

## **2021 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY PRIORITY**

### **SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY**

Protecting children’s safety and their school records online and ensuring their access to high-quality digital educational opportunities is critical in the 21st century. Meaningful education data can provide positive benefits to students’ academic growth and assist teachers and families in creating more personalized learning plans to meet every child’s needs. Federal and state laws must be updated to better protect our children and their educational information online while increasing students’ access to the technological services they need to succeed in a 21st-century learning environment.

North Carolina PTA recognizes that much of learning today takes place online, and it is essential for every student to be able to continue their education at home. Unfortunately, there are still far too many children in North Carolina and the U.S. who lack access to adequate internet services when they leave school. According to a 2018 report from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), nearly 39% of households in the U.S. with school-age children lack access to the internet.

North Carolina PTA will support initiatives as well as encourage and advocate for legislation and policies that:

- Ensure children’s identities are protected online, and families and students have reasonable control over the collection, storage, and use of relevant personal education information—parents should know their rights under the law to protect their child’s personal and educational information.
- Update current laws to improve the protection of student educational records and the collection of information gathered online.
- Increases funding for technology in classrooms and technology-related curriculum.
- Decrease the digital divide and expand student access to broadband services at home and outside the school building.
- Increases access to high-speed internet for students and staff (Broadband, WiFi, and Internet) and that every child has access to 21st-century technology.
- Provide teachers and school officials with the training they need to ensure data is meaningfully used for educational purposes while keeping it protected and secured.
- Ensure parents and families have access to educational information and can interpret and use this data to support and improve their child’s education.