Federal Education Update

Noelle Ellerson Ng

Fall 2026

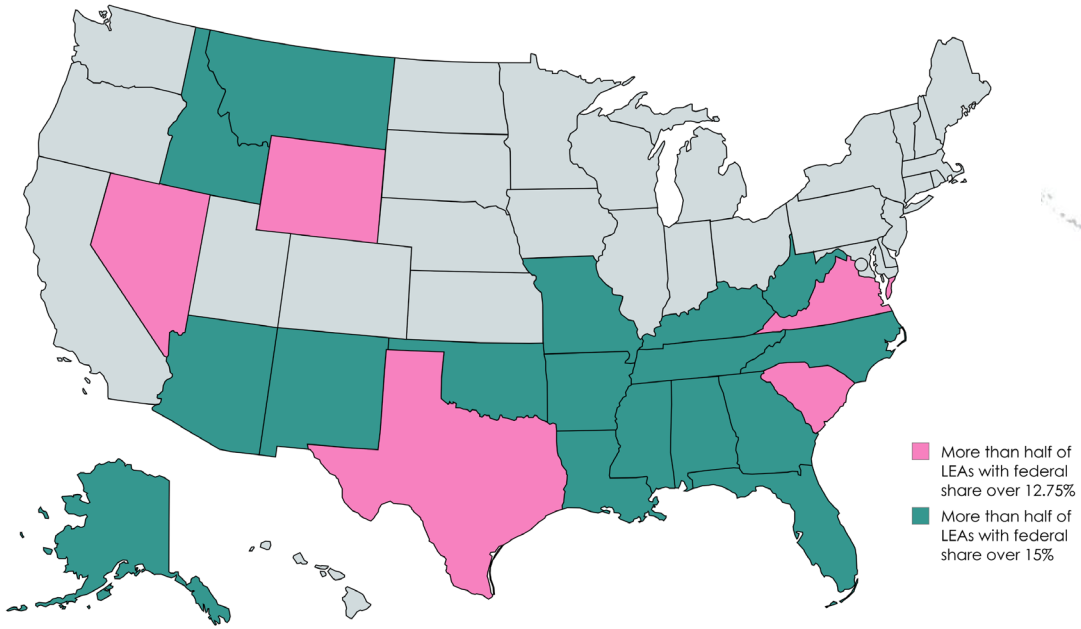
AASA THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

