

Practice What We Teach:

Thoughtful AI Integration for Students with Learning Differences

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Setting the Stakes

Here in Silicon Valley, AI advertisements are everywhere, plastered on billboards and affixed to passing buses. While it's unclear whether we'll see it complete a boom and bust cycle, these companies are asserting that AI is here, not only to stay but to transform our very way of life. Many industries are quickly adapting to these new technologies, and conversation about the promise and dangers of AI are ubiquitous. There are concerns about labor exploitation in the Global South and what laborers are exposed to in order to train large language models (Perrigo, 2023). We're wrestling with ownership, copyright, and what gets fed into training data. There are continual questions about the tech industry and its environmental impact, especially on impoverished communities of color. But AI tools are also transforming opportunities and opening doors.

In education, we are not separate from these conversations. These broader conversations take on particular urgency in educational research, where we must balance innovation with evidence-based practice, especially for vulnerable student populations. Recent studies show significant and growing AI adoption across K-12 settings. Pew Research found that 26% of teens have used ChatGPT for schoolwork, doubling from 13% in 2023 (Sidoti et al., 2025). Common Sense Media (2024) found that 51% of young people ages 14-22 have used generative AI at some point, though only 15% use it weekly. Meanwhile, the Gallup and Walton Family Foundation (2025) found that 60% of teachers have used AI tools during the current school year, with weekly users saving an average of 5.9 hours per week—adding up to about six weeks a year. With teacher shortages in the United States, the Center for Innovation, Design, and Digital Learning suggests that “AI can positively alleviate pressures and challenges contributing to teacher burnout” (2024). There is particular promise for students with learning differences. In a recent survey, 65% of special education teachers agree that AI will improve the accessibility of learning materials for students with disabilities (Gallup & Walton Family Foundation, 2025).

But there also still exist significant gaps in terms of what we know about AI's impact on society and our students. For educators of students with learning differences, we are tasked with the responsibility to get this momentous opportunity as right as we can:

If we wait too long, we may be depriving our students of learning tools that may transform their experience or amplifying existing inequities in education.

If we adopt too quickly, we risk exposing an already vulnerable population to greater harm, exacerbating existing inequities.

So what do we do?

At Charles Armstrong School, we do what we've been doing for almost sixty years to “unlock the unique potential of students with dyslexia and related learning

differences, changing the trajectory of their lives." We are uniquely positioned to contribute to this research gap. Our 60 years of serving students with dyslexia, combined with our deliberate approach to integration of all types of learning tools, creates an opportunity to generate evidence that can inform both practice and policy. The Office of Governor Gavin Newsom (2025) recently unveiled the Golden State Literacy Plan, which we are delighted to support.

And.

We have been doing the fundamentals of that plan for many years now: a commitment to research and evidence-based practices, embracing learning tools with a mindful approach, and celebrating the growth of our students with "enthusiastic optimism," in the words of our founder Wilbur Mattison.

We are no strangers to learning tools of all kinds: students choose modular, flexible seating to suit their learning profile; they rotate through fidgets to manage their floating attention. We use manipulatives in small group math and reading intervention. Students also use graphic organizers, text-to-speech and speech-to-text tools, spellcheck features, etc. When other people may think students with learning differences are "lazy" or "not trying hard enough," we ask our students to deeply understand the learning task and equip them with the right tools to navigate the next step towards that goal.

While recent research is growing rapidly—from 11 studies in 2020 to 27 in 2023 (Yap et al., 2025)—significant gaps remain in understanding AI's impact on students with dyslexia, particularly regarding long-term outcomes, accessibility challenges, and bias in diverse populations. Recent research identifies four primary AI applications in dyslexia education: early detection and diagnosis, personalized learning interventions, speech and language processing, and brain imaging analysis (Yap et al., 2025). However, critical challenges persist around data quality, algorithmic bias, accessibility barriers, and the need to balance AI assistance with human expertise—challenges that our decades of research-based expertise and excellence in teaching experience position us to navigate thoughtfully.

So here's what we currently know about the development of AI policies in K-12 contexts—and more importantly, what critical questions remain unanswered about implementation challenges, equity concerns, and the specific needs of students with learning differences that our work at Armstrong is uniquely positioned to address.

What the Research Shows

The Cognitive Development Paradox

Educational research has long established that productive struggle—the optimal zone of challenge where learning occurs—is fundamental to cognitive development. For

students with dyslexia, this struggle often leads to exceptional strengths in creativity, pattern recognition, and innovative problem-solving. AI tools promise to reduce barriers and personalize learning, yet emerging research reveals a fundamental tension: the cognitive processes that AI can bypass may be essential for developing these learning advantages.

The Promise of Adaptive Learning

Recent research identifies AI's potential to support dyslexic learners through four primary applications: early detection and diagnosis, personalized learning interventions, speech and language processing, and brain imaging analysis (Yap et al., 2025). As the Center for Innovation, Design, and Digital Learning (2024) notes, "Recently developed AI technologies are inherently flexible and adaptable, creating personalized learning experiences and assistive technologies that enable educators to meet the unique instructional needs of this diverse population of students."

