

FTC to set its sights on ed tech companies

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Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

The Federal Trade Commission on Thursday will vote on a measure meant to warn companies the agency will prioritize taking action against children's online privacy violations by education technology companies.

Why it matters: Remote schooling during the pandemic led to an explosion in the use of ed tech services, [raising concerns](#) about whether those companies are safeguarding children's data.

Driving the news: The FTC, now up to full strength with the addition of privacy expert Alvaro Bedoya as the third Democratic commissioner, will vote on a policy statement on education technology and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA.

- Ahead of its meeting, the agency noted the policy statement "makes clear that parents and schools must not be required to sign up for surveillance as a condition of access to tools needed to learn."
- COPPA requires websites to get parents' consent to collect children's information. Schools can consent on parents' behalf for data collection, but only to use the information for an educational purpose.

What they're saying: "I'm hoping that it signals that the FTC is going to be looking very closely at how companies are actually using the data they're collecting from children in schools," said Josh Golin, CEO of Fairplay, an advocacy group focused on ending marketing to children.

- "What we need to see after a policy statement is an enforcement action against a fairly big player because that's how you change the dynamic."