

Purpose

This document is intended to support local education agencies in developing or refining policies related to artificial intelligence. It outlines key governance, instructional, legal, and equity considerations to help district leaders align AI use with educational priorities, community values, and applicable law.

Artificial intelligence is not a standalone initiative. It affects instruction, operations, data systems, academic integrity, procurement, and professional learning. Effective policy design requires cross-functional leadership and clear decision-making structures.

Considerations for Local Policy Development

PURPOSE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

District AI policy should articulate why AI is being addressed and what principles guide its use. Many districts may choose to adopt a guiding principle such as: AI serves as a tool in support of teaching and learning. Human relationships, professional judgment, and student wellbeing remain central.

Consider:

- What educational goals should AI support in this district?
- How will human judgment and professional expertise remain central?
- How will the district balance innovation with risk management?
- What commitments are made to students and families regarding safety, privacy, and transparency?

VISION AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

AI policy should reflect and reinforce the district's broader strategic plan.

Consider:

- How does AI align to district priorities such as equity, literacy, workforce readiness, or instructional improvement?
- What problems is AI intended to address, and what problems should it not address?
- How will success be measured?
- How will the district avoid reactive or fragmented adoption?

SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

Clear scope prevents confusion and uneven implementation. Providing working definitions of artificial intelligence, generative AI, AI literacy, and operational AI can reduce ambiguity and support consistent application.

Consider:

- Does the policy apply to instructional, assistive, and operational AI tools?

- Does it include embedded AI features within existing platforms?
- Does it govern both student and staff use?
- What definitions are necessary to create shared understanding across the district?

ROLES AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

AI oversight should not rest with individual educators or a single department. Policy should clarify distributed responsibility. Clear governance structures reduce fragmentation and increase consistency.

Consider:

- Who coordinates AI implementation at the district level?
- Is there a cross-functional leadership team that includes instruction, technology, legal, equity, and operations?
- What is the Board's role in review and accountability?
- How are school leaders supported in implementation?
- How are students and families positioned as partners?

DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

AI integration increases complexity in data governance. Policy should explicitly address privacy protections. AI use should not weaken existing privacy or cybersecurity safeguards.

Consider:

- What student information, if any, may be entered into AI systems?
- How does the district ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, and applicable Maryland laws and regulations?
- What review process exists for tools that collect or process student data?
- How are vendors required to disclose data collection, storage, retention, and deletion practices?
- How will families be informed about AI-enabled systems?

EQUITY AND ACCESS

AI policy should reinforce the district's civil rights and equity commitments. Equity monitoring should be ongoing, not one-time.

Consider:

- How will the district evaluate tools for bias prior to adoption?
- How will inequitable outputs or impacts be identified and addressed?
- How will access disparities in devices or connectivity be mitigated?
- How will AI support — but not replace — legally required services for students with disabilities or multilingual learners?
- What processes ensure that automated recommendations affecting student opportunity receive human review?

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ASSESSMENT

AI challenges traditional approaches to authorship and assessment. Policy should clarify expectations while supporting instructional adaptation. Clarity and transparency reduce misuse more effectively than punitive approaches.

Consider:

- How will the district define appropriate and inappropriate AI use in student work?
- When must AI use be disclosed?
- How will assessment practices evolve to emphasize reasoning, process, and authentic demonstration of learning?
- What guidance will be provided to educators regarding assignment design?
- Will the district rely on AI detection tools, and if not, what instructional alternatives are emphasized?

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

AI implementation depends on educator capacity. Policy should reflect sustained preparation, not one-time training. AI adoption without educator preparation increases risk.

Consider:

- What foundational AI competencies are expected of educators and leaders?
- How will professional learning differ by role?
- How will educators be supported in evaluating AI outputs for accuracy and bias?
- What structures exist for collaborative learning and reflection?
- How will professional learning adapt as tools and research evolve?

PROCUREMENT AND VENDOR GOVERNANCE

Tool selection requires structured review and documentation. Approval should be ongoing, not a one-time event.

Consider:

- What process governs submission and review of AI tools?
- Who applies evaluation criteria, and what standards are used?
- How are educational value, privacy, accessibility, bias mitigation, and transparency assessed?
- What contractual provisions limit vendor data use and require breach notification?
- How will approved tools be monitored over time?

OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AI USE

AI is increasingly embedded in budgeting, staffing, scheduling, and early-warning systems. These uses carry heightened risk. Operational AI should be treated as high-stakes use.

Consider:

- Where is AI already embedded in district systems?
- Which operational decisions require documented human review?
- How are leaders trained to interpret predictive outputs responsibly?
- How are equity impacts monitored in operational contexts?

- How are families informed about high-impact automated systems?

AI LITERACY AND STUDENT PREPARATION

District policy should address not only AI use, but student understanding. Students should graduate prepared to navigate AI-rich environments critically and responsibly.

Consider:

- How will AI literacy be integrated across grade levels and disciplines?
- How will students learn to evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy and bias?
- How will ethical use, privacy awareness, and transparency be taught?
- How does AI literacy align with digital literacy and computer science standards?

MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW

AI governance requires continuous improvement.

Consider:

- How frequently will the policy be reviewed?
- What data will inform revisions?
- How will stakeholder feedback be incorporated?
- How will emerging legal or technological changes be addressed?