wellness & safety
Schools Insurance Authority
SIA for Kids
SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP
Volume XXXV, No. 5 • May-Jun 2025

Cyber Safety Corner

Patch management in K-12 education

Keeping schools secure and running smoothly

Gustavo Mastroianni, SIA Chief Information Security Officer

Technology is now central to learning and administration in K-12 schools. From Chromebooks and smartboards to cloud-based learning platforms and student information systems, modern education depends on secure, functional software. But as schools become more digital, they also become more vulnerable to cyber threats.

Patch management, the process of keeping software up to date, is one of the most effective and affordable ways to protect school systems and ensure that everything runs smoothly. Let's explore why it's so important in K-12 environments and how schools can build reliable patch management.

What is patch management?

Patch management is the routine process of identifying, testing, and applying updates (called "patches") to school software and devices. These patches fix bugs, close security holes, and sometimes add new features. In a school district this might include:

- Student and teacher laptops and tablets
- Classroom technology such as interactive displays
- Administrative systems (e.g., SIS, HR, finance tools)
- Network infrastructure (routers, firewalls, servers)
- Learning management systems (LMS)

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May is National Bike Month

Dust off your bike and hit the road

Lyn Poll, M.S., SIA Prevention Services

The days are longer and warmer, spring is in the air, so what better way to enjoy the great outdoors than on a bike? It's time to dust off those seats, oil up those chains, pump up those tires and hit the road and trails.

Join communities from coast to coast in helping to celebrate National Bike Month. Whether riding for fun, fitness, or taking essential trips to work or shops, be part of the celebration. But before you head out into the great outdoors with your trusty wheels (or maybe "rusty" wheels), ensure that your bike is safe to ride.

Follow this "ABC Quick Check" guide developed by the League of American Bicyclists to help you make sure your bike is working properly:

Air: Make sure your bike tires are inflated properly. The recommended range of PSI (pressure per square inch) is located on the side of the tire. Proper pressure can affect safety, speed and comfort. To learn more about bike tire pressure click here: Bike Tire PSI: How Much Air Should You Put in Your Bike Tire? II REI.

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Cyber Safety Corner

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Why patch management matters in K-12

1. Cyber security and student data protection

Schools handle sensitive student and staff data. Unfortunately, they've become frequent targets for ransomware and other cyber attacks. Many of these attacks exploit unpatched software vulnerabilities. A strong patching routine helps prevent breaches that could disrupt learning and compromise personal information.

2. Instructional continuity

A failed app or a frozen device can derail a lesson. Applying software patches keeps devices stable and reduces frustrating downtime for students and teachers.

3. Compliance and funding requirements

Education regulations like FERPA and cyber security insurance policies often require schools to maintain secure systems. Patch management helps demonstrate due diligence and avoid potential consequences from non-compliance.

4. Limited IT Resources

Most school districts operate with small IT teams. Regular patching helps prevent larger problems down the road—saving time, money and stress.

Best practices for K-12 patch management

Automate where possible: Tools like Microsoft Intune for Education, Jamf for Apple devices or Google Admin Console for Chromebooks can streamline patching.

Prioritize security patches: Focus first on fixes for known vulnerabilities, especially those rated "critical" or actively exploited.

Educate staff: Non-IT staff should understand why updates are important and avoid delaying or bypassing them.

Make patching routine: Set a monthly or quarterly schedule for patch reviews and build them into your overall IT planning calendar.

Keep testing simple: Even a quick check on five to 10 devices can help avoid major deployment issues.

For K-12 schools, patch management isn't just about updates, it's about protecting learning time, securing sensitive data, and supporting teachers and students. With limited budgets and busy IT teams, automation and consistency are key. By making patch management a regular, documented part of IT operations, schools or districts can reduce risks, avoid costly disruptions, and help everyone focus on what matters most: education.

"Why Patch Management Matters in K-12" and "Best Practices for K-12 Patch Management" were drafted with AI Assistance (ChatGPT) and reviewed for accuracy.