AI's adaptive capabilities offer particularly compelling possibilities for students with learning differences. These tools can "modify text presentation in real time, adjusting readability, font size, spacing, and background color to improve access" and "suggest alternative learning resources or exercises based on the student's progress, strengths, and challenges, promoting a more personalized learning experience" (Marino, Basham, Courtade, et al., 2024). Beyond individual adaptations, AI can enhance classroom inclusion through "real-time translation of spoken or written text" that makes "classroom communication during IEP meetings and working with community constituents more inclusive" (Marino, Basham, Courtade, et al., 2024).

For educators, AI assessment tools can "provide a data-driven approach to instruction, facilitating a more nuanced understanding of student learning and teaching efficacy" while monitoring "patterns in student engagement, focus, and social interaction, enhancing targeted instruction" (Marino, Basham, Dieker, et al., 2024). This technological support could lead to "a more satisfying work experience and potentially lower attrition rates, especially in high-need areas such as special education" (Center for Innovation, Design, and Digital Learning, 2024).

Most educators believe developing AI skills is important for students with learning disabilities (Special Olympics Global Center for Inclusion in Education, 2024), and research demonstrates that AI-enhanced feedback can outperform traditional approaches in specificity and alignment with learning goals (Darvishi et al., 2024).

The Cognitive Offloading Risk

However, studies reveal concerning implications when AI eliminates productive struggle. MIT research on "cognitive debt" shows that premature use of large language models compromises brain activity and reduces ownership over final products (Kosmyna et al., 2025). Students using ChatGPT had difficulty recalling their own work and reported reduced confidence in their authorship. Timing proves crucial: introducing

AI tools too early in creative processes forecloses ideation and reduces original thinking quality (Qin et al., 2025).

This "cognitive offloading" shifts students from developing their own thinking to relying on external systems. Dergaa et al. (2024) warn of "AI chatbot induced cognitive atrophy [AICICA]," arguing that excessive AI dependence without cultivating fundamental cognitive skills may lead to loss of critical thinking abilities—particularly problematic for younger learners who may prioritize convenient information access over deep understanding.

The Dyslexic Advantage Tension

For dyslexic students, these risks are particularly acute. Dyslexic advantages emerge because these students develop alternative cognitive pathways through working with challenges. The pressure to "keep up" may incentivize premature AI adoption as cognitive offloading rather than developing their own exceptional capabilities. As Darvishi et al. (2024) emphasize, AI implementation must balance assistance with fostering student agency to ensure students remain active participants in their learning journey.

The critical question becomes: how do we distinguish between removing harmful barriers and eliminating productive struggle? This paradox reveals why timing and intentionality matter—the question isn't whether to use AI tools, but *when* and *how* to introduce them without undermining cognitive development that leads to confidence and capability.

Vulnerability and Mental Health in AI Interactions

Beyond cognitive concerns, emerging research reveals serious mental health risks that follow a troubling developmental trajectory, particularly for vulnerable populations. The path from academic assistance to clinical crisis often begins with a fundamental gap in adult awareness about how young people actually use AI tools.

The Awareness Gap

Parents and educators often lack comprehensive understanding of young people's AI interactions. While adults frequently assume AI use is limited to homework assistance, research reveals teens increasingly engage with AI for companion chatbots, virtual relationships, and emotional guidance (Yu et al., 2024). As one teen observed, "Teens are asking AI before asking adults for answers," while another described using AI to "give the impression that things are fine and that they have no stress by just answering with answers [from AI] that make them seem ok" (Common Sense Media et al., 2024). This misunderstanding leaves families and schools unprepared to address AI's full impact on adolescent development, creating conditions where concerning patterns can develop without detection or intervention.

Emotional Dependency and Displacement

What begins as academic support often evolves into emotional dependency. Teens report turning to AI for advice on dating, personal relationships, and emotional challenges because "it helps me ask questions without feeling any pressure" (Common Sense Media et al., 2024). Yankouskaya et al. (2025) warn that AI's streamlined, always-available features create conditions ripe for dependency formation. For students with learning differences, these risks compound significantly. Those who already experience emotional volatility, anxiety, depression, and executive dysfunction may find AI's immediate, non-judgmental responses particularly appealing, potentially bypassing the development of crucial self-regulation and help-seeking skills.

As AI becomes a primary source of guidance and emotional support, it displaces the human connections essential for healthy adolescent development. Students may increasingly rely on AI systems that lack genuine understanding of their complex needs, undermining development of social-emotional skills and authentic relationships. For students with learning differences who may already experience school-based trauma or struggle with self-advocacy, this displacement occurs precisely when they need human mentorship to develop confidence and resilience. The combination of novelty-seeking behaviors common in ADHD with AI systems designed for engagement creates particularly concerning conditions for students with executive dysfunction, who may struggle to maintain healthy boundaries with these tools.

Clinical Mental Health Crises

At the extreme end of this trajectory, documented cases reveal severe consequences including involuntary psychiatric commitment, incarceration, and death. These outcomes were predicted as early as 2023, when Søren Dinesen Østergaard, head of a research unit at the Department of Affective Disorders at a Danish university, hypothesized that ChatGPT interactions could trigger delusional thinking. He noted that the realistic nature of chatbot conversations creates cognitive dissonance: users get "the impression that there is a real person at the other end—while, at the same time, knowing that this is, in fact, not the case," which "may fuel delusions in those with increased propensity towards psychosis" (Østergaard, 2023).

Recent investigative reporting has documented the prediction's tragic accuracy. Cases include a Manhattan accountant who believed ChatGPT when it told him he was "one of the Breakers — souls seeded into false systems to wake them from within," leading to a dangerