



February 24th, 2026

The Honorable Michael Marcotte
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Re: H650, Educational Technology Products

Dear Chair Marcotte:

On behalf of the Software and Information Industry Association (SIIA), we write to offer our perspective on H 650.

By way of background, SIIA is the principal trade association for the software and digital information industries worldwide. Our nearly 400 member companies and associations represent the diverse landscape of digital content providers across academic publishing, education technology, financial information, and data analytics. We serve as the leading voice for the ed tech industry, representing members who partner with K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to develop and deliver software applications, digital instructional content, online learning services, assessments, and related technologies that serve millions of learners nationwide

When technology is safely and actively integrated into the classroom through evidence-based educational tools, it transforms digital engagement into an inclusive and powerful learning resource. While we share your commitment to student privacy and well-being when interacting with ed tech, H 650 outlines issues that are already thoughtfully addressed by local schools. We urge you to look to local leaders and support their efforts through additional funding to build local capacity, not to create an additional state program that complicates school administration even more. Our specific concerns with the legislation are outlined below:

Ed Tech Works

We're pleased this bill recognizes the need to intentionally integrate technology. Evidence suggests that when intentionally integrated, educational technology significantly accelerates student achievement. A landmark RAND Corporation study¹ found that blended learning models—which combine digital software with traditional instruction—can effectively double the typical annual learning gains for students in subjects like Algebra. This is supported by SRI International's research² on platforms like ASSISTments, which showed that providing students with immediate digital feedback on homework resulted in 75% more learning compared to traditional methods, while specifically closing achievement gaps for struggling learners.

¹John F. Pane et al., *Does an Algebra Course with Tutoring Software Improve Student Learning?* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RB9746>.

²Jeremy Roschelle et al., "Online Mathematics Homework Increases Student Achievement," *AERA Open* 2, no. 4 (October–December 2016): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858416673968>.

Furthermore, the 2025 HMH Educator Confidence Report³ indicates that these tools are essential for teacher sustainability, with 68% of U.S. educators reporting that ed tech saves them an average of five hours per week on administrative tasks. Far from replacing the human element, modern ed tech acts as a force multiplier; it automates the "busy work" so that teachers can reinvest their time into high-value, one-on-one mentorship and data-driven interventions that prevent students from falling behind.

Local Control Must be a Priority

We are concerned that this bill removes the ability for local communities to make decisions on what works for their schools and families. H 650 would require Vermont school districts to adapt their systems to state mandates without consideration for local community needs. Furthermore, H 650 ignores the rigorous, multi-step vetting processes that many school districts already have in place to ensure both student safety and educational efficacy. By shifting this authority to the Secretary of State, H.650 would replace a proven, localized, and expert-led system with a rigid administrative hurdle that risks slowing down classroom innovation without adding any meaningful layer of protection beyond what Vermont's districts already provide.

Burdensome "Pre-Market Approval" Requirements

As mentioned above, H 650 establishes a de facto pre-market registry approval system, prohibiting schools from using any product not certified by the Secretary of State. This shifts the authority over curriculum and tools from local educators to a state administrative office that may lack the resources to evaluate thousands of rapidly evolving digital tools. The subjective certification standards, allowing the Secretary to consider "any other factor," create significant regulatory uncertainty for providers.

Overbroad and Ambiguous Definitions

The bill broadly defines "educational technology product," covering any software that "may collect, process, or transmit student data" for teaching purposes, which could inadvertently sweep in general-purpose tools like cloud storage, learning management and communication platforms, or even basic productivity software. Furthermore, the trigger for compliance is "use at a school with or without a contract," creating a legal trap for providers whose tools are used organically by teachers without formal procurement.

We support the efforts to improve educational outcomes for learners in Vermont. We welcome the opportunity to share our expertise and look forward to working with the legislature to ensure technology serves as a bridge to learning rather than a barrier.

Sincerely,

Software & Information Industry Association

³Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, *2025 Educator Confidence Report* (Boston: HMH Education Company, 2025), <https://www.hmhco.com/educator-confidence-report>.

