TEACH PLUS

ILLINOIS DIGITAL EDUCATORS alliance

Rules and Tools for AI-Powered Learning:

Why Educators Can't Afford to Wait on AI Policies

By TEACH PLUS and the ILLINOIS DIGITAL EDUCATORS ALLIANCE

With partnership and assistance from:

Illinois Learning Technology Center • AI4K12: The Artificial Intelligence for K-12 Initiative
Illinois State Teachers of the Year • Association of Illinois School Library Educators
Illinois Association of Teachers of English • Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Illinois Science Teaching Association • Lanier Learning • Illinois School Counselor Association
Illinois Association of School Social Workers • EdSystems Center, Northern Illinois University
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INTRODUCTION

Classrooms have felt the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) as much as any other sector of society. Because AI is so new to schools, little is yet known about its impact. Surveys seem to suggest that educators are split,[1] with some teachers opposing AI, others embracing it, and a large number unsure. Many educators and schools considered or implemented a ban on AI in the classroom when it first appeared, primarily stemming from fears of student plagiarism or other forms of cheating.[2]

However, as more student- and teacher-focused AI tools are introduced,[3] educators are seeing increased value in AI in the classroom. Tools specifically designed for teachers can help with grading, differentiation, tutoring, and lesson planning,[4] and even to increase educational equity.[5] As this technology continues to evolve, new applications will have the potential to accelerate student learning, personalize education, and save teachers time.

With AI technology evolving far faster than educators have capacity to follow closely, many are looking for guidance both to leverage its benefits and avoid potential harms. As of July 2024, 24 state educational agencies have implemented guidelines or policies for schools to follow. California created an informative resource kit with recommended guidelines for educators and schools.[6] Minnesota created a document to help educators walk through the process of deciding how and when to use AI in the classroom.[7]

There are many other examples of recommendations and policies in other states, but unfortunately Illinois is not among them. The best Illinois-specific resource we've found is guidance from the independent Illinois Principal Association. While Superintendent Sanders hosted a forward-thinking conversation with AI leader Sal Khan, neither the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) nor the General Assembly have to-date released official public policies on AI in education. The General Assembly convened a task force to make policy recommendations, but in the meantime teachers and schools have been left to figure out new technology on their own while policymakers debate and discuss, and that has yielded very uneven results.

We are a group of Teach Plus Policy Fellows who teach in diverse classrooms across schools and districts in Illinois and have a deep interest in AI and its effect on teaching and learning. In collaboration with organizational partners across the state, we asked more than 200 educators about their experiences, hopes, and concerns about AI to inform policymakers about how to make AI a safe and effective educational tool. In this report, we present our findings and recommendations to help guide the creation of a meaningful, forward-thinking AI policy that supports Illinois' schools and students.

Findings

1. Educators urgently need clear guidelines for responsible AI use that also preserve the flexibility to explore and experiment.
2. Educators care most about preserving the student learning experience and protecting students from harm.
3. Educators welcome AI as a tool to save time or enhance learning, but need more training to use it—and teach students to use it—effectively.
4. Educators are concerned about equity and access issues, and want to ensure students aren't left behind.

Recommendations

1. The General Assembly and ISBE should collaborate with urgency to provide regulations and guidance to schools, and include teacher voice as they are continuously updated.
2. The General Assembly, ISBE, and district leaders should center student learning and safety in regulations and guidance around AI.
3. ISBE should develop and amplify teacher expertise in the design and use of AI technology for learning.
4. The General Assembly should center equity and access as AI use in schools grows.

METHODOLOGY

Recognizing that the AI revolution impacts every facet of schools, we reached out to organizations across the state and formed an ad-hoc coalition interested in the impact of AI technology on learning. We connected with organizations specializing in education technology, and also with those representing various professional learning communities, in order to connect digital expertise with classroom application.

To better understand educators' opinions on AI, our coalition of educators conducted a digital survey of Illinois educators from April to June 2024. Surveys were distributed through a variety of means according to the capacities of our coalition partner organizations. Just over 200 educators participated in the survey, with the following demographic characteristics:

- At least two-thirds of respondents were classroom teachers.[8] Administrators, technology specialists, school librarians, and other support personnel were also represented.[9]
- The sample included educators from pre-K to higher education, with the largest group of respondents working in a high school setting.[10]
- The majority of respondents have more than 10 years of experience in an educational setting, making up 84.16% of the sample.[11]
- Most respondents (87%) work in a public school setting, with the remainder working in private and charter schools.[12]
- Of the educators who responded, 52 identified themselves as teachers of color (25.62%), 142 identified themselves as white or Caucasian, and 8 preferred not to disclose their race/ethnic identity.[13]
    - Of those identifying as teachers of color, 4 identified as Asian or Pacific Islander (2%), 24 as Black or African-American (12%), 16 as Hispanic or Latinx (8%), and 3 as Middle Eastern or North African (1%). Five (2%) identified as more than one race.