Check out these fun, family-friendly events at Safetyville

Grab your helmet and bike for a "wheely" fun time riding around Safetyville's enclosed 3.5-acre site. These family events feature helmet fittings, bike safety demos, and fun family activities to practice bike skills.

Bike Rodeo
Saturday, May 3
11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Free pre-registration required for RIDERS ONLY.

Pancake Palooza and Bike Ride
Saturday, May 17
Breakfast 9-11 a.m./Bike riding 11 a.m. to noon
Cost: $10 pre-registration required for all attendees

SAFETY CENTER INC.
Safetyville USA
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS
THE ONE-OF-A-KIND CHILDREN'S PROGRAM OF
SAFETY CENTER

Family Bike Nights
Thursdays, May 8, May 15, May 22
4-6:30 p.m.
Free pre-registration required for RIDERS ONLY.

Click here Safety Education | Volunteer Opportunities | Children's Safety for additional information or to register for the events or call (916) 438-3380. Safetyville USA is at 3909 Bradshaw Road, Sacramento 95827.

Spring into exercise and enjoy the sunny days ahead

Anthony Ricci, M.S., SIA Prevention Services

The warm weather months invite us to spend more time outside and be more active. Outdoor exercise is one of the best things we all can do for our health and here are some worthwhile safety tips to keep in mind while planning outdoor activities:

Watch sun exposure - Getting more sun has several health benefits. Spending more time outside can aid your immune system, mood, vitamin D production, sleep, and reduce inflammation. Excessive sun exposure, on the other hand, can cause sunburn and, potentially, skin cancer. So if you're planning to spend a lot of time outside in the warm months ahead, first consult your doctor about proper skin care.

Get regular sleep - The sun is going to come out early and go down late, which is great for adding new activities during the day. But don't forget to maintain your same sleep schedule. It's incredibly important to wake up and go to sleep around the same time every day to preserve sleep quality. Consistently staying up late can disrupt sleep and lead to ongoing fatigue.

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National Bike Month

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Brakes: Check brake pads for wear and tear. Firmly squeeze the brake levers. There should be a gap between the levers and handlebar about the width of a thumb.

Chain and cranks: Pull on the bike's cranks, the components that attach the pedals to the bike, and make sure they aren't loose. The bike chain also should be free of gunk and rust.

Quick release: Make sure all quick releases, which hold the wheels on, are tight and closed, if applicable.

Check: Take your bike for a slow, brief ride to make sure it's working properly.

It's also recommended that you check tires for bald spots, damage or loose threads and replace if noted.

Biking is one of the healthiest, low-impact exercises around and an excellent way to run errands, get to and from work or school, enjoy family time, and just have fun. So, air up those tires, check those brakes and take a ride in honor of this month-long pedal-pushing celebration.

Spotlight On...
EDCOE's 'Journey to Joy' Wellness Challenge

In January 160 El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) staff members embarked on an inspiring four-week *Journey to Joy* Wellness Challenge. This program was designed to uplift spirits, boost morale, and foster a sense of community through weekly activities and shared goals.

Throughout the program participants engaged in a variety of "Joy" activities aimed at promoting positivity, connection and personal wellness. Activities included everything from gratitude journaling and mindful movement to random acts of kindness and intentional self-care practices, all with the goal of contributing to the participants' overall well-being.

As participants completed these activities, they accumulated points and rewards highlighted by special digital "Joy" badges. Each participant also had the chance to win in weekly prize drawings.

The program led to many meaningful outcomes, such as:

- Increased awareness and practice of self-care
- More frequent and thoughtful interactions among coworkers
- A boost in camaraderie across teams
- Stronger and more supportive workplace relationships

With the help of SIA's Golden Carrot funds and a grant from CVT, this transformative program was expertly organized by Wellness team members Kim Stephens and Makayla Evans, whose dedication and commitment helped make the *Journey to Joy* a memorable success for all involved.

Congratulations on building a healthier, happier community—together. Keep that joy ripple flowing!

