

November 3, 2022

Office of the National Cyber Director
716 Jackson Place NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Cyber Workforce Request for Information Response

Common Sense Media appreciates the opportunity to provide information to the Office of the National Cyber Director (ONCD) as it develops its national strategy on cyber training and education, digital awareness, and the cyber workforce. Common Sense Media is the nation's leading independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping kids and families thrive in an increasingly digital world. We provide unbiased information, sound advice, and innovative tools to help keep kids safe online. As a trusted resource, we empower parents, teachers, and policymakers to ensure that the power of media and technology is a positive force in children's lives.

I. Overview of Common Sense Media's Digital Citizenship Curriculum and Cyber Education Work

Common Sense Education's [Digital Citizenship Curriculum](#) was first launched in 2010.¹ This curriculum was designed and developed in partnership with Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and guided by research with thousands of educators. It is available to educators and schools for free, thanks to the generous support of funders. The Digital Citizenship Curriculum addresses critical issues facing children in a fast-changing world of media and technology so students can learn to think critically and develop good habits to navigate digital dilemmas in their everyday lives.

Today, more than 1.3 million teachers use our digital citizenship resources worldwide, and more than 70% of U.S. schools use our curriculum.² Our curriculum is used in 45,163 Title I schools, or 74% of all U.S. schools that qualify for schoolwide Title I funding.

The curriculum is designed to be flexible and easy for teachers to implement, and it covers six topics:³ (1) media balance and well-being, (2) privacy and security, (3) digital footprint and identity, (4) relationships and communications, (5) cyberbullying, digital drama, and hate speech, and (6) news and media literacy. It includes 73 lessons across 13 grades for ages 5 to 18 with 32 videos. Grades 2-12 include six lessons per year and grades K-1 include three lessons per year. The

¹ James, C., Weinstein, E., & Mendoza, K. (2021). Teaching digital citizens in today's world: Research and insights behind the Common Sense K-12 Digital Citizenship Curriculum. (Version 2). San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media.

² Common Sense Media, Digital Citizenship, <https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship>.

³ Common Sense Media, Digital Citizenship Curriculum Overview, <https://www.commonsense.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-09/2020-digitalcitizenshipcurriculum-overview-final-release.pdf>.

lessons range from 30 minutes (K-2), to 45 minutes (grades 3-8), to 50 minutes (grades 9-12). Students tackle complex topics in engaging ways, including with characters and song videos for primary schoolers to digital dilemma scenarios and "teen voices" videos for secondary schoolers. Select lessons also have accompanying interactive games and extension activities.

Educators utilizing the lesson plans to teach students can also use the online professional development resources the curriculum offers, like self-paced training and webinars. The curriculum also aims to educate families, and offers family engagement resources like tip sheets, advice, and turnkey presentations. To make these resources more accessible, all parent materials are also available in Spanish, and select materials are available in Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalong, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

The curriculum aligns with U.S. education standards, including Common Core (ELA), ISTE, CASEL, AASL, and TEKS. It can also be used as a criterion for CIPA compliance for E-rate.

In the Privacy and Security unit, students learn how to protect personal information and gain a deeper understanding of their data privacy rights so they can advocate for themselves and others.

A. Updating Privacy and Security lesson plans

Currently, our education team is working to further expand on the Privacy and Security unit so that students will have more opportunities to learn how to protect their privacy and be secure online. We are adding cybersecurity extension activities to the "Additional Resources" section of the lessons under Privacy and Security for middle and high school students. Instead of reinventing the wheel, we are amplifying the established work by other trusted sources, reviewing major players' content, and partnering with aligned sources to recommend their content as extension activities. These activities will have a close connection to the topic of the existing lesson. For example, in "Don't Feed the Phish," a 6th grade lesson, students learn about internet scams and how to avoid being tricked to share private information. We plan to recommend a cybersecurity extension activity related to authentication, such as how to protect oneself with advanced methods, like two-factor, multi-factor, or biometric authentication.

B. Educating teachers about cybersecurity

We are also focusing our attention on educating teachers about cybersecurity. One of the most effective ways to scale cyber education is to educate the teachers who would be teaching this content so that they can reach even more students about cybersecurity every year. In addition to refreshing our Digital Citizenship Curriculum, our education team will offer our network of educators other resources and opportunities to learn about cybersecurity.

For example, Common Sense created Teacher's Essential Guides (TEG), housed on our website, which are articles in Q&A format that answer questions about a broad topic related to digital

citizenship or teaching with technology. These guides also provide a curated list of resources and recommendations we have vetted for educators. TEGs have been a popular content type that have allowed us to address a broad set of issues and amplify resources related to a topic in a digestible way. Examples of existing Teacher's Essential Guides include our TEG on Social Emotional Learning and Digital Life, Cyberbullying Prevention, and Digital Citizenship for CIPA and E-Rate.⁴

In Q1 of 2023, we will publish a TEG on cybersecurity education that will answer questions such as, "What is cybersecurity education?" and "Why is it important?" We also have an education email newsletter, which currently has 270,000 subscribers, that features a weekly topic that is compelling and relevant to educators. We will devote one edition of the newsletter to cybersecurity education early in 2023, written by one of the experts we work with or featuring resources from aligned partners.

