

AI in Education: *Friend or Foe?*



69% of teachers say AI tools have improved their teaching methods and skills.

5.9 the average number of hours per week teachers report saving through the use of AI tools.

7/10 middle & high school students say they're worried that using AI for school reduces their critical thinking skills.

22% of high school principals reported cases of bullying that involved AI-generated deepfakes during the 2023-2024 school year (RAND).

50% of students say that AI in the classroom makes them feel more disconnected from their teachers and peers.

Unless stated otherwise, statistics are from surveys featured in Education Week

FEATURED PANELISTS

April Camuso is the Principal of Hopkins Academy in Hadley, Massachusetts. A former English teacher, she transitioned from resisting Generative AI to leveraging it as a tool to enhance student thinking. She is currently leading a team to design an AI Literacy Competency for implementation in the fall of 2026.

Tasheira Gary is a 3rd-grade teacher entering her 6th year of teaching. She is interested in exploring how AI can be effectively utilized in the classroom to support both teachers and students.

Jeffrey C. Riley is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Day of AI, an MIT spin-off training educators in artificial intelligence. He previously served as Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and held leadership roles as Superintendent of Lawrence Public Schools and principal of Tyngsboro Middle School.

FEATURED PANELISTS

Sarim Chaudhry is both a high school student and a GCC student through dual enrollment. Sarim's interests are biology, specifically human health and physiology.

Dr. Torrey Trust is a Professor of Learning Technology at UMass Amherst. Her research explores how educators leverage digital tools, OER, and generative AI to enhance instructional design and classroom practice. A prolific scholar, she has authored ten books, including her most recent publication, *AI and Civic Engagement* (2025).

Dr. Rebecca Mazur is Director of the Center for Emerging Educational Practices and Senior Research & Evaluation Scientist at the Collaborative for Educational Services in Northampton. She is the author of DESE's AI Literacy resources for educators and works with teachers and education leaders across the state on AI literacy, classroom use, and policy.

How does AI work?

Artificial intelligence is the ability of a digital computer to perform intelligent tasks, such as thinking, writing, creating, and reasoning.

Generative AI (GenAI) is a popular subfield of AI that creates text, images, code, and other data seemingly out of thin air. Prominent GenAI tools include ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude.

- **Deep learning models:** GenAI learns from the patterns and relationships it identifies in data, which it then uses to respond to prompts users input.
- The **“black box”** issue: it’s not entirely clear how these models make the decisions they do. Not even Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, fully understands how ChatGPT produces its outputs.
- AI **“hallucinations”**: these tools can produce incorrect, misleading, or non-existent information.

How is AI being used in education?

86%

of K-12 students reported using AI, with heavy usage skewed towards older students: roughly 84% of high schools and 46% of middle schoolers, according to research from College Board.

According to a Pew Research Center poll, students use AI to find information, get help with schoolwork, and create summaries of books, articles, and videos.

85%

of K-12 educators reported using GenAI tools, with 58% using them regularly, according to a TeachersPayTeachers survey in 2026.

According to the Walton Foundation, teachers use AI to prep lessons, create worksheets, modify materials, do administrative tasks, and make assessments.



Google’s **“Gemini for Education”** is a suite of AI tools intended to integrate with school issued Chromebooks. Students can use Gemini to prep for exams, break down concepts, and get writing feedback.



Khan Academy’s AI-powered personal tutor & teaching assistant, **Khanmigo**, is a chatbot designed to “guide learners to find the answer themselves,” and provide support in generating lesson plans, rubrics, & other content. As of early 2026, 795 U.S. districts have adopted the tool.



Students at **Alpha Schools**, a growing network of private schools, access academic lessons via AI-powered software.

Potential benefits and risks of AI in education

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Access
AI can improve equity by addressing educational resource gaps and expanding access to education.

Time savings
AI can optimize teacher time for greater focus on students.

Learning outcomes
AI can improve students' learning.

Personalization
AI can tailor learning to each student's needs.

Accessibility
AI can extend learning to neurodivergent students and students with disabilities.

Assessment
AI can advance assessment.

POTENTIAL RISKS

Cognitive development
AI can undermine students' cognitive development.

Social and emotional development
AI can impede students' social and emotional development.

Trust
AI can degrade trust in education.

Safety
AI can threaten students' safety.

Dependence
AI dependence can erode students' autonomy and agency.

Inequality
AI can deepen equity divides.

© Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, 2026.

How is Massachusetts approaching AI in schools?

In 2025, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released an **AI guide** for district leaders and an **AI literacy** course for teachers. This comprehensive approach has positioned MA as a leader in the edu/AI landscape.

The AI guide supports district leaders in...

- Creating or refining AI use policies
- Embedding AI literacy in curricula and instruction
- Promoting ethical and equitable AI use in diverse communities
- Providing tools to ensure AI implementation fulfills education goals

In the news:

- In Sept. 2025, Governor Healey announced a new AI curriculum pilot that introduces students in grades 8 and up to foundational concepts, technologies, and societal implications of AI across 30 districts.
- In March 2026, Boston became the first major city to provide all high school students with AI proficiency before they graduate.