

IOWA'S CYBER READINESS STARTS HERE

Cybersecurity Readiness Guide for Your State

A quick, state-by-state look at how K–12 schools are protecting student data, meeting cybersecurity laws, and preparing for digital threats.



State-Specific Laws

Key data privacy and cybersecurity laws for K–12 schools.



Staff Readiness

FERPA alignment and annual phishing training.



Incident Preparedness

Breach notification and response steps.



Nationwide Context

How your state compares in K–12 cyber readiness.

K-12 Threat Landscape

National

K-12 schools are increasingly targeted by cyberattacks that disrupt learning, compromise student data, and cost districts hundreds of thousands of dollars in recovery.

Preparing now helps minimize risk, protect families, and avoid costly downtime.



- 92% of K-12 data breaches begin with phishing
- \$50K-\$1M average recovery cost
- Cyber incidents are now the leading cause of school closures unrelated to weather

Iowa

In Iowa, districts must comply with [Code § 279.71](#), [715C.2](#), and [FERPA](#), which govern how schools handle student data and respond to cyber incidents.

Understanding Your State's Cybersecurity Laws:

- Code § 279.71** What Iowa Schools Should Know About the Student Data Privacy Act
- 715C.2** FERPA Compliance in Iowa: How to Keep Student Records Secure
- FERPA** Responding to a Data Breach in Iowa K-12: What Schools Must Know



School Cybersecurity Readiness Checklist

Network

- Ensure **firewalls are configured** to block unauthorized traffic
- Enable intrusion detection/prevention systems (IDS/IPS)**
- Conduct **regular vulnerability scans** on school networks
- Enforce **network segmentation** (separate student/staff networks)
- Implement **DNS filtering** to block malicious sites

Account & Access

- Require **multi-factor authentication (MFA)** for all admin accounts
- Enforce **strong password policies** (length, complexity, expiration)
- Implement **role-based access control (RBAC)** for staff and students
- Set **automatic account lockouts** after failed login attempts
- Regularly **audit user access & remove inactive accounts**

Device & Endpoint

- Ensure all **devices have endpoint protection & antivirus software**
- Enable **automatic software & OS updates** on all school-owned devices
- Restrict **USB and removable media access** to prevent data theft
- Deploy **mobile device management (MDM) for remote monitoring**
- Require **full-disk encryption** for staff and admin laptops

Email & Phishing

- Configure **DMARC, SPF, and DKIM** to prevent email spoofing
- Implement **phishing simulation training** for staff & students
- Enable **email filtering** to block spam & malicious attachments
- Use **safe browsing tools** to prevent credential theft
- Implement a real-time threat reporting system** to streamline user-reported attacks, rapidly remove malicious emails, and reinforce ongoing security awareness.

CyberNut provides phishing simulation training and a real-time threat reporting system.

START YOUR FREE PHISHING AUDIT HERE

Data Protection & Compliance

- Encrypt **sensitive student & staff data** (both in transit & at rest)
- Ensure **backups are performed daily** and stored securely
- Regularly test **data recovery procedures**
- Implement **data retention & deletion policies**
- Comply with federal regulations like: **FERPA, CIPA, and COPPA**
- Comply with states regulations like: **Code § 279.71, § 715C.2, and FERPA**

Incident Response & Disaster

- Develop a **cybersecurity incident response plan**
- Conduct **quarterly security drills** (ransomware, data breach scenarios)
- Ensure staff knows **who to contact in case of a cyber incident**
- Maintain **cyber insurance coverage** for potential breaches
- Review & update **disaster recovery plans annually**

Resources & Next Steps



National Resources

Explore trusted national organizations dedicated to student data privacy and K-12 cybersecurity.



Department of Education
Student Privacy Policy Office (SPPO)

[Learn more](#)



Federal Trade Commission
Protecting Student Privacy

[Learn more](#)



National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Cybersecurity Framework

[Learn more](#)



Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) K-12 Resources

[Learn more](#)

Iowa Resources

Explore state-specific departments, privacy laws, and cybersecurity initiatives supporting K-12 protection.



State Department of Education

[Learn more](#)



Student Data Privacy Laws or Acts

[Learn more](#)



Cybersecurity Frameworks, Regulations, or Funding Initiatives

[Learn more](#)

CYBERNUT RESOURCES



Staying Ahead of the Curve: Cybersecurity in the Age of AI

Learn how AI is transforming cyber threats in schools and what your district can do to stay secure.

Schools are high-value cyber targets. This report explains the latest AI-driven threats and gives district leaders practical strategies to defend against them.



[DOWNLOAD](#)

CyberNut's Adaptive Cybersecurity Training Platform Overview

[LEARN MORE](#)

Our platform equips K-12 institutions with essential tools to combat cyber threats. Experience a comprehensive approach to security awareness through engaging simulations and real-time analytics.

FREE PHISHING VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

The goal is to quickly and discreetly identify your district's cybersecurity vulnerabilities. CyberNut's baseline phishing assessment quickly and quietly measures your district's current cybersecurity risk—without disrupting school operations.

-  Quick & Invisible
-  Actionable Results
-  Zero Setup Required
-  Budget-Friendly Evidence

[GET YOUR FREE
ASSESSMENT NOW](#)