

Submitter: Sasha Scamarone
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1546

Dear Senators:

My name is Sasha Scamarone. I am a Beaverton resident, a mom, wife, small business owner, former educator and licensed acupuncturist. Thank you for inviting me to testify in support of SB 1546.

Education Technology has slipped into Oregon schools unregulated and now children are suffering the consequences in their learning and well-being. My son attends 6th grade at a charter school and my husband and I have been appalled at the heavy implementation of 1:1 Chromebooks and EdTech platforms in his middle school. We have a point of comparison, as the school our son attended for 4th and 5th grades used almost 100% analog curriculum. He was engaged and we could see deep learning occurring. We have been dismayed at how gaming and constant distraction seems to have become the norm in his current classroom culture. Middle school students are able to find endless work-arounds to IT restrictions on the Chromebooks to play games, which is wiring their brains for distraction, addiction and an inability to focus or think deeply. Students, when caught playing games and off-task, are told that they are not being “digitally responsible,” when their brains are not developmentally equipped to control their impulses. Students are required to take Chromebooks home to complete assignments, which is a direct intrusion into family life and is negatively affecting family dynamics by creating a home environment of constant stress and frustration for both parents and children.

And now we are seeing how AI in its infancy is already causing problems. Our son has access to AI on his school-issued device and resorts to it often. His math homework is all digital and multiple choice, with students allowed to guess 2 times, and without having to show their work. Our son uses AI to solve math problems, but he is not learning from using AI; it is simply a crutch. Dr. Jared Horvath, educator turned neuroscientist, has referred to AI use in classroom learning as “Wikipedia on steroids.” Students’ increasing reliance on AI, and the lack of regulations as to students’ access to AI in schools, is extremely concerning as a parent. Children do not have the capacity to discern and manage AI. There should be an age restriction and safety guardrails on teens.

Thank you for listening to my testimony.