While some questions on the survey offered limited options, other open response items asked educators to describe their opinions on AI in general, their opinions of AI in the classroom, and policy implications for AI. For these descriptive answers, Teach Plus Policy Fellows and staff coded and analyzed the responses to generate findings reflective of educator voices, outlined below.

FINDINGS

1. Educators urgently need clear guidelines for responsible AI use that also preserve the flexibility to explore and experiment.

Educators expressed a strong desire for clear guidelines on the use of AI in educational settings as soon as possible. There is a consensus that these guidelines should not only delineate inappropriate uses of AI, but also establish an environment that allows for exploration and experimentation by both students and educators. The balance between providing structure and maintaining flexibility is crucial as educators navigate the complexities of integrating AI into their teaching practices.

Educators were asked what resources or guidelines they rely on to inform their use of AI. Peer advice was the most common response with 51% of educators agreeing, followed by guidelines from professional organizations (48%) and professional development (47%). School leadership and state/district policies came in with 46% and 40%, respectively.[14] This suggests that the guiding forces on AI for teachers are not expert-developed policies or guidance, but informal interactions with peers who are largely still figuring it out themselves. That's potentially problematic because the habits ingrained early will be lasting—for better or worse.

Because teachers have far too little AI expertise or capacity to develop it, it's urgent for the state to provide guidance and regulations to schools, even if these are imperfect. One educator wrote, *"Schools are behind. Students utilize AI often, and we have nothing in place. It is a bit like the Wild West right now."*[15] Others echoed this sentiment:

- *"AI advances quickly, so being proactive about creating and revisiting policies about AI is critical."*[16]
- *"I feel like the speed at which AI is developing is outpacing policy development. This could lead to a lot of unintended consequence."*[17]
- *"Students are already using it so we need to act quickly to mitigate the bad habits they are already creating."*[18]

While respondents articulated the urgent need for policy guidance, we believe this came primarily from a desire to use AI well, not from opposition to the technology itself: *"We have to move fast on these policies because AI continues to improve each day … We need to proactively teach students (and educators) how to use AI for its good purposes."*[19] Educators are also wary of overly restrictive policies that could hinder their ability to explore and utilize AI effectively. One teacher called for *"GUIDELINES not policies. Don't stifle our use of this technology and make things harder on us than they already are."*[20] Many educators echoed this sentiment, expressing a desire to experiment and learn alongside a need for some foundational policies.

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"We have to move fast on these policies because AI continues to improve each day."

Respondents acknowledged the speed at which AI is evolving, and the need for policies to evolve with it. One respondent called for policies that are *"... subject to further revision. The field is moving way too fast … to nail down guidelines today that will make sense next week."*[21] Several called for balance between the need for policy and the understanding that AI policies cannot be static: *"Policymakers need to take this work seriously, seek input from all stakeholders, and create policy that is organic and can change with times."*[22] As those policies evolve, it is important to connect frontline experiences with policy expertise, and there were many calls for including teacher voice in the process of policy design and revision:

- *Listen to educators first. Include educators in the initial, middle, and end stage planning.*[23]
- *I would like policymakers to gather teacher input every step of the way.*[24]
- *Policies designed WITH TEACHER VOICE and not by folks who are outside of schools and do not have a real sense of the implications of their policies on instruction.*[25]
- *Educators and students need to be leading and driving all policy decisions.*[26]

In summary, the survey findings highlight the urgent need for clear but ever-evolving guidelines for AI use in education that preserve the flexibility to experiment within guardrails that protect students. Educators in Illinois want a framework that emphasizes responsible use so they can effectively integrate AI into their teaching, and a policy landscape that is co-created with educators and involves them directly in the ongoing process of revision.

"Listen to educators first. Include educators in the initial, middle, and end stage planning."

2. Educators care most about preserving the student learning experience and protecting students from harm.

The most common theme we found in survey responses can be summed up with the medical oath to "first, do no harm." For the educators in our sample, "harm" meant many things. The most common concern was that student learning might suffer from misuse of AI, but a significant number of respondents also expressed serious concerns related to student privacy, exposure to inaccurate or harmful information, embedded bias, overreliance on technology, and a lack of human connection.

