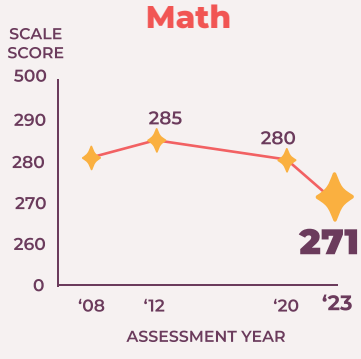
Claim #4: Technology improves student outcomes

Digital learning improves student outcomes, digital curriculum materials are high-quality, and students are learning the skills they will need to succeed in a digital age.

Reality: EdTech companies often use weak research to make false claims.

- The criteria that **EdReports** uses to identify "high-quality curriculum material" include alignment to Common Core standards and usability, **not** student achievement.
- **Reading comprehension** is better when reading text on paper rather than a screen.
- **Math skills** improve when problems are written on paper.
- Since the explosion of EdTech into schools starting in 2012, 13-year-old students' **test scores have dropped** from 263 to 256 in reading and from 285 to 271 in math (NAEP)





Screens & Learning Action Kit
LEAD AUTHOR: Denise Champney
A project of the Screens in Schools Work Group

screen time action network at fairplay

Take Action!

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What Can We Do to Limit EdTech in Schools?

CONNECT

Connect with other parents who share your concern and help bring awareness to your community about the harms of EdTech.

Reach out to your child's school and share your concerns. Administrators are generally much more receptive when approached by groups of parents (even small groups).

IN YOUR HOME

Provide as many opportunities for your child to have true hands on learning with books and papers and away from screens.

Prioritize outdoor play.

Encourage screen-free breaks during online homework.

Continue to educate yourself. Reading this sheet is a great start!

REQUESTS FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Ask if your district has an opt-out option for technology.

Request to opt-out of technology for your child, check out this **tool kit** created by Emily Cherkin, The Screentime Consultant.

If your child has a disability, request that educational materials be presented in the format that best supports their learning.

Request that schoolwork and homework be on paper and not online.