In addition, we will host a webinar for teachers in the spring of 2023 featuring a cybersecurity expert. Our edWeb webinar series features thought leaders and experts from education to provide monthly online professional learning for educators. We have almost 32,000 members in our edWeb community, and edWeb's marketing distribution reaches new educators through MDR lists. Educators can attend our live webinar or watch the post-webinar recording, and we have ranged from 500-1,000 live attendees per webinar. After we host a webinar featuring an expert in cybersecurity education, we will share our Teacher's Essential Guide to Cybersecurity Education, post the recording of the webinar to our Professional Development webpage, and promote the webinar via social media so more people can watch it.

II. Recommendations for Training, Education, and Awareness: Sub-area K-12 Education

Increasing cyber educating and awareness are key to helping people protect themselves online and create a stronger overall national cyber infrastructure. To prepare as many people as possible to navigate the online world in a safe and secure manner, we must empower and equip K-12 educators to teach students about these topics, and make these educational opportunities as accessible as possible. ONCD can play a central role in accomplishing this.

There are a number of organizations that have crafted strong and valuable content and resources, and distribution mechanisms for those materials, around cybersecurity education and awareness. ONCD can serve as a clearinghouse of existing organizations and resources and can also amplify and distribute resources from organizations it has vetted and recognized as reputable voices offering quality content. For example, it can establish a one stop shop on its website that features all recommended cybersecurity education and awareness content.

One section of the ONCD website or resource page should be dedicated to educators, who could find in one place (1) resources that educate teachers on the basics of cybersecurity, such as

⁴ See Common Sense Media's Teacher's Essential Guides on [Social Emotional Learning and Digital Life](#), [Cyberbullying Prevention](#), and [Digital Citizenship for CIPA and E-Rate](#).

Common Sense's upcoming Teacher's Essential Guide and recorded webinars, and (2) curriculum and lesson plans teachers can utilize in their classroom to teach students, such as Common Sense Education's Digital Citizenship Curriculum and curriculum developed by other organizations.

Another section of the website or resource page should be dedicated to students and parents. This section should include additional activities for students interested in learning more about topics like privacy and cybersecurity, list opportunities like summer camps, and offer family engagement resources for parents to use in talking to their kids. Resources in languages besides English should be clearly labeled so families that need non-English resources can easily locate them.

Once ONCD has established this website or page that can serve as a cybersecurity education and awareness repository, it should utilize marketing strategies to advertise the existence of these resources to targeted populations. Awareness efforts could include social media, where the Office can share the link to the website itself, television and radio advertising, and advertising in publications and outlets that are widely viewed by teachers and students. The marketing campaigns can feature different resources on the website or promote specific opportunities like summer camps for students focused on cybersecurity or workforce development programs.

In addition, awareness efforts should also include more directed outreach to local communities. It can be difficult to ensure that valuable information gets to underrepresented populations, such as those in low-income communities or families who predominantly do not speak English at home. It is especially important that this information reaches these populations because while they are increasingly using digital media and technology, they may not be exposed to education and awareness about the security risks and other dangers that exist online today. ONCD could partner with existing organizations that have significant reach into lower-income schools and schools with large non-English-speaking populations to increase these populations' access to and utilization of cybersecurity education materials. This would increase the diversity of students who can learn how to become smart digital citizens who might also become interested in career opportunities in the field.

ONCD has a valuable opportunity to amplify existing cyber education content and resources, which will increase widespread awareness around these issues and prepare the largest number of young people possible to learn how to navigate the online world.

III. Summary of Recommendations

In short, Common Sense Media is developing and collecting resources to educate students and teachers about cybersecurity and planning for wide distribution to increase education and awareness about cybersecurity. Common Sense recommends that ONCD take the following steps to amplify the efforts of organizations like Common Sense and others:

- Emphasize reaching teachers, as well as students, with cyber education and awareness content and messaging.
- Establish a *one-stop cyber shop* on its website that features all recommended cybersecurity education and awareness content from trusted organizations that ONCD has vetted. This website should dedicate one page to resources for educators and one page to resources for students and parents.
- Utilize marketing strategies to advertise the website and its resources, including through social media, television and radio advertising, and education publications and other publications with strong teacher and student reach.
- Direct outreach to local communities to ensure this information gets to underrepresented populations, such as by partnering with existing organizations that reach lower-income schools and schools with large non-English-speaking populations.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this request for information and we look forward to working with ONCD as the Office continues to develop its national cyber strategy.

Respectfully Submitted,

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