BCASBO 2026 · CLOSING KEYNOTE

Protecting Student Outcomes Against AI-driven Cybercrime

How small "builder-defender" teams can use automation to scale their security

Palo Alto Networks — IBM Penticton — 9:45 am

Cybercrime is no longer an **IT problem.**

It is a threat to a student's **good day.**

Lost instruction days. A twelve-year-old's medical history on a criminal forum. A decade of reserves spent in a single week.

DECEMBER 2024

PowerSchool.

A company most parents had never heard of — holding the records of millions of Canadian students, teachers, and families.

5M+

Canadians exposed — students, teachers, families.
In some districts, records reaching back **decades**.

One stolen login. **No second lock.**

A support portal without multi-factor authentication. Not a genius — by his own admission in court, a teenager.

APRIL 2026

It happened **again.**

Canvas — the learning platform from Instructure. While you were packing for Penticton.

275M

people · ~9,000 institutions worldwide. The largest breach in the history of education — and the **second** at the same vendor in eight months.

TWO BREACHES. ONE LESSON.

01 Your security is the security of your weakest vendor.

02 Data you don't hold can't be stolen.

03 The prepared and connected came through best.

THE LANDSCAPE

What changed in twelve months

The attacker's only limit used to be **their own time.**

A human had to choose the target, write the lure, test the passwords one by one. It was labour — and labour doesn't scale.

That limit is **gone.**

Agentic AI: software that carries out the whole task — pick the target, write the lure, try the doors — on its own, around the clock.

$0

What it now costs a criminal to attack **one more** school district.

“Too small to target” **is no longer a defense.**

There is no obscurity left. No back of the line. If you are connected to the internet, you are worth an automated system’s free attention.

AND THE HALF THE HEADLINES SKIP

The same tools are on the shelf **for defenders.**

The same shelf. The same price collapse. The attackers got there first — they always do. But the tools are not theirs by right.

FOR THIRTY YEARS, TWO OPTIONS

Buy. Or hire.

A box no one can run. A team you can't find and couldn't afford. Neither works for a district your size.

THE THIRD PATH

The Builder-Defender

From doing the work — to **directing** it.

A small team that builds and supervises automation, and connects to others. One person can make a district operate like it has a security team.

THE QUESTION CHANGES

It's the **wrong question.**

"Can I afford a security team?" — the honest answer was always no. The new question: is the team I already have set up to punch above its weight? That's a setup problem, not a hiring problem — and setup problems, you can solve.

TWO MOVES

FIRST **Connect**

THEN **Automate**

MOVE ONE

Connect

The criminals **share**. The defenders work alone.

One break-in at one vendor becomes nine thousand institutions in a headline. That asymmetry is not necessary.

COLLECTIVE DEFENSE

An attack on **one** is a warning to **all.**

An ISAC is a **neighbourhood watch** — for a whole sector.

One member sees an attack; every member gets the warning the same hour. The second district gets hit with its eyes open. The third doesn't get hit at all.

AND IN BC, YOU HAVE ALREADY BEGUN

This is not a **standing start.**

Focused Education already runs shared cyber assessments and a risk toolkit built for small districts. You already share a provincial network. The instinct to pool, you have lived by for decades.

HOW FAR IT CAN GO

01 CanSSOC — Canada's universities: one shared security team, 150+ campuses.

02 Michigan — a $9-million statewide security operation for its schools.

03 Ohio — shared readiness, so safety doesn't ride on a postal code.

MOVE ONE — CONNECT

This is what **Connected by Purpose** means.

Collective defense is not a product — it is a set of relationships and a decision to share. You cannot buy it. You can only choose it.

MOVE TWO

Automate the toil

THE WORK THAT BURIES A SMALL TEAM

Thousands of alarms a day. **A handful** that matter.

Nearly all of it is noise. No one person can read it all — so it piles up, and the real attack hides in the pile, for weeks.

WHAT AUTOMATION ACTUALLY MEANS

01 The school year starts on time.

02 Payroll runs Friday — everyone gets paid.

03 The teacher's tools just work — no lost lesson.

04 Your IT person stops being the single point of failure.

05 A parent asks if their child is safe — and you say yes.

YESTERDAY — DARCI LANG'S KEYNOTE

It clears the toil so your people can focus on the **90%.**

Automation doesn't replace anyone. It hands their attention back — to the students, and to each other.

NOT AN IT PROBLEM

Everyone's part

THE PART WITH YOUR NAME ON IT

01 Finance — govern it, and fund it.

02 HR & Payroll — guard the crown jewels.

03 Operations — close the doors left open.

04 Communications — write the words early.

05 IT — stop being the lonely hero.

06 Everyone — it starts with one click.

ONCE A YEAR — TOGETHER

Walk through a bad day **before** it's a real one.

Finance, HR, Operations, Communications, the superintendent — one room, one afternoon, with coffee, when nothing is on fire.

The point is a **student.**

Not servers. Not data. Childhoods, futures, and the trust of a community that is right to give it.

THREE THINGS — BEFORE THIS CONFERENCE IS BEHIND YOU

01 Put cyber on the board's risk register.

02 Email one vendor: show us your MFA, breach history, notification clock.

03 Phone one district: let's not face the next one alone.

Connected by Purpose.

Connect your district. Equip your people. Never face it alone.

THANK YOU