

NEW FEDERAL GUIDANCE

Start with the child.

A more useful way to think about technology, screen time, and learning.

U.S. Department of Education
August 20, 2026



Before we debate screens, name what we are protecting.

ATTENTION

LEARNING

OPPORTUNITY

WELL-BEING

These are the stakes behind the screen-time conversation.

“Screen time” can hide very different experiences.

01

A rural student

gains access to
advanced coursework.

02

A student with dyslexia

accesses complex text.

03

A homebound student

stays connected to
classroom learning.

Same category. Very different educational realities.

“

The question should be whether the technology we ask teachers and students to use improves learning and students' academic outcomes.”

— U.S. Department of Education guidance

NOT ONLY

How many minutes were on a screen?

BUT

What happened for the learner?

Good technology expands what a child can do.

ACCESS

Rigorous learning opportunities

UNDERSTAND

Differentiated instruction and feedback

PARTICIPATE

Accessibility and assistive technologies

PROGRESS

Timely evidence about learning

Technology remains the tool. Learning remains the purpose.

Good intentions aren't enough.

“Responsible design is the floor.”

**Does it work? Why? For whom? Under what
conditions?**

Third-party evidence · Implementation reviews · Educator and parent
feedback · Local outcomes

Effectiveness is the standard—not endorsement of technology for its own sake.

Put the student at the center.

● **PURPOSEFUL USE**

A clear instructional purpose?

● **ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY**

Learning otherwise unavailable?

● **IMPLEMENTATION**

Educators supported to use it well?

● **EVIDENCE**

Does it work—for whom, and when?

● **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Outcomes shape renewal and improvement.



**STUDENT LEARNING
& OUTCOMES**

Technology in service of learning.

Technology is not the outcome. Learning is.

**Keep student academic outcomes at
the center of every decision.**

There is a great deal of substance in this guidance.
Read it directly—and engage seriously with what it asks
of all of us.

**READ THE
GUIDANCE**

Engage with the
argument.

Keep the child at
the center.

**AUG 20
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