Spring into exercise

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Adjust slowly to warmer weather - As the days get warmer our bodies need time to adjust; it can take up to 14 days to fully acclimate to different temperatures. Try to avoid overheating by wearing the appropriate clothing, shielding your head from direct sunlight, and drinking plenty of water.

Try new things - Spring is a time to start fresh. The beautiful weather and longer days can be perfect for trying some new things outside. Walking, jogging, kayaking and gardening are just some of the great activities to enjoy when the weather warms up.

Bring friends to stay motivated - It's easy to start a new routine with good intentions, commitment and follow-through, only to gradually become unmotivated because the chosen activity has become too difficult or too hard to fit into a daily schedule. One way around this is to invite others to join in. Being part of a group will keep you accountable and focused on your goals, and will make trying new activities more enjoyable.

Don't start too fast - It's easy to go overboard and take on more activity than you can handle. Try to forget past benchmarks and instead treat each current activity as if you're doing it for the first time.

Free virtual trainings to enhance your life

SIA provides the staffs of member districts with virtual training on a variety of topics that apply to both personal and professional life. To learn more or register for any of the training courses listed below, click the course title or contact tfranco@sia-jpa.org. You also can join our email list to learn of future events at SIA – Schools Insurance Authority (sia-jpa.org).

5/1	Coping with Traumatic Events	5:30-6:30 p.m.
5/5	How to Simplify Your Life	5:30-6:30 p.m.
5/6	Positive Parenting	5:30-6:30 p.m.
5/14	Self-Care: Small Changes for Positive Results	5:30-6:30 p.m.
5/15	Support Through Perinatal Loss and Infertility	noon-1 p.m.
5/19	Supporting Mental Health Concerns With Friends and Family	5:30-6:30 p.m.
5/20	Understand and Embrace Diversity	530-6:30 p.m.
5/22	Understanding Anxiety	5:30-6:30 p.m.
5/27	Understanding Depression	5:30-6:30 p.m.
5/29	How to Overcome Negativity in the Workplace	noon-1 p.m.
6/2	Creating a Healthier Lifestyle	5:30-6:30 p.m.
6/3	Suicide Prevention	noon-1 p.m.
6/4	Social Media: Use and Misuse	5:30-6:30 p.m.
6/5	How to Make the Most of Feedback	5:30-6:30 p.m.
6/9	How to Improve Communication Skills for Employees	5:30-6:30 p.m.
6/11	Mindfulness	5:30-6:30 p.m.
6/12	Caring for Elders	noon-1 p.m.
6/23	How to Slow Down	5:30-6:30 p.m.
6/25	Making the Most of Your Work Day	5:30-6:30 p.m.
6/26	Creating a Respectful Workplace	5:30-6:30 p.m.

QUOTE TO NOTE

"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." - Anne Lamott, Author

Wellness & Safety is published by the Schools Insurance Authority, P.O. Box 276710, Sacramento, CA 95827-6710, (916) 364-1281, 1-877-SIA-KIDS. The SIA is a joint powers authority, composed of 37 members, that collectively provides workers' compensation, liability, property, and health benefit insurance coverage on behalf of its member districts. The SIA school districts are: Arcohe, Atwater, Buckeye, Camino, Center, Central Sierra ROP, El Dorado Co. Off. Ed., El Dorado High, Elk Grove, Elverta, Folsom-Cordova, Galt Elem., Galt High, Gold Oak, Gold Trail, Hayward, Indian Diggings, Latrobe, Merced City, Mother Lode, Natomas, North Bay SIA, Pioneer, Placerville, Pollock Pines, Rescue, River Delta, Robla, Sac. City, Sac. Co. Off. Ed., San Juan, Shasta-Trinity SIG, Silver Fork, Twin Rivers, Visions in Education Charter, and Woodland. SIA Officers: Executive Director — Brooks Rice; President – Chris Gilbert, Sacramento COE; Vice President — Wendy Frederickson, El Dorado COE; Secretary — Kristen Coates, Elk Grove USD; Newsletter: Lyn Poll, Prevention Services; CG Communications

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