While many educators recognize the potential of AI to enhance student outcomes and streamline administrative tasks, many educators expressed concern that students or teachers could become overly reliant on AI, leading to a decrease in critical thinking and problem-solving skills. As one teacher noted, *"Just like tools to get answers, AI can be helpful but cannot replace individual thinking, problem-solving, and learning."*[27] One wryly described a worst-case scenario: *"Students submit AI-generated essays that are graded by AI because teachers are too lazy to grade. Cool future we have made for ourselves."*[28]

Most responses, however, centered around whether AI would support learning, as with one educator who talked through questions they'd use to evaluate an AI tool: *"Is it something that will enhance the outcome of student learning or is it superficial? Will*

students learn something by using AI or will it remove barriers to their understanding of material?"[29] Another wrote, *"Our students deserve more than to be curators of AI-generated ideas and products. We have to protect students as writers, thinkers, and creators."*[30] This approach highlights a prevalent theme that teachers welcome AI when it enhances student learning, but firmly believe there is no substitute for meaningful human connection in the classroom. One respondent summed up this theme nicely: *"My role as an educator is … to harness it to empower my students. This means continuously advocating for ethical AI practices, ensuring equitable access to technology, and fostering an environment where human judgment and relationships remain at the heart of education."*[31]

It was not surprising to us that educators were concerned with protecting the students in their care, but it was noteworthy that academic integrity—using AI tools to cheat—was not the primary concern given the attention it has received in the media and among

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educators. While many respondents did call for clear guidelines that could be applied consistently across their schools about cheating, we got the sense that this stems mainly from a desire to have a clear policy to refer to if parents or students push back against consequences for plagiarism. For instance, one educator said, *"We need a set protocol to follow if students are found to have used AI to completely plagiarize an assignment."*[32] Teachers like these have been addressing plagiarism and academic honesty issues for years, so their concern isn't so much identifying plagiarism or having those conversations with students—it's being supported by policy if they're challenged about whether AI use is really plagiarism.

Privacy and bias are other critical concerns for educators. They expressed questions about how student and educator data would be used, as well as how AI platforms would use information. One teacher emphasized, ***"Privacy and security are non-negotiable;*** *I diligently review the privacy policies to confirm compliance with child protection laws."*[33] Another worried about bias: *"I have concerns with teachers using AI for grading because AI inherently is biased. AI learns from its creators and users, so it picks up on the human biases that exist … I heard of a teacher using AI to create images of juveniles in detention centers, and AI only produced images of young Black children."*[34] In general, educators agreed that AI use in classrooms requires human oversight: *"AI may help differentiate or translate a lesson for a student but the educator shouldn't blindly trust the AI platform to do it all without oversight, thoughtful review, and the original generation of the lesson itself."*[35] This highlights the need for clear standards around data privacy and anti-bias protections in policy, as well as continued human oversight.

Across all the open-response items, approximately one-fifth of respondents advocated for some kind of limit on AI use, ranging from mild restrictions like "in moderation" to outright banning AI in education. Most of these responses were driven by a commitment to preserving the human element in teaching and learning. One teacher expressed this sentiment clearly: *"I would not allow my students to use AI in my classes. They are tech-savvy enough and will figure out how to use AI on their own. I'm more concerned with preserving human insight and creativity."*[36] While there was a vocal minority that responded this way during the survey, it is important to note that 92% of our sample believe that AI can be very or somewhat helpful in their classroom instruction,[37] which speaks to the importance of policy protections that will assuage educators' concerns and enable them to innovate safely.

3. Educators welcome AI as a tool to save time or enhance learning, but need more training and guidance to use it—and teach students to use it—effectively.

Respondents expressed a pressing need for professional learning to equip teachers to effectively employ AI in classrooms and guide students in its ethical use. Although our survey was conducted more than a year and a half after ChatGPT became widely available, 46% of respondents had still not participated in any professional learning on AI in an education setting.[38] Additionally, 48% of educators indicated that their districts offer no AI training or professional development they are aware of.[39] While 92% of respondents said that AI can be very or somewhat helpful in their classroom instruction,[40] only 16% use AI tools frequently[41] and only 31% described themselves as "very familiar with AI."[42]

The gap between the potential educators see in AI technology and their present ability to tap into it is large, but can be bridged with professional learning and guidance. A number of responses like, "I would first have to have a strong understanding of the tools in order to prepare my students to interact with them"[43] and "We as teachers need to be prepared first and then we can model it for our students"[44] suggest that educators recognize the need for professional learning. The most common theme was that teachers want to develop their own familiarity with AI tools before using them with students, or teaching students to use them responsibly. This sentiment reflects a widespread awareness throughout the survey that effective integration of AI in the classroom hinges on educators' proficiency and confidence—and also connects to educators' desire to protect the student learning experience.

