



**ASPEN TECH
POLICY HUB**

PROJECT



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Racial Equity in Edtech

Addressing racial bias in artificial intelligence used in education technologies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Black and Brown students in American public schools battle discrimination in many forms: higher rates of suspension, less advanced academic tracks, and a lack of cultural responsiveness from predominantly white teachers. Education technology (edtech) products that use AI and machine learning can amplify already existing biases and introduce new ones. Education technologies promise to personalize learning, identify at-risk students, and automate administrative tasks for educators, but many of these tools do not take into account the unique challenges facing the Black and Brown students that make up over half of the American K-12 public school population. This project proposes a Racial Equity Toolkit for AI in Edtech to enable companies to uncover and mitigate racial bias at each stage of their product design and development, from ideation to implementation. Additionally, it puts forward procurement guidelines to help schools assess edtech platforms for racial equity before purchasing.



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THE PROBLEM

Over half of students in American K-12 public schools are Black or Brown. However, most edtech companies don't prioritize the experience of these children during product development. Black and Brown students in America already battle discrimination in many forms throughout the school day: they are suspended at higher rates, are placed on lower academic tracks, and are not taught culturally relevant content to which they can relate. Edtech products that use AI and machine learning exacerbate these biases and introduce new ones. Critics note that edtech increases students' screen time and poses risks to data privacy, and digital equity efforts have focused on lack of access to the internet and devices at home, but AI bias remains unprioritized. Without explicit attention from schools and edtech companies, new technology products will continue to exacerbate the already large achievement gap that plagues Black and Brown students today.

“ *Edtech products that use AI and machine learning can amplify already existing biases and introduce new ones.* ”

THE SOLUTION

Edtech companies must account for racial bias in the design and use of their products and prioritize the experience of Black and Brown children. This project proposes that edtech companies use the AI in Education Toolkit for Racial Equity to uncover and mitigate racial bias in each stage of product design and development, from ideation to implementation. Schools must also hold edtech companies accountable by prioritizing racial equity during their procurement processes. By asking the right questions through the procurement process using the School Procurement Guide, schools can champion students' needs and incentivize edtech companies to build more equitable products that are designed for students of all races.

ABOUT THE HUB

The Aspen Tech Policy Hub is a Bay Area policy incubator, training a new generation of tech policy entrepreneurs. We take tech experts, teach them the policy process, and support them in creating outside-the-box solutions to society's problems.

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