

Navigating the AI Landscape in Education: State Guidance for Responsible Integration

Guidance Document | 2024

As AI becomes integrated into everyday life, including education, states have started crafting guidance to help stakeholders navigate the rapidly changing and sometimes confusing technology landscape. State guidance documents provide roadmaps, offering educators, policymakers and administrators insights and best practices for leveraging the potential AI holds for teaching and learning in safe and effective ways.

Guidance documents explain the principles, policies and procedures that should inform the use of AI in education. They outline ethical considerations, data privacy safeguards, equity concerns and pedagogical strategies that educators can use to meet the unique needs of students. By establishing a framework for responsible AI use, these resources aim to maximize the benefits of AI while mitigating risk.

The primary audience for state guidance is educators and school administrators, but policymakers, school administrators, technology developers and researchers can also learn from these documents. We hope this overview can serve as a resource for state education agencies and education partners to leverage when developing an AI guidance document or toolkit.

State Guidance Documents

In the last year, state education agencies in 14 states have led the way in integrating AI into education through the development of comprehensive AI guidance documents.

- California: [Learning With AI, Learning About AI](#)
- Delaware: [AI in Delaware Education](#)
- Indiana: [Artificial Intelligence Guidance](#)
- Kentucky: [Artificial Intelligence Guidance Brief](#)
- North Carolina: [North Carolina Generative AI Implementation Recommendations and Considerations for PK-13 Public Schools](#)
- Mississippi: [Artificial Intelligence Guidance for K-12 Classrooms](#)
- North Dakota: [North Dakota K-12 AI Guidance Framework](#)
- Ohio: [AI Toolkit](#)
- Oklahoma: [Guidance and Considerations for Using Artificial Intelligence in Oklahoma K-12 Schools](#)
- Oregon: [Generative Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) in K-12 Classrooms](#)
- Virginia: [Guidelines for AI Integration Throughout Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia](#)
- Washington: Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence in Schools [Version 1](#) and [Version 2](#)
- West Virginia: [Guidance, Considerations, & Intentions for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in West Virginia Schools](#)
- Wyoming: [Guidance for Wyoming School Districts on Developing Artificial Intelligence Use Policy](#)

Common Themes States Can Build On

ExcelinEd examined the guidance documents provided by states to understand common themes. As other states craft their own guidance, these themes can serve as a foundation to build on.

1. START WITH SETTING A VISION FOR AI

As a first step, states should develop and communicate a vision for leveraging AI to enhance teaching and learning in the context of existing technologies, as part of the broader vision for technology in the state.

Existing state guidance recognizes the transformative potential of AI in education, encouraging the responsible exploration of AI tools and technologies.

For example, **Indiana** highlights AI's capacity to help educators analyze student data for targeted support, streamline classroom processes and give students real-time feedback. **Virginia** emphasizes AI's ability to foster business innovation and economic growth.

Providing tangible examples of AI use and highlighting its potential to improve both education and the workforce can help alleviate concerns and apprehensions surrounding this new technology.

2. DECIDE ON THE TARGET AUDIENCE

States have identified different audiences when crafting guidance. For example, **Ohio** and **North Carolina** focus heavily on practical strategies to successfully integrate AI into the classroom. With educators in mind, these documents provide resources such as classroom activities, sample policies and letter templates and checklists to evaluate AI tools.

On the other hand, **Virginia's** guidance focuses on the roles and responsibilities of state agencies, governing boards, and leadership, while West Virginia emphasizes AI's role in building computer science and technology skills.

Whether integrated within broader state agency recommendations or established as an independent framework, specific education guidance is crucial for ensuring responsible and effective use of AI tools in the classroom.

3. DEVELOP THE VISION AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Guidance should not be developed in a vacuum. Insights from experts in the field and input from diverse stakeholders engaged are essential for drafting accurate and relevant content and fostering buy-in.

Some states have leveraged experts from organizations such as [TeachAI](#), [Code.org](#), [aiEDU](#) and [ISTE](#), as well as higher education institutions such as Stanford, Yale, Cornell and the University of Chicago. Others have gathered input from key stakeholders involved in navigating AI integration in K-12 schools, including superintendents, principals, teachers, technology directors and counselors.

Oklahoma encourages hosting conversations with students, educators, parents and community members to address questions and concerns regarding AI use in education. **Ohio** consulted with stakeholders in the state's educational system to gather ground-level insights that helped shape the design and content of its toolkit.

4. OUTLINE THE RESPONSIBLE USES OF AI TOOLS

Existing guidance documents reflect a shared concern for ensuring AI tools are used in ethical and safe ways for students and educators. They emphasize the importance of policies and guidelines that support improved learning experiences with AI tools, while ensuring human oversight and control are not replaced. States also recognize the potential risks associated with AI, such as an overreliance on AI technologies, data privacy and safety, furthering existing digital divides and issues related to plagiarism and cheating. In response to these challenges, they all emphasize the need to implement robust safeguards to mitigate potential risks.