Many respondents spoke to the importance of teaching students about the ethical implications of AI as well, such as one respondent who noted, "I think students need to understand how AI is used by bad actors. I want students to be able to determine when they are interacting with an AI system, or an actual human. In essence, I want media literacy to be supercharged."[45] This call for enhanced media literacy and digital citizenship was echoed frequently. When asked to select the top three factors driving their decisions about whether to use AI tools, 55% responded "Student understanding of AI tools and resources."[46] Educators are eager to equip students with the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate an AI-infused world—but can't do that unless they understand them first.

> ***"I want media literacy to be supercharged."***

A number of educators elevated one specific kind of training as the most useful—an introduction to a specific tool that's vetted and safe, with recommendations for effective use. "So often we get on the new-and-exciting-thing train and we have teachers introducing things to students that they do not have proper training or understandings of," wrote one teacher, who went on to suggest, "Perhaps having one tool reviewed and used by teachers."[47] Another educator highlighted added, "I feel like the most helpful would be … what sites would be useful, which ones are not, and an opportunity for PD to properly use the tool."[48] A significant number of educators echoed this need for guidance about specific AI tools and classroom uses, and the need for this kind of support makes a lot of sense for educators with limited time for free exploration, especially given the massive boom in school-oriented AI tools. It's simply not possible for

teachers to review and vet even a small percentage of the available tools in order to make informed decisions for their students, but as noted above, they're very reluctant to introduce AI tools to students before they have. Those with a state-level lens might think a general overview is a good starting point, but for teachers who need to deliver lessons tomorrow, starting with one actionable application is a much more accessible and effective introduction.

4. Educators are concerned about equity and access issues, and want to ensure that students aren't left behind.

Educators in Illinois are increasingly concerned about equity and access issues related to AI, questioning the current systems that are in place to ensure all students can effectively utilize these technologies. When asked to identify the top three factors driving their decision to use AI, the second most-selected option (60%) was "access to AI tools and resources."[49] One educator said, *"I strive to choose tools that are accessible to all students, regardless of their background or the technology they have at home, ensuring that every student benefits equally from our AI-enhanced lessons."*[50] Without intentional efforts to expand and maintain access, there is a significant risk that certain student populations will be left behind, exacerbating existing inequalities in educational outcomes.

Many of the educators in our sample advocated for systemic changes to broaden access to AI tools and to connective technology generally. They proposed a variety of solutions, such as school-based resources, subsidies or price controls for students, and universal access as a public good, but generally agreed that the end goal should be equitable access to technology. One teacher pointed out, *"[We] need to promote high-speed internet access as a utility, on par with electricity and water."*[51] This perspective underscores the belief that reliable connectivity is essential for engaging with AI technologies at school and at home, and that ensuring access is a foundational requirement for an equitable education.

Furthermore, other educators recognize that many AI tools are free or available at no cost for educators and students. They see this as a vital feature to enhance accessibility in the state of Illinois. One educator remarked, *"Many AI tools are free or free for educators and I think this is an important feature to help make sure they are accessible to the masses."*[52] Others noted that, while some features are subscription-only, they are add-ons to existing free AI platforms. Some educators viewed this as a benefit to using AI, as these tools can assist in reducing inequities in educational resources. One respondent called on policymakers to *"continue to offer free elements to educators and students in safe and constructive environments. AI cannot and should not be ignored, so growing with it and providing access and safe places to work within it are a MUST to decrease the divide post-secondary."*[53]

In short, as technology continues to be embedded into every aspect of our lives, a failure to provide equitable access is as unreasonable as providing textbooks to only half of a class. One teacher succinctly summed up the equity and access concerns in stating: *"Schools need to be aware of this and have a plan in place to provide education and access to these tools for all students and educators. If AI is another educational resource/material, funding and systems need to be put in place to ensure all students have access to and education about these tools."*[54] Overall, educators want systems in place to ensure that all students across the state of Illinois have the same opportunities to explore and learn from AI.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The General Assembly and ISBE should collaborate with urgency to provide regulations and guidance to schools, and include teacher voice as they are continuously updated.

Schools across Illinois are encountering AI-related challenges but lack the necessary expertise and authority to develop sound policies. This has resulted in inconsistent decision-making and poor precedents across districts. To ensure a thoughtful and effective approach, the Illinois General Assembly (ILGA) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) must collaborate with urgency to provide clear regulations and guidance for AI in schools, while establishing mechanisms for continuous updates.

Currently, teachers and school districts are poorly suited to make policy decisions around AI. Educators are highly skilled in pedagogy, but most do not possess (and don't have time to develop) the necessary expertise on the implications of AI in education. Many school districts are similarly under-equipped to address these issues. In the absence of state-level guidance, individual educators and local institutions are forced to make critical policy decisions without sufficient knowledge, authority, or consistency.

