The last few years have seen an astronomical increase in screen time and "blended learning" being required in schools, starting even in preschool and kindergarten. Many schools require students to pay a fee for a personal Chromebook or similar device (also called a 1:1 program) and students can often take this computer home, which brings with it a new level of privacy, tracking and security concerns. Many programs are adaptive, with hidden algorithms collecting every key click, and monitoring how a child learns, behaves. This is "personalized learning" and it has many parents, education advocates and teachers concerned. Even RAND researchers see little evidence to support online personalized learning, "The evidence base is very weak at this point," said John F. Pane, a senior scientist and the group's distinguished chair in education innovation.

With people so enamored with the latest in technology, legislators and school administrators are quick to legislate and school districts to buy the latest software and portable computers, with the students paying the price of more screen time and less time interacting with a teacher and their peers. The interaction is part of a well-rounded experience in education and a generation of students are missing out.

Another aspect of school is it provides an opportunity for students to interact with each other, develop social skills and learn how to effectively and appropriately communicate. With so much time now spent in front of a computer, students are less likely to learn the skills that prepare them for life.

It's time to consider all the aspects of the computerization of our public schools before going for the next big thing in technology. It's time to consider the children.

-Dora Taylor