

i-Ready: An explainer



Across the NYC Public Schools system, the very nature of teaching is up for debate. As third-party software interventions reshape classroom interactions, the role of teachers in defining student learning and growth is being progressively replaced with automated data systems directed, increasingly, by those distant from the everyday life of classrooms. Among the companies benefiting from the current expansion of computer testing in New York is Curriculum Associates, a Massachusetts based vendor whose product i-Ready is being used in thousands of school districts across the United States, particularly large urban school districts such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York.

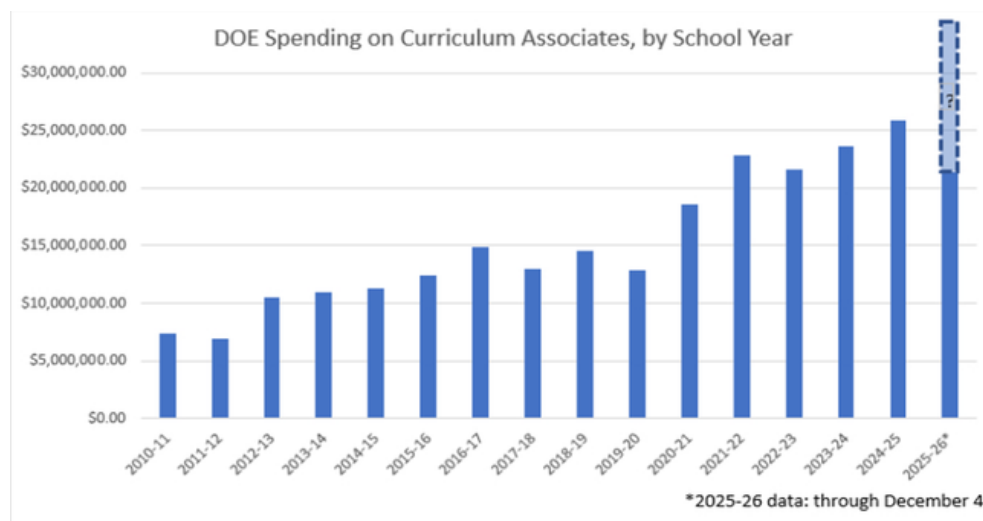
- Screens, data-gathering education technology (EdTech), and algorithms increasingly undermine critical thinking and parent, teacher, and student agency.
- Despite professional training, teachers' pedagogical decisions are being outsourced.
- The quality of public education is being further defined by software-vendor test statistics—rather than the skill and talent of the educator workforce.
- Curriculum Associates is integrating AI diagnostics and speech recognition technology into their platform via SoapBox Labs and an AWS incubator.

What is i-Ready?

The education company Curriculum Associates sells i-Ready as a program that assesses K–8 students through “computer adaptive testing”: multiple choice assessments and machine-calibrated “personalized instruction” lessons.

- Launched in 2011, the number of districts providing i-Ready grew to 6 million students by 2016.
- Since Covid-19, the number of students nationwide using i-Ready has doubled (17 million in 2025).

In NYC, the annual cost of NYCPS's contracts with Curriculum Associates grew steadily to over \$10 million before Covid-19. Since 2020, the cost has exploded to \$25 million in 2024–25.



How does i-Ready get into our schools?

Curriculum Associates sponsors K–12 employer associations across the country, all of which are governed or led by superintendents or school district officials—people who are in positions to recommend contracts with Curriculum Associates. One of these, The Council of Great Public Schools, had as chairman of its board former NYCDOE Chancellor Richard Carranza (2018–21). In 2021, through the firm Patrick B. Jenkins & Associates, Curriculum Associates engaged directly in lobbying efforts to successfully kill the Student Privacy Protection Act in Albany.

i-Ready and the DOE

In 2018, Carranza appointed Curriculum Associates Vice President Abram Jimenez to the DOE position of “Senior Executive Director of Continuous Improvement.” Though Jimenez quit the DOE after his stock ownership in EdTech companies selling to DOE was reported in 2019, i-Ready has been included as one of the vendors expanded by Mayor Adams’s and ex-Chancellor Banks’s NYC Reads and NYC Solves initiatives.

Before leaving DOE to take an executive position at an EdTech company, Former Chancellor Melissa Avila-Ramos further expanded these initiatives in spring 2025 to cover 490,000 students, or about half of NYC public schools’ enrollment.

Despite fierce and mounting criticism of the product, including a federal class action lawsuit from the EdTech Law Center alleging that Curriculum Associate’s shares children’s data illegally, the Mamdani administration has decided to include i-Ready as a core math curriculum in the May 2026 \$17.3 million expansion of NYC Reads and NYC Solves.

Who benefits?

Curriculum Associates earns \$800 million in revenue from public school districts, and is partially owned or indebted to four private equity firms: Berkshire Partners, Hellman & Freidman, Olam Capital, and Permira.

Rob Waldron became CEO of Curriculum Associates from 2008–24, leaving his role as an operating executive at the private equity firm Berkshire Partners, which is a majority stakeholder in Curriculum Associates. Berkshire Partners has financially backed charter school expansion through its support of National Heritage Academies, one of the largest for-profit charter school operators in the US. Today, Curriculum Associates is using its profits to purchase EdTech companies in Australia.

Is i-Ready accurate?

Teachers have no way to actually analyze the diagnostics or see the underlying performance data, and can only access the reports i-Ready generates. Curriculum Associates updates their algorithm’s “guess” of student ability, but this can never replace teachers’ skills in identifying root causes of learning gaps. Despite this, school districts are using i-Ready’s progress diagnostics as instructional tools.

While Curriculum Associate sales reps claim their product is AI-free, AWS AI is streamlining the production of their diagnostics to rapidly align collected data with individual state standards.