ISBE is well positioned to address the challenges posed by AI. With its combination of educational expertise and regulatory capabilities, ISBE has the knowledge and capacity to develop comprehensive guidance for schools and districts. The ILGA must ensure that ISBE has the legal framework and resources required to implement and enforce AI-related guidelines and policies. This would empower ISBE to take a leadership role, providing much-needed direction to educators and school administrators.

Given the fast-paced development of AI technologies, it is essential that any regulatory framework be adaptable. The ILGA should create an ongoing mechanism for updating policies related to AI in education. This mechanism must include input from all relevant stakeholders—teachers, students, families, and other community members—ensuring that the voices of those directly impacted by AI are heard. It is especially important that classroom teachers are directly involved in these ongoing discussions to provide a short feedback loop between students and policymakers. This collaborative approach will ensure that AI policies remain relevant, ethical, and reflective of the needs of Illinois' diverse educational landscape.

2. The ILGA, ISBE, and district leaders should center student learning and safety in regulations and guidance around AI.

The ILGA and ISBE must take action to protect students from potential harms associated with the use of AI in educational settings. While much media coverage has focused on student use of AI tools to cheat, we are confident educators will adapt to this new technology in the classroom, as they have adapted to cell phones, the internet, and calculators. We are especially concerned about areas where risks are less visible, such as AI embedded in hiring practices for teachers, student selection for Advanced Placement or honors courses, and the administration of standardized testing. These **invisible mechanisms can lead to biased and harmful outcomes,** significantly impacting students' educational opportunities and experiences in ways that teachers may not readily see, and therefore cannot prevent or address.

One of the most important policy levers for the state is adoption of clear standards for AI tools used in schools. These standards should mandate transparency and rigorous testing for bias and accuracy, ensuring that any tools implemented in the classroom are safe and effective for student use. To implement this policy, ISBE should publish a list of AI tools that have been evaluated and meet these safety criteria. While we recognize the desire for local control in education, few districts, schools, or teachers have the capacity to independently evaluate AI tools. Providing a curated list will empower educators with the information they need to make informed decisions about the safety of the technologies they use with students—without serving as an endorsement of those tools or recommending specific applications of them.

Finally, ISBE should support schools and districts by developing and disseminating guidance to address common concerns. One primary concern for educators is that guidance must emphasize the human element in teaching and learning and the value of healthy interpersonal relationships between educators and students. It should also suggest ways schools can promote equity of access, empower teachers to innovate, and equip students to not only use but create future AI technology. Like evaluation of AI tools, these are areas in which individual schools and teachers are poorly equipped to lead, and state-level guidance can do a great deal to nudge educators in the right direction.

3. ISBE should develop and amplify teacher expertise in the design and use of AI technology for learning.

ISBE should take the lead in providing the most essential training for both teachers and students regarding safe and ethical use of AI in schools, equipping them with the knowledge and tools they need to navigate the complexities of AI technology responsibly.

To begin with, ISBE should produce and make available professional development modules for teachers and school leaders. These modules should cover critical topics such as how to use AI safely in classrooms, pitfalls to avoid in using AI with students, and effective strategies for coaching students on navigating AI safely and ethically.

ISBE should not only provide foundational training but also encourage and elevate professional development efforts that promote effective use of AI in planning, teaching, learning, assessment, and routine task automation. While we expect ISBE to be hesitant to endorse specific tools, we note that teachers are specifically asking for this kind of guidance, and in the absence of a thoroughly vetted, thoughtful recommendation from the agency they will instead adopt the much less well-informed—and potentially misguided—recommendations of others who too often lack the capacity to offer well-informed advice in this area. One way the agency might lead without making endorsements is by convening communities of practice among educators to experiment collaboratively with AI and learn from one another's experiences. Implementing a design-thinking approach with specific problem-based parameters could push educators to develop and share impactful ways to harness AI for student learning. ISBE, either directly or by proxy through grants, should host educator think-tanks like this to enable the collective exploration of AI applications in the classroom, and serve as a platform for sharing promising practices that result.

In addition to training for teachers, it is equally important to develop age-appropriate content for students that addresses issues of safety and ethics related to AI. This content should be crafted in a student-friendly format using relatable language and concepts so lessons resonate with young learners—a "Skibidi-Rizz AI," so to speak. High production value will also be crucial to higher engagement and uptake among students—complementing the relationship-based learning students will get from their teachers.

We firmly believe that educators should be at the forefront of designing and deploying AI technology in classrooms, but also recognize the speed at which AI is evolving, its potential to transform education, and the limited time teachers have. Because of these factors, **state-level leadership is crucial to establishing Illinois as a leader in leveraging AI to support student learning.**

4. The General Assembly should center equity and access as AI use in schools grows.

We must address the digital divide, and provide every student with the resources needed to thrive in an increasingly technology-driven society. We believe access for all students is an essential component of sound state-level policy.