Framing the Moment

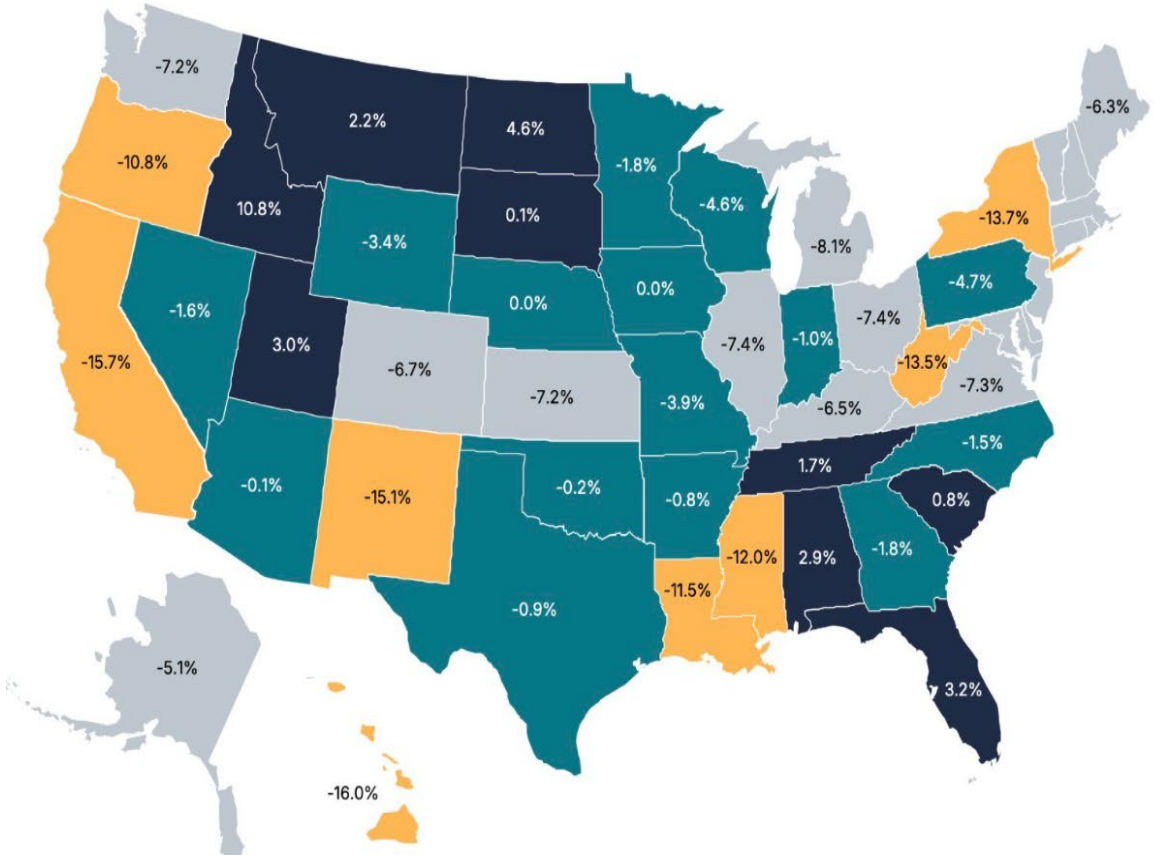
- **Congress is MIA**
  - With AI plotting humanity's demise, prices climbing, wars raging, and the Department of Education being dismantled, both chambers made the tough bipartisan choice to leave town and ask voters to send them back.
- **Trump and McMahon**
  - Never a dull moment
  - Lots of guidance, investigations and waivers
  - The focus for supts is outside of ED (FCC, Treasury/IRS, USDA).
- **What's Next?**
  - It depends on who wins in November and by how much.
  - And: Lame Duck or Living Duck for the Nov/Dec work session!
  - Specific to Education?
    - Next step for appropriations
    - Final Rules?
    - Privacy Legislation?

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

Two maps paint a bleak picture



Created with mapchart.net



Percent Change in Projected Enrollme

- > 0%
- 0 to -5%
- -5.1% to -10%
- < -10%

CT	-9.4%
DC	-5.2%
DE	-7.7%
MA	-7.2%
MD	-8.1%
NH	-7.3%
NJ	-8.3%
RI	-6.9%
VT	-7.6%

FY27 President's Budget Request

Program	FY26 Final	FY27 President's Budget	FY27 House Proposal
Title I, Part A	**$18.427 billion**	**$18.427 billion (level)**	**$16.532 billion (-$1.9 b)**
Title I, Part C (Migrant)	**$376 million**	**$0 (-376 million)**	**$0 (-376 million)**
Title I, Part D (Neglected & Delinquent)	**$49 million**	**$0 (-49 million)***	**$0 (-49 million)**
IDEA, Part B	**$14.234 billion**	**$15.401 billion (+1.167 b)**	**$14.259 billion (+25 million)**
Title II-A (Supporting Effective Instruction)	**$2.19 billion**	**$0 (-2.19 billion)***	**$0 (-2.19 billion)**
Title III-A (English Language Acquisition)	**$890 million**	**$0 (-890 million)**	**$0 (-890 million)**
Title IV-A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment)	**$1.380 billion**	**$0 (-1.380 billion)***	**$1.385 billion (+5 million)**
Title V, Part B (Rural Education Achievement Program)	**$225 million**	**$0 (-225 million)***	**$230 million**
Other provisions of note	N/A	Creates $2 billion block grant to replace $6.5 billion from other programs	Rescinds $1.6 billion in FY26 Title II funding that districts would receive October 1

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

Big Questions for FY27

- What are the Senate numbers? What kind of negotiation will happen b/t House & Senate?
- What about the $15 billion Pell Grant shortfall?
- Will the election make folks more or less likely to strike a deal?

