



K12 SIX



BACK TO SCHOOL SAFELY: CYBERSECURITY FOR K-12 SCHOOLS FACT SHEET

On August 8, 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration hosted a special K-12 cybersecurity event entitled, Back to School Safely: Cybersecurity for K-12 Schools. The event featured remarks by federal, school system, and private sector leaders and the announcement of several new initiatives and resources to help school systems defend their communities from emerging cybersecurity threats. The official White House statement summarizes key resources and commitments: "[Biden-Harris Administration Launches New Efforts to Strengthen America's K-12 Schools' Cybersecurity](#)"

Announcements and resources related to this convening are compiled below in several categories, including:

- Information about the *Back to School Safely: Cybersecurity for K-12 Schools* White House Summit itself
- New U.S. Department of Education (ED) commitments and resources
- New U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) commitments and resources
- New private sector commitments and resources
- Statements of support from K-12 organizations and associations

While more announcements were made than are compiled below, only significant new commitments and resources are highlighted. This fact sheet will be updated periodically as new information becomes available.

K-12 Cybersecurity Summit

- Video archive of event: "[First Lady Jill Biden Hosts the Back to School Safely: Cybersecurity for K-12 Schools](#)"
- U.S. Secretary of Education Cardona Remarks: "[Secretary Cardona Emphasizes Need for Cyber Security in K-12 Schools in White House Remarks](#)"
- U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Mayorkas Remarks: "[Secretary Mayorkas Delivers Remarks at White House Summit, Back to School Safely: Cybersecurity for K-12 Schools](#)"



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U.S. Department of Education Commitments/Resources

The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education (ED) is designated as the K-12 sector's [Sector Risk Management Agency](#) (SRMA). As such, ED is tasked with building the mechanisms to collaborate with K-12 education organizations and agencies to identify, understand, and mitigate threats, vulnerabilities, and risks facing the sector. At the urging of the U.S. Government Accountability Office¹—and in partnership with CISA—ED committed to taking steps to enhance its cybersecurity risk management support for school systems nationwide.

- U.S. Department of Education Summary: "[U.S. Department of Education Announces Key K-12 Cybersecurity Resilience Efforts](#)"
- NEW commitment: ED will convene a K-12 sector [Government Coordinating Council](#) to "coordinate activities, policy, and communications between federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments that strengthen the cyber defenses and resilience of K-12 schools."
- NEW guidance: Joint US Department of Education and CISA guidance: "[K-12 Digital Infrastructure Brief: Defensible and Resilient](#)" (direct: [here](#))

U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Commitments/Resources

As the nation's cyber defense agency and the National Coordinator for critical infrastructure security and resilience, CISA is charged with understanding, managing, and reducing risk to the cyber and physical infrastructure Americans rely on every hour of every day, including supporting the K-12 sector. In partnership with ED, CISA committed to expand on free services they provide to the K-12 sector, including risk assessments and tabletop exercises. [See here for a comprehensive list](#) of no-cost cybersecurity resources and tools compiled by CISA and/or [contact your CISA regional office](#) for more information.

- NEW resource: "[Cybersecurity for K-12 Education](#)"
- NEW guidance: "[Cybersecurity Guidance for K-12 Technology Acquisitions.](#)" (direct: [here](#))

¹ U.S. GAO. "Critical Infrastructure Protection: Education Should Take Additional Steps to Help Protect K-12 Schools from Cyber Threats (GAO-22-105024)." 13 October 2021. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-105024>; U.S. GAO. "Critical Infrastructure Protection: Additional Federal Coordination Is Needed to Enhance K-12 Cybersecurity (GAO-23-105480)." 20 October 2022. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-105480>



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Private Sector Commitments/Resources

- AWS
 - Blog: "[AWS launches \\$20 million K12 cyber grant program, joins White House to address cybersecurity for K12 education](#)"
 - Resource: "[AWS K12 Cyber Grant Program](#)"
- Cloudflare
 - Blog: "[Project Cybersafe Schools: Bringing security tools for free to small K-12 school districts in the US](#)"
 - Resource: "[Project Cybersafe Schools](#)"
- CompTIA
 - Press release: "[CompTIA joins new White House efforts to strengthen cybersecurity in the nation's K-12 schools](#)"
- Google
 - Resource: "[K-12 Cybersecurity Guidebook](#)"
- ClassLink
 - Press release: "[ClassLink Makes Secure by Design Pledge at White House Convening for K-12 Cybersecurity](#)"
- Clever
 - Blog: "[Clever joins forces with the White House to strengthen cybersecurity in schools](#)"
- D2L
 - Press release: "[D2L Invited to Speak at White House Summit; Reaffirms its Commitment to Strong Cybersecurity](#)"
- Powerschool
 - Press release: "[PowerSchool Joins White House K-12 Education Technology Secure by Design Pledge & Announces New Commitments to Education Ecosystem Security](#)"



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K-12 Organization Statements

- AASA: "[AASA Leadership Joins White House Summit Highlighting Importance of Cybersecurity for K-12 Schools](#)"
- CoSN
 - "[CoSN Applauds White House Cybersecurity Summit for K-12 Schools](#)"
 - "[Back to School Month: Let's Step Towards a Stronger and More Secure future for Our Nation's Schools](#)"
- K12 SIX: "[K12 SIX Lauds Whole-of-Nation, Whole-of-Government Response to School Cybersecurity Crisis](#)"

The K12 Security Information eXchange (K12 SIX) is a national non-profit membership organization solely dedicated to protecting the U.S. K-12 sector from emerging cybersecurity threats, such as ransomware and data breaches. Visit www.k12six.org to learn more.

AASA, The School Superintendents Association is the premier association for school system leaders and serves as the national voice for public education and district leadership on Capitol Hill. Visit www.aasa.org to learn more.