The educators in our survey identified several potential solutions to enhance access, including calls for school-based access, student-based discounts or subsidies, and internet-as-utility approaches. We don't have a strong preference for any one approach, but note that while school-based devices and access do help, they often fall short of being a universal solution. Subsidies or discounts that follow the student or societal approaches that envision internet access as a utility would likely provide more universal access.

We urge the ILGA to work toward universal access, recognizing that the current budget climate may not permit full and immediate access provided by the state. In the meantime, we call on the state of Illinois to be a leading voice in advocating for more universal solutions at the federal level, balancing those calling for cuts that would dramatically undermine equity. In a time when the FCC's e-rate program may be in jeopardy, **the nation needs leadership for equity.**

It remains critical for Illinois to do what it can. Drawing on lessons learned from the pandemic, when many schools faced significant challenges in providing universal access during remote learning, the ILGA should identify the most efficient ways to provide access to the neediest students before they are left behind.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence is here to stay, and it will transform the lives of today's students in ways we cannot yet predict. This can feel exhausting—many of today's teachers have already lived through several life-altering advances, like the internet, smartphones, and social media.

But this revolution can also be empowering. If educators are a part of the ongoing policymaking process, supported by policy guardrails that protect students, and equipped with training and tools to accelerate and enhance student learning, Illinois can position itself as a world leader in AI implementation and prepare its students not just to use, but design the next-generation technology that will shape their future.

We call on Illinois policymakers to act urgently to make this exciting future a reality.

Lead Authors:

+ **Sarah Murmann,** Senior Fellow / Math teacher, Crystal Lake South High School
+ **Traci Johnson,** IDEA President-Elect / Instructional Coach, Rochester CUSD 3A
+ **Bill Curtin,** NBCT, Policy Director, Teach Plus Illinois

Co-Authors:

+ **Lindsay Johnson,** Policy Fellow / Art Teacher, River Forest SD 90
+ **Joe Brewer,** Policy Fellow / Teacher Dean, Beardstown Junior/Senior High School
+ **Maria Solis,** Policy Fellow / English Department Chair, Chicago Public Schools
+ **Taylor Winfield,** Policy Fellow / ELA Teacher, Great Lakes Academy, Chicago

ABOUT TEACH PLUS

Teach Plus is dedicated to the mission of empowering excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that advance equity, opportunity, and student success. Since 2009, Teach Plus has developed thousands of teacher leaders across the country to exercise their leadership in shaping education policy and improving teaching and learning, to create an education system driven by access and excellence for all.

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APPENDIX

Overall Sample Size: 205

Current Role

N = 142	%
Teacher	66.2
Paraprofessional/SECA	0.7
Librarian	6.34
School support personnel	4.93
Administrator	11.27
Other	10.56

Years of Teaching Experience

N = 202	%
Less than 4 years	3.47
4-9 years	12.38
10-20 years	44.06
More than 20 years	40.1

School Setting

N = 200	%
Public school	87
Charter school	2.5
Private school	10.5

Grade Level

N = 205	%
Prekindergarten	11.71
Kindergarten	23.41
1st grade	22.93
2nd grade	23.41
3rd grade	22.93
4th grade	23.41
5th grade	25.37
6th grade	20.49
7th grade	20.49
8th grade	21.95
9th grade	41.95
10th grade	43.90
11th grade	45.37
12th grade	48.29
Other	5.37

Grade Level

N = 203	%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1.97
Black or African-American	11.82
Hispanic or Latinx	7.88
Middle Eastern or North African	1.48
White or Caucasian	69.95
More than one race	2.46
Prefer Not To Disclose	3.94
Other	0.49

1) How would you describe your current understanding of artificial intelligence (AI)?

N = 201	%
I am very familiar with AI	31.34
I am somewhat familiar with AI	61.69
I am not familiar at all with AI	6.97

2) How helpful do you think AI can be as a tool for educators to use in their classroom instruction?

N = 202	%
Very helpful	42.08
Somewhat helpful	49.5
Not very helpful	4.95
Not helpful at all	3.47

3) How helpful do you think AI can be as a tool to help manage educator tasks outside of classroom instruction, such as lesson planning, grading, etc.?

N = 203	%
Very helpful	46.53
Somewhat helpful	43.56
Not very helpful	6.44
Not helpful at all	3.47

4) How helpful do you believe AI can be as a tool for supporting student learning (ex: providing individualized learning opportunities, providing creative and engaging content, etc.)

N = 203	%
Very helpful	39.41
Somewhat helpful	47.78
Not very helpful	8.87
Not helpful at all	3.94

5) How would you describe your current use of AI as an educator?