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

Confluence of Federal Funding Pressures

- SNAP and Medicaid cuts
- Trickle down effect on direct certification (F/RPL)
- Proposed changes to E-Rate
- Annual appropriations cuts
- Further down the road….opportunity cost of FTC dollars

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

H.R. 1 – One Big Beautiful Bill Act

- Significant cost shifts for SNAP and Medicaid will put pressure on State budgets - $1 trillion in Medicaid shifted to States

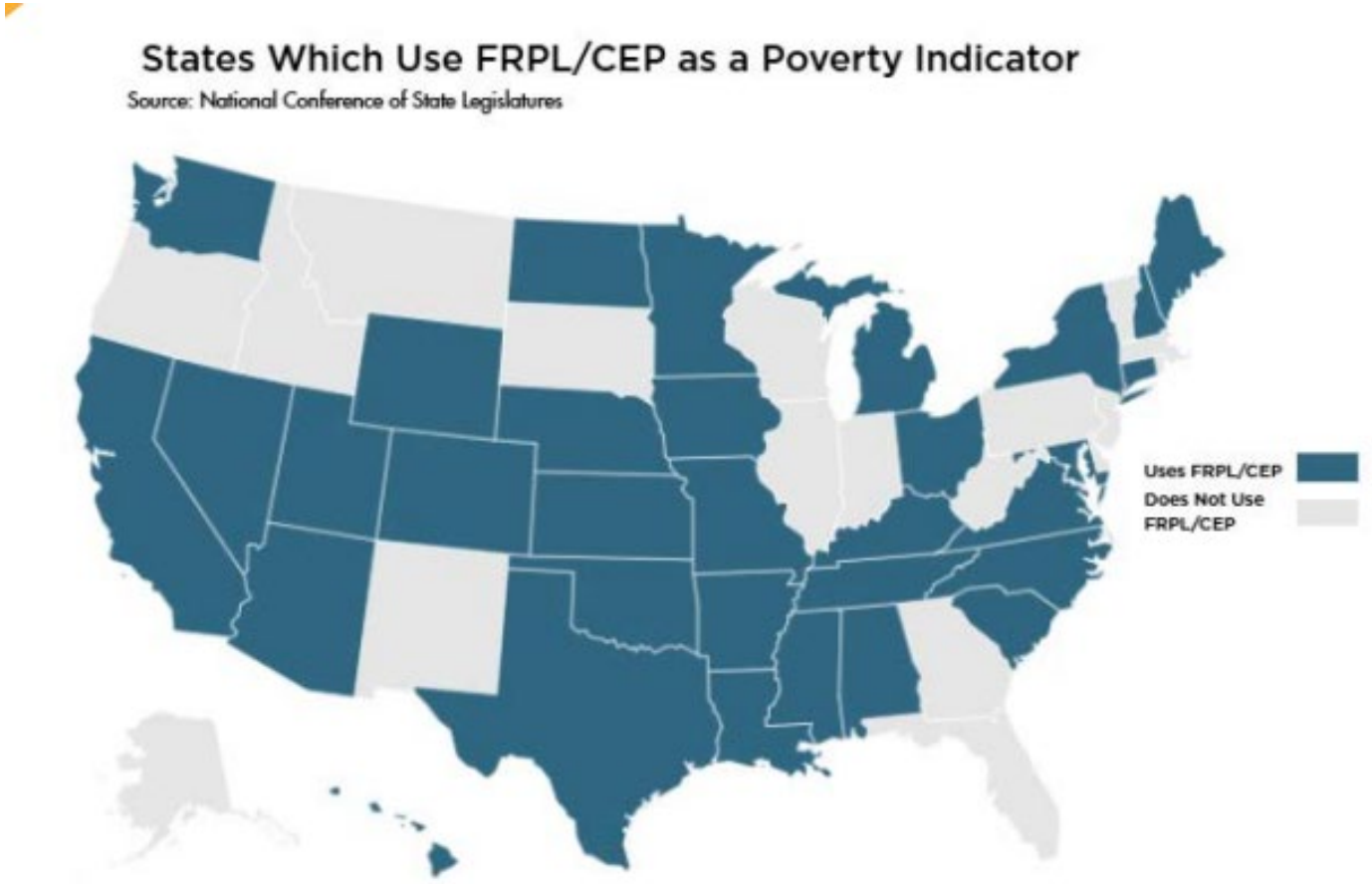
- SNAP Cost Shifts
  - Effective Oct. 1 , 2027: States will cover a portion of benefits the feds once paid for resulting in annual shortfalls:
    - KY, WI estimate: $0
    - KS estimate $10-50 m
    - MO, OH, IN, MN estimate: $100-199 million
    - IL estimate: $500-599 million

