



AI in Education: How Modern Schools are Navigating the AI Revolution with Administrators, Teachers, and Students

Insights

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Artificial intelligence – especially the burgeoning Generative AI field where digital platforms help human users create new content from scratch – has opened the door to boundless uses and opportunities. From an employment perspective, HR professionals are using it to increase efficiency in recruiting, interviewing, onboarding, performance management, employee retention, and more. The uses for teachers, administrators, and students in the school setting are just as expansive. But the arrival of this technology has alarmed some educators who worry that its use could be a hinderance to teaching and learning. How are schools using AI, what risks should you consider with such usage, and what should your school do about it?

How is AI Being Used in Schools?

Like it or not, artificial intelligence is becoming a steady presence on school campuses across the globe. While there are almost infinite ways it can be used, here are some common uses we are seeing:

- **Teachers** are using it to personalize learning for students at different levels, improve student engagement, create lesson plans, automate administrative tasks like grading assignments, and engage in professional development through AI-drive training modules.
- **Administrators** are using it implement predictive analytics to identify students at risk, enhance school surveillance systems to increase campus safety, deploying chatbots to assist with administrative tasks like onboarding and answering questions about policies and procedures, and streamlining all manner of school operations – from bus schedules to improved cafeteria menus.
- **Students** are using it as a tool to help with research projects and assignments, many of which can be personalized and adjusted to their individual learning pace and style. They can engage in interactive simulations and scenarios to enhance their experiential learning. They are also using it to practice their skills, such as being provided real-time feedback on grammar or learning new vocabulary words.

Potential Pitfalls as You Consider Using AI-Powered Tools in Your School

While there is a lot to gain from the use of AI-powered tools, schools should consider the possible drawbacks and weigh those against the benefits they provide.

Concerns About Student Use of AI

The primary concern that educators have expressed is about **academic integrity**: the fear that students could use it to cut corners and cheat on assignments. Many teachers report that ChatGPT has become the new Wikipedia, seeing an increasing number of students cutting and pasting from online sources when turning in work.

- Obviously, plagiarism is always a serious concern and GenAI is yet another temptation students have at their fingertips now.
- ChatGPT has been criticized for the lack of reliability of the information that it provides, as the technology will at times “hallucinate” and provide flat-out incorrect information. In fact, in its Terms of Use, OpenAI warns users that the use of ChatGPT services “may in some situations result in incorrect Output that does not accurately reflect real people, places, or facts.” This can present a real problem if students rely on it when developing content of all sorts.

There is also a concern that students may become **overly reliant on AI**, potentially leading to a lack of critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills.

- Another related concern is that an overreliance on AI could stunt emotional and social development of students.
- Of course, the other side of that argument is that AI is here to stay. Some educators feel that they should be teaching students the appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI to help prepare them moving forward with a technology that will be ever-present with them the rest of their lives.

Further, AI is only as unbiased as the data it is trained on. Therefore, if the training data contains **biases**, such as racial or gender stereotypes, then AI may also exhibit those biases in its responses.

Finally, schools are rightly concerned that **economic disparities** could lead some students to be left behind during the AI revolution. Schools need to be diligent in ensuring students at all ends of the economic spectrum have access and training on new technological resources.

- Not to mention the ever-present societal concern that the integration of cutting-edge AI tools in some schools and others might widen the gap between well-resourced schools and those lacking in funds, leading to disparities in the quality of education and technological exposure.

Concerns About Administrator/Teacher Use of AI

There are serious concerns about **data privacy and confidentiality** in the age of AI, especially when it comes to minors.

- Anyone inputting information into ChatGPT has to assume that the data is being seen by unknown third parties. In fact, ChatGPT warns that the information being inputted is not private and will be used to help train the machine (and its human programmers).
- Privacy is protected by a patchwork of state, federal, and international privacy laws, some of which come with significant consequences for non-compliance. Your school could find itself in violation of these laws if reckless or oblivious school personnel provide private information into certain AI programs.

Beyond legal ramifications, there are **ethical concerns** to consider. Even if certain data sharing or collection is technically legal, is it ethically right? How would parents, guardians, or the students themselves feel knowing their data is being used in certain ways? Schools have a responsibility to maintain the trust of their communities. This trust can be easily eroded if stakeholders feel that their data is being used without their explicit consent or in ways they find objectionable.

And just as with students, **over-reliance on AI** for administrative decisions can pose risks. For instance, if admissions or grading processes heavily rely on AI without human oversight, there could be errors or biases that go unchecked. While AI can aid decision-making, it should complement human judgment, not replace it.

What Are Schools Doing When It Comes to the Use of AI in Academics?

As a result of some of these lingering questions, there are a variety of approaches that schools are taking when it comes to AI in their hallways.

- Some schools have decided to prohibit the use of AI altogether. This may end up being an exercise in futility, as the New York City public schools learned: the Education Department overseeing schools banned ChatGPT and then later withdrew its ban when faced with criticism over the move.
- Others are cautiously embracing it – treating the technology the way we treat calculators, for example – allowing it for some assignments but not others. A very common approach we have seen this school year is for teachers to specifically ban the use of ChatGPT or other GenAI products to produce original content, but allow students to use it for any number of creative uses: to develop writing prompts, brainstorm on projects, assist with time management and organization, aid in data analysis, generate statistical models, and even simulate historical events for deeper understanding of social studies lessons.
- Other schools and teachers have placed absolutely no restrictions on the use of GenAI among students. The open ChatGPT policy has caught hold with some teachers who would rather not police its use for a number of reasons.

What Should Your School Do?

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to this difficult question. You should gather information from various stakeholders in your school community before laying down any rules or policies.

- Once you make a decision, your attorney can help you craft a policy for students and employees on the use of AI that are in line with your school's mission and helps set expectations for appropriate and inappropriate uses. ([You can use our firm's complimentary model policy to assist you develop your own workplace policies.](#))
- If your school is still determining what to do, work with your school attorney to determine what approach fits best within your community.
- It's crucial to keep abreast of AI's evolving landscape. Consider annual workshops or seminars to educate both staff and students about the ethical, academic, and practical implications of AI.
- You may also want to collaborate with other institutions about AI usage. Sharing experiences and strategies with other educational institutions can provide broader insights and best practices when formulating or revising AI-related policies.

Conclusion

As always, we will continue to monitor developments on artificial intelligence, so make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to keep up with the most up-to-date information. Please consult your Fisher Phillips attorney, the authors of this Insight, or any attorney on our [Education Team](#) or [Artificial Intelligence Practice Group](#) to obtain practical advice and guidance on how to adapt your school policies to the changes we expect as a result of this new technology.

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