N = 204	%
I frequently use AI in my work as an educator	16.18
I sometimes use AI in my work as an educator	45.59
I do not use AI in my work as an educator	38.24

6) What ways have you used AI tools? (Check all that apply)

N = 205	%
I have not used any AI tools in my work as an educator	27.32
Developing differentiated or individualized content for students	32.68
Developing lesson plans or content for your instruction	41.46
To help with grading or providing feedback to students	17.56
Educational games	18.05
Data analysis	16.10
Personalized learning platforms	9.76
Chatbots	26.34
Designing assessments	28.78
Language learning apps/ language translation	19.51
To help communicate with parents	25.37
To identify plagiarism in student work	21.46
Other	12.68

7) What are the three most important factors that drive your decision about whether to use AI as an educator? (select top three)

N = 205	%
Access to AI tools and resources	59.51
Permission from school administration or district administration to use AI	30.73
Student understanding of AI tools and resources	54.63
Ethical considerations regarding use of AI in schools	75.12
Concerns from students, parents, or others about using AI in schools	26.34
Other	17.56

8) How do you, or how would you determine whether an AI tool is appropriate for students to use? (Open response)

9) How do you, or how would you determine if an A.I. tool is appropriate for educators to use? (Open response)

10) What concerns do you have, if any, about teachers using AI in classrooms to support instruction, student learning, or manage educator workload? (Open response)

11) What can be done to ensure that AI tools do not widen existing digital divides? (Open response)

12) What resources or guidelines do you rely on to inform your use of AI as an educator? (select all that apply)

N = 205	%
State and/or district policies	40.00
Policies set by your school leadership	46.34
Resources or guidelines you received during professional development on AI	47.32
Peer advice	50.73
Resources or guidelines you received from professional organizations	48.29
Other	13.66

14) Have you participated in any professional development or training on using AI in an educational or classroom setting?

N = 201	%
Yes	54.23
No	45.77

13) What types of AI training or professional development opportunities does your district currently offer for educators? (select all that apply)

N = 205	%
Internal Workshops	32.68
Access to external training outside of your district	17.56
Access to instructional materials on AI	20.49
None that I'm aware of	48.29
Other	6.34

15) What professional development opportunities do you believe would be helpful for preparing K-12 faculty and staff to use AI as part of their instruction or other work with students? (select all that apply)

N = 205	%
Training on AI tools that support lesson planning/creating instructional content	82.93
Training on AI tools that support creating assessments	71.71
Training on AI tools that support grading and giving feedback to students	65.85
Training on AI tools that support personalized learning/differentiation	78.05
Training on how to use AI ethically	79.51
Other	9.27

ENDNOTES

1 https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/16/about-1-in-5-us-teens-whove-heard-of-chatgpt-have-used-it-for-schoolwork/

2 https://www.forbes.com/advisor/education/it-and-tech/artificial-intelligence-in-school/

3 https://www2.datainnovation.org/2022-ai-education.pdf

4 https://www.edutopia.org/article/7-ai-tools-that-help-teachers-work-more-efficiently/

5 https://www.forbes.com/sites/ulrichboser/2024/08/15/students-and-teachers-of-color-are-embracing-ai-in-schools-at-greater-rates-than-others-why/

6 https://cde.ca.gov/ci/pl/documents/cdeairesourcekit.pdf

7 https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=PROD084632&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary

8 Prompt: "What is your current role?" was added after the survey had begun, so these numbers are a sample of overall data. Response (n=142): teacher (66.2%), Paraprofessional (0.7%), Librarian (6.34%) School support personnel (4.93%), Administrator (11.27%), Other (10.56%)

9 *Ibid.*

10 Prompt: "What grade level(s) do you work with? (select all that apply)" Prekindergarten (11.71%), Kindergarten (23.41%), 1st grade (22.93%), 2nd grade, (23.41%), 3rd grade (22.93%), 4th grade (23.42%), 5th grade (25.37%), 6th grade (20.49%), 7th grade (20.49%), 8th grade (20.49%), 9th grade (41.95%), 10th grade (43.90%), 11th grade (45.37%), 12th grade (48.29%), Other (5.37%)

11 Prompt: "Including the 2023-2024 school year, how many years of teaching experience do you have?" Response (n=202): Less than 4 years (3.47%), 4-9 years (12.38%), 10-20 years (44.06%), More than 20 years (40.1%)

12 Prompt: "Which of the following best describes your current school setting?" Response (n=200): Public School (87%), Charter School (2.5%), Private School (10.5%)

13 Prompt: "What is your racial or ethnic identity?" Response (n=203): Asian or Pacific Islander (1.97%), Black or African-American (11.82%), Hispanic or Latinx (7.88%), Middle Eastern or North African (1.48%), White or Caucasian (69.95%), More than one race (2.46%), Prefer not to disclose (0.49%), Other (.49%)

14 Prompt: "What resources of guidelines do you rely on to inform your use of AI as an educator? (select all that apply)." Response (n=505): Peer advice (50.7%), Resources or guidelines from professional organizations (48.3%), Resources or guidelines from professional development on AI (47.3%), Policies set by your school leadership (46.3%), State and/or district policies (40.0%), Other (13.7%)

15 Prompt: "What types of policies or guidelines around educator and/or student use of AI in schools would be most helpful to you?"