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

H.R. 1 – One Big Beautiful Bill Act

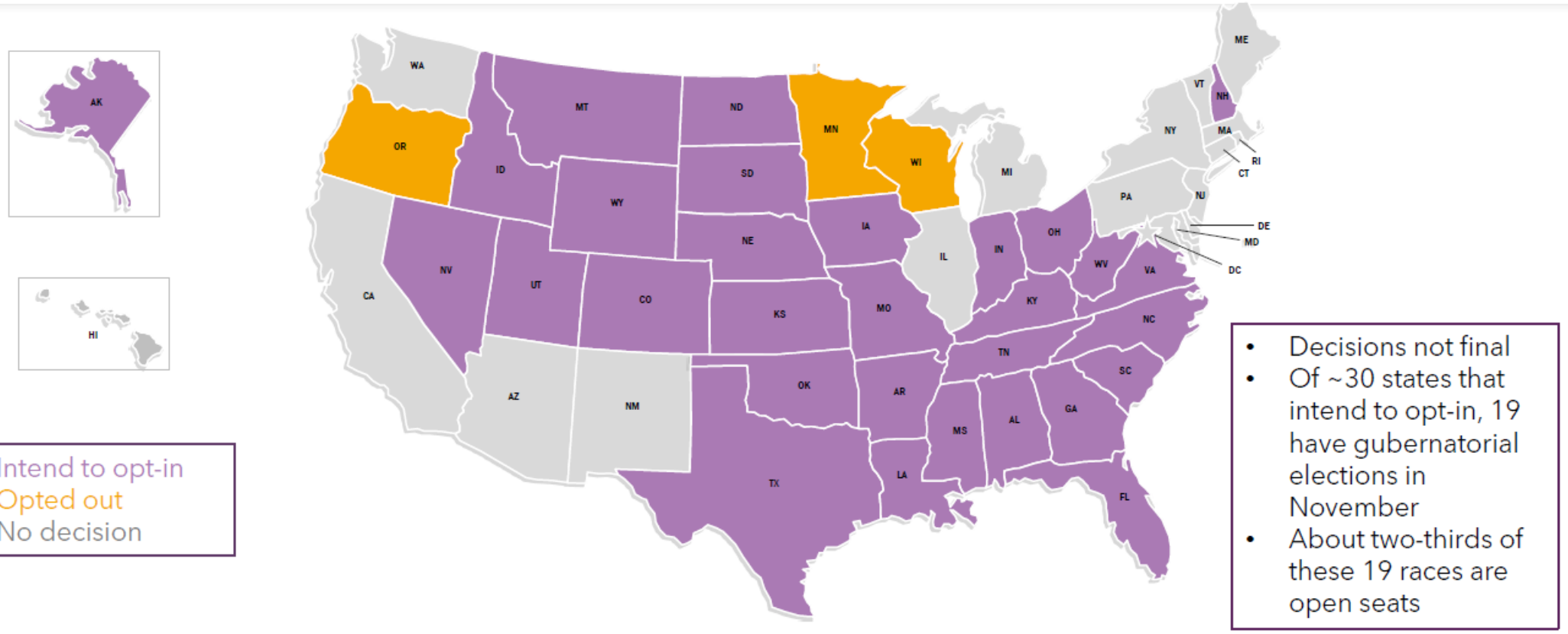
- Changes to eligibility will impact direct certification