West Virginia outlines prohibited uses of AI tools and recommends privacy policies for schools and districts to adopt. These include implementing security protocols to safeguard AI technologies from unauthorized access and misuse, rigorously evaluating AI systems deployed in educational settings and using AI rating systems to guide software procurement decisions.

5. CELEBRATE THE POWER OF AI IN PREPARING LEARNERS FOR EVOLVING WORKFORCE NEEDS

AI will continue to shape education and the workforce. States may provide guidance that recognizes the demands of a changing economy and the role AI will play in the careers of the future.

North Carolina recognizes that businesses and universities will expect students to have AI proficiency and emphasizes the role of public schools in preparing students with these skills.

West Virginia policy mandates grade-appropriate computer science instruction for all K-12 students, with their guidance document explicitly recognizing AI as a subset of computer science.

Washington highlights the role of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in preparing students with transferrable skills for AI careers and providing opportunities to earn industry multiple industry-recognized credentials.

6. INCLUDE A PLAN TO SUPPORT AI LITERACY FOR TEACHERS

Currently, teachers often rely on ad hoc methods to access training on AI. However, comprehensive professional development opportunities are needed to effectively integrate AI into instructional practices.

North Carolina encourages districts and schools to develop and implement an AI Literacy program that provides staff and students with AI training. While the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction leaves it up to districts and schools to develop their own AI Literacy programs, they emphasize the need for robust and ongoing professional development for educators, offering opportunities to incorporate AI skills into instructional methods.

Mississippi states that district leaders should provide ongoing AI training to educators on topics like acceptable use, misinformation, bias, restructuring instruction, and digital citizenship. **Virginia** suggests training teachers through workshops, courses, micro-credentials, and micro-badges focused on AI training for educators. **West Virginia** provides a checklist that educators can use to guide their AI use in instructional design and delivery.

7. PRIORITIZE DIGITAL LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS

Digital literacy equips students to navigate and thrive in a technology-driven world. Some states suggest integrating these skills, including AI literacy, into existing state standards. Incorporating digital literacy within courses, rather than creating a standalone course, is a simple and effective way to ensure students develop both AI and digital skills.

Kentucky outlines ways the KDE is promoting digital citizenship among students including using its statewide **Student Technology Leadership Program** to engage K-12 students in AI concepts and making ongoing investments in digital learning and computer science education.

Mississippi emphasizes the importance of ongoing digital citizenship instruction and provides strategies for students, teachers and administrators to ensure responsible and safe AI use.

Virginia lists subjects that digital skills can be seamlessly incorporated into including health, mathematics, science, English and social studies.

For additional details see *ExcelinEd's two-pager on [Digital Literacy Standards](#)*.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

Successful AI integration in schools requires support and guidance from state education agencies.

Virginia assigns the following responsibilities to the Virginia Department of Education and State Council of Higher Education for Virginia:

- Creating advisory resources that are continuously updated
- Developing stakeholder training toolkits and workshops
- Hosting conversations with educators, institution leaders, and governing board members on topics such as digital citizenship, integration of AI in the curriculum
- Partnering with the Virginia Community College System to design micro-badging and micro-credential training opportunities
- Providing technical assistance to school district governing boards

Kentucky's Education Technology System Master Plan tasks the Department of Education with:

- Providing guidance and support to districts and schools
- Identifying and reducing barriers to integrating AI tools into classrooms
- Fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders such as school districts, universities, research institutions, and AI vendors
- Conducting regular assessments to monitor and evaluate the impact of AI technologies on educational outcomes

Kentucky's [Digital Learning Coaches](#) are also responsible for exploring AI ethics, best practices, and the alignment of AI tools with both the [Kentucky Academic Standards for Technology](#) and the [Digital Citizenship Framework](#).

Additional AI State Actions

Besides developing state guidance documents, states can support AI integration through pilot programs. For example, [Florida](#) and [Indiana](#) offer grants for districts to explore AI platforms and cover related costs. [New Hampshire](#) has taken a different approach by entering a statewide contract with Khan Academy and its District Partnership Program to provide teachers and students with enhanced AI features. These varied efforts aim to provide guidance and establish guardrails to help districts effectively integrate AI into the classroom.

Conclusion

So far, 13 states have responded to the need for AI guidance by developing comprehensive recommendations on AI use in education. With AI's ongoing impact on education, it's crucial for states to create guidance documents that meet the needs of their specific educational contexts. In doing so, states can leverage AI's potential while proactively addressing the risks associated with new technologies.

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