16 Prompt: "What would you like policymakers to know about AI usage by educators and/or students as they work to create policies about AI?"

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*

20 Prompt: "What types of policies or guidelines around educator and/or student use of AI in schools would be most helpful to you?"

21 *Ibid.*

22 Prompt: "What would you like policymakers to know about AI usage by educators and/or students as they work to create policies about AI?"

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

25 Prompt: "What types of policies or guidelines around educator and/or student use of AI in schools would be most helpful to you?"

26 Prompt: "What would you like policymakers to know about AI usage by educators and/or students as they work to create policies about AI?"

27 Prompt: "How do you, or how would you determine whether an AI tool is appropriate for students to use?"

28 Prompt: "What concerns do you have, if any, about teachers using AI in classrooms to support instruction, student learning, or manage educator workload?"

29 Prompt: "How do you, or how would you determine whether an AI tool is appropriate for students to use?"

30 Prompt: "What would you like policymakers to know about AI usage by educators and/or students as they work to create policies about AI?

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32 Prompt: "What types of policies or guidelines around educator and/or student use of AI in schools would be most helpful to you?"

33 Prompt: "How do you, or how would you determine whether an AI tool is appropriate for students to use?"

34 Prompt: "What concerns do you have, if any, about teachers using AI in classrooms to support instruction, student learning, or manage educator workload?"

35 *Ibid.*

36 Prompt: "How do you, or how would you determine whether an AI tool is appropriate for students to use?"

37 Prompt: "How helpful do you think AI can be as a tool for educators to use in their classroom instruction?" Response (n=202): Very helpful (42.1%), Somewhat helpful (49.5%), Not very helpful (5%), Not helpful at all (3.5%)

38 Prompt: "Have you participated in any professional development or training on using AI in an educational or classroom setting?" Response (n=201): Yes (54.2%), No (92%)

39 Prompt: "What types of AI training or professional development opportunities does your district currently offer for educators?" (select all that apply) Response (n=257): None that I'm aware of (48.3%), Internal workshops (32.7%), Access to instructional materials on AI (20.5%), Access to external training outside of your district (6.3%)

40 Prompt: "How helpful do you think AI can be as a tool for educators to use in their classroom instruction?" Response (n=202): Very helpful (42.1%), Somewhat helpful (49.5%), Not very helpful (5%), Not helpful at all (3.5%)

41 Prompt: "How would you describe your current use of AI as an educator?" Response (n = 204): I frequently use AI in my work as an educator (16.2%), I sometimes use AI in my work as an educator (45.6%), I do not use AI in my work as an educator (38.2%)

42 Prompt: "How would you describe your current understanding of artificial intelligence (AI)?" Response (n = 201): I am very familiar with AI (31.3%), I am somewhat familiar with AI (61.7%), I am not familiar at all with AI (7%)

43 Prompt: "How do you envision preparing students to use or interact with AI?"

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*

46 Prompt: "What are the three most important factors that drive your decision about whether to use AI as an educator? (select top three)." Responses (n=541): Ethical considerations regarding use of AI in schools (75.1%), Access to AI tools and resources (59.5%), Student understanding of AI tools and resources (54.6%), Permission from school or district administration to use AI (26.3%), Concerns from students, parents, or others (26.3%), Other (17.6%)

47 Prompt: "How do you, or how would you determine whether an AI tool is appropriate for students to use?"

48 Prompt: "What types of policies or guidelines around educator and/or student use of AI in schools would be most helpful to you?"

49 Prompt: "What are the three most important factors that drive your decision about whether to use AI as an educator?" (select top three). Responses (n=541): Ethical considerations regarding use of AI in schools (75.1%), Access to AI tools and resources (59.5%), Student understanding of AI tools and resources (54.6%), Permission from school or district administration to use AI (26.3%), Concerns from students, parents, or others (26.3%), Other (17.6%)

50 Prompt: "How do you, or how would you determine whether an AI tool is appropriate for students to use?"

51 Prompt: "What can be done to ensure that AI tools do not widen existing digital divides?"

52 *Ibid.*

53 *Ibid.*

54 *Ibid.*