



AI Best Practices in K-12 Education: A Future-Proof Framework



Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are transforming the educational experience for students and educators alike. When guided by research and sound policy, AI has the potential to enhance and elevate K-12 teaching and learning. However, without guardrails, it can disrupt classroom learning, threaten academic integrity, and increase data privacy concerns.

To safeguard proper AI usage, many K-12 organizations are wrestling with how to develop appropriate policies, training, and expertise. Follow these best practices to establish a research-based and future-proof framework for the use of AI technology in your K-12 organization.

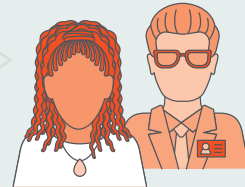
WHO'S USING AI?

32%



of K-12 teachers use AI tools on a weekly basis

9%



of district leadership teams use AI technology systematically

84%



of K-12 students use AI technology

28+



states have issued AI guidance for schools as of October 2025

THE IMPLICATIONS OF AI IN SCHOOLS

Like any new technology integration, there are both potential advantages and challenges to AI. Understanding both sides can help school and district leaders thoughtfully approach guidance for teachers and students as the technology evolves.



BENEFITS

THE STRATEGIC USE OF AI TOOLS
HAS THE POTENTIAL TO:



Speed up lesson
planning or grading



Facilitate inquiry-
based learning and
critical thinking



Enhance instruction
and engage students in
new types of projects



Personalize learning
and support
accessibility



Facilitate
assessments



Prepare students for
future careers that
involve AI technology



PITFALLS

IF NOT MANAGED PROPERLY, AI'S POWER
AND RAPID PACE OF CHANGE COULD:



Hinder student
creativity and
critical thinking



Create data
privacy concerns



Facilitate cheating
on assignments



Encourage an
overreliance on
technology



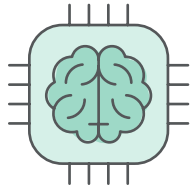
Increase misinformation,
inaccuracy, or bias
due to limitations
in the algorithms

K-12 LEADER CONSIDERATIONS

As AI quickly takes root in society, K-12 leaders have a responsibility to ensure schools integrate it appropriately.

Establishing effective AI guidelines requires resources, a collective mind shift, and a willingness to adapt information over time.

START WITH THESE FIVE STEPS TO ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE AI USE IN YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT:



1.

Explore AI on your own: Successful technology integration relies on visible support from leaders at all levels. Familiarize yourself with AI tools and model appropriate technology use. Try using AI to write the first draft of your next newsletter or summarize key points from meeting minutes.



2.

Learn how others use it: Survey teachers, staff, and students to learn how they are currently using AI technology and determine what support, improvement, or training needs exist.



3.

Form a team: Gather members of your K-12 organization together to develop a shared vision for AI technology integration that includes goals and a plan for annual evaluation.



4.

Build iterative guidelines: Establish an acceptable use policy or guiding statement that frames how AI technology should and should not be integrated into teaching and learning. Keep it simple enough to be able to add future policies without having to undo limiting language or complicated procedures.



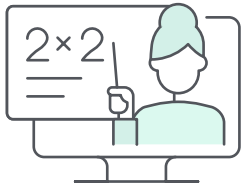
5.

Provide training: Plan ongoing, embedded professional learning to train teachers and staff on new technology tools, technology integration best practices, and student engagement methods.

PRO TIP: Because machine-generated content is subject to errors and limitations, it's important to emphasize that all information gathered through AI must be cross-checked and edited for accuracy and clarity. Make sure teachers understand how to critically evaluate their own AI-generated content so they are prepared to model and teach that skill to students.

TEACHER CONSIDERATIONS

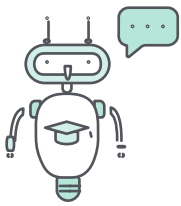
Help teachers and instructional staff access and encourage appropriate use of AI technology in their work.



IN THE CLASSROOM

To prepare students for future AI-focused learning or careers, teachers can begin to integrate AI literacy skills across the curriculum, with consideration to the grade level and content of their classes. Some examples include:

- In primary grades, teachers may integrate introductory AI instruction across content areas (such as interactive games, personalized learning) rather than develop AI-specific courses
- For secondary grades, teachers may expand students' interaction with AI tools through learning extension activities, test prep, or peer collaboration (e.g., *students may use AI to create an outline or teachers may use it to generate an essay for students to critique*)



INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING

Teachers can use time-saving AI tools to support routine instructional tasks such as lesson planning or personalized learning plans for students. Some examples include:

- Writing prompts, discussion questions, reading passages, and example problems
- Preparing lesson or unit outlines, summary information, rubrics, or assessment feedback
- Gathering information on a given topic or generating new ideas for exploring a subject

STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS

Educators have a responsibility to teach students how to use AI properly and ethically as a tool for learning and help them understand what can go wrong.



ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION

- Engage students in conversations about their expectations of AI and discuss how it is a tool for enhancing learning, rather than a replacement for it.
- Show students how AI tools get their information from unfiltered internet sources. Demonstrate how difficult it is to get an AI tool to cite its sources and how easily AI can spread misinformation or bias.



ADAPT ASSIGNMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

- Explain how and when students may use AI in their assignments, with clear guidelines for how to verify AI information and examples of what constitutes cheating or plagiarism.
- Reframe assignment goals to preserve students' own thinking, including inquiry-based assignments or project-based learning.

Hear how other K-12 organizations are integrating AI in our on-demand webinar, **Navigating AI in Schools: Policies, Pitfalls, and Possibilities.**

Sources: EdWeek, EdWeek, eSpark Learning, Forbes, Hanover Research, Hanover Research, Hanover Research, Hanover Research, Hanover Research, International Society for Technology in Education, Quizlet, Governing, Gallup