- Implications for CEP, FRPL forms and in some cases, state funding allocations



© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

FSTC: State of Play



- Intend to opt-in
- Opted out
- No decision

- Decisions not final
- Of ~30 states that intend to opt-in, 19 have gubernatorial elections in November
- About two-thirds of these 19 races are open seats

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

The Dismantling of USED Continues

- IAA moves the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to HHS and Office of Civil Rights to DOJ
- Senate HELP Committee passes bipartisan bill to stop IAA for OSERS
- OSERS director abruptly resigns
- Staff are spread across different agencies

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

LOTS of Regulations

- New **school nutrition** regulations are expected that will align with the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans
  - What we're watching: New limits on "highly processed foods"; Implementation timeline; and Opportunities for flexibility
- **EDGAR** Regulations: The proposed EDGAR changes would expand federal discretion and alter how districts access, manage, and retain grant funding.
- **Head Start:** 'Reducing burden'; rolling back federal standards
- **E-Rate**: Proposal to end program, make rural only, tie to screen time

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

ED PROPOSES REVISIONS TO GRANT REGULATIONS

The proposed EDGAR changes would expand federal discretion and alter how districts access, manage, and retain grant funding.

THE BIG SHIFT

From predictable grant rules toward broader agency discretion

Potential result:

More uncertainty for district planning, budgeting, and compliance.

01 Formula funds

Would add Executive Orders to requirements for state-administered grants and impose new conditions related to hiring, admissions, political views, and free-speech policies.

02 Competitive grants

Would broaden authority to discontinue or terminate awards, including termination "for convenience," and allow partial awards, installments, or delayed funds.

03 Grant competition

Would permit preference for applicants offering lower indirect-cost rates, potentially disadvantaging districts and nonprofits already operating with low rates.

04 Transparency & process

Would move application notices from the Federal Register to Grants.gov only and add severability provisions so remaining rules may survive court challenges.

BOTTOM LINE The proposal could make federal grant funding less predictable and give ED more leverage over grantee policies and continuation decisions.

Source: AASA blog, "ED Proposes Revisions to Grant Regulations"

USDA School Meals Regulations

- New school nutrition regulations are expected that will align with the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- What we're watching:
  - New limits on "highly processed foods"
  - Implementation timeline
  - Opportunities for flexibility

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

E-Rate: What's at Stake?

- E-Rate is a nationwide connectivity program—not a program about what students should be doing on screens.
- E-Rate has supported connectivity for nearly 30 years, has a proven track record, and enjoys strong bipartisan support.
- More than **100,000 schools and 11,000 libraries** rely on E-Rate annually.
- **$13.2 billion** in E-Rate funding was committed to schools and libraries from FY2021–FY2025.
- **98.1% of U.S. counties** received E-Rate funding during that five-year period.
- E-Rate supports broadband, internet access and network infrastructure—not devices or curriculum.

- **The question isn't whether schools need connectivity. It's whether federal policy will continue to support it equitably.**

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

What are the BIG questions?

- Rural-only funding
  - E-Rate currently serves rural, suburban and urban communities.
  - AASA argues that connectivity needs are not determined solely by geography.
  - A “non-rural” designation could include small towns and suburban districts, not simply wealthy or highly connected communities.
- Ending the program
  - Ending or significantly limiting E-Rate could mean roughly $2.6 billion per year in federal support is no longer available to schools and libraries.
  - Districts could face higher local costs for internet access and internal network infrastructure.
  - The impact could extend beyond classroom connectivity to operations, transportation, security and other network-dependent functions.
- Screen time
  - E-Rate's core purpose is connectivity.
  - The FCC is considering whether funding should be conditioned on limits around student screen use.
  - AASA/EdLiNC's position: questions about curriculum, instructional practice and student behavior should not undermine a connectivity program.

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

FCC Call to Action: Keep Schools Connected

- The FCC is actively considering changes that could fundamentally reshape the future of E-Rate.
- One of the options under consideration is to END the program.
- **Reply Comments are due by November 12, 2026.**
- Go to https://erate.aasa.org/letter.html and send a letter to the FCC about why it must not harm the E-rate program.

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

Education Technology

- We think of the following topics as an amorphous set of interrelated policy issues that move at the same time, but not always in the same direction or the same pace. They are a constantly changing set of Venn Diagrams.
  - E-Rate
  - Student Data & Privacy
  - Artificial Intelligence
  - Cybersecurity
  - Screentime
  - Social Media
  - ‘Anti ed-tech’ sentiment

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

POLITICOPRO

Gift article

STATE

Mamdani allies urge him to issue moratorium on AI in schools

Parents, advocates and lawmakers called for a two-year pause, citing risks to student privacy and critical thinking.

BY: **MADINA TOURÉ** | 04/17/2026 11:51 AM EDT

Beware the unintended consequences of school screen time limits

THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE

Why Sal Khan's AI revolution hasn't happened yet, according to Sal Khan

By Matt Barnum | April 9, 2026, 5:11pm EDT

CHALKBEAT

Parents, Schools Clash Over Movement to Abolish Screens

Teachers find themselves caught in the middle of a growing opt-out push.

The74

Newsletters

The Atlantic

What Happened After a Teacher Ditched Screens

Why one early adopter of computers in classrooms has decided to toss them

By Jenny Anderson

The New York Times

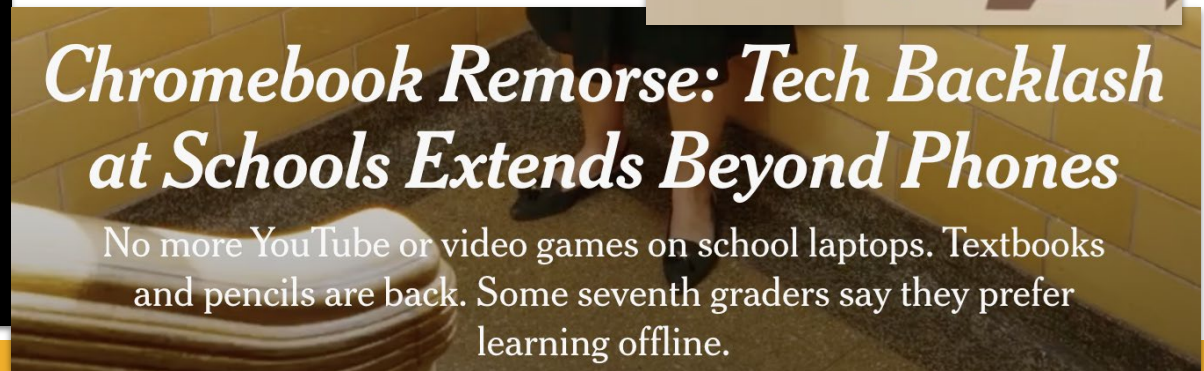
THE NEW YORKER

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO GET A.I. OUT OF SCHOOLS?

The tech world assumes that A.I.-aided education is necessary and inevitable. A growing number of parents, educators, and cognitive scientists say the opposite.

By Jessica Winter

April 23, 2026



Chromebook Remorse: Tech Backlash at Schools Extends Beyond Phones

No more YouTube or video games on school laptops. Textbooks and pencils are back. Some seventh graders say they prefer learning offline.

2026-27 Superintendent Salary & Benefit Survey

This year marks 15 consecutive reports!
Please complete by October 23.

If 183 Ohio superintendents participate (roughly 30%), BASA will get a state specific report. (Currently at 14)

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

Help Us Get Better (Give Feedback!)

https://tejoin.com/participate/329955015

Participate by navigating to tejoin.com and entering the following 9-digit code:

- 329-955-015

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.

Noelle Ellerson Ng

Chief Advocacy & Governance Officer
nellerson@aasa.org

X: @Noellerson

Sasha Pudelski

Director of Advocacy
spudelski@aasa.org

X: @SPudelski

Tara Thomas

Senior Government Affairs Manager
tthomas@aasa.org

X: @TaraEThomas1

Kat Sturdevant

Advocacy & Governance Manager
ksturdevant@aasa.org

X: @K_Sturdevant

© 2026. AASA, The School Superintendents Association. All Rights Reserved.