Designing an AI Roadmap Framework: Creating and Communicating AI Guidelines and Policies

Michael Millington   June 3, 2024

(Image credit: Future)

The use of AI in school districts has been equal parts exciting and concerning for educators. Many factors involving the use of AI-driven programs and technology have yet to be fully understood. However, the quest to integrate and comprehend AI's usefulness is one that many school districts have undertaken to help both teachers and students.

During a recent Tech & Learning webinar sponsored by PowerSchool, designing an AI roadmap for school districts was discussed by: Alana Winnick, Educational Technology Director and Data Protection Officer at Pocantico Hills Central School District; Greg Bagby, Coordinator of Instructional Technology at Hamilton County Schools; and Joel Lathrop, Director for Education Strategy at PowerSchool.

Watch the webinar on-demand here

Key Takeaways

How have you addressed AI concerns in your district?

Alana Winnick: AI is not going anywhere and we should embrace it. It is our job as educators to prepare students for their future. It's inequitable to not use it as a teaching tool.

We listened to and addressed issues raised from parents, teachers, and other stakeholders within the district.

One of the major challenges with AI is the idea of AI use for cheating. But focusing on the learning process and how to best use AI tools to benefit learning instead of circumventing learning helps to change the idea of learning with AI across the board.

Greg Bagby: We cannot block or ban our way out of using AI. If they have access to it, they are going to use it. It is not about getting in front of AI, it is about understanding the best ways to use AI. What we need to understand is that AI is only going to get better.

Tech & Learning Newsletter

Tools and ideas to transform education. Sign up below.

Reaching out to the community is the best way to understand what the concerns are that are surrounding AI. Helping students understand AI is the best way to prepare them for professional success after their educational career ends.

Integrating AI use on every scale helps to normalize its use and train all those involved how to use AI products and programs.

Joel Lathrop: Preparation is important for a district to successfully deploy an AI plan. Having an AI readiness assessment will go a long way toward knowing if your school district is ready to adopt AI on a wide scale. Teacher training is important as teachers will be on the front lines of introducing AI to students.

It's important to note that AI is not meant to replace people, but to complement the human element.

Bringing AI to your data is also important on a security level, as taking your data outside of a secure environment can create security risks.

How Do You Plan for District Wide AI Adoption?

GB: We created an AI support team to better understand the trajectory of AI in the world and in the educational space. Building a diverse team that can help principals, administrators, and others adopt AI into their school systems helped to ensure the success of the project.

Being open to working with other agencies about AI helps to create a comprehensive plan of attack as well. Working with edtech organizations, universities, and even elected officials gives us an extremely diverse blend of information to help form our AI direction for educators and students.

AW: Creating "AI policies" is not the mindset to take when it comes to AI, but having a firm stance on how to use AI helps to give teachers and students the ability to better understand how to move forward with AI use. Giving teachers agency to create their own guidelines for using AI helps to support teachers in their decisions while also advocating AI use.

Getting the conversation started about AI has really worked. Involving teachers, industry experts, students, parents, and other stakeholders can create amazing talking points for AI. Embrace policy revision to include AI.

JL: Many districts are still planning how to integrate AI into their existing tech policies. Some districts are banning the use of AI while others are limiting it to teacher-use only.

The best way to help adopt a district wide plan for AI is to know how ready your district is for AI. An AI readiness assessment is important, but equally as important is how safe and secure your data is when using AI. Finally, knowing what your budget can handle is integral to knowing what tools and resources you can introduce to your district.

What Is the Most Important First Step In Launching a District Wide AI Plan

JL: Be sure that the vendor you use has K-12 experience. They need to be aligned with your staff, your students, and your teachers.

AW: No matter where you are in your AI journey, you're on the right track. Reach out, have conversations, embrace learning.

GB: Make sure you have the right verbiage when using AI. Make sure student information safety is a top priority. Policy, privacy, and professional readiness.

For more information, please visit **PowerSchool.**

Michael Millington

Senior Staff Writer

Michael Millington is a senior staff writer for Tech & Learning. A writer and editor with over a decade of experience, his focus on bringing actionable information to those in need is the driving force behind his work. When not researching new advancements in technology, Michael likes to practice his Italian and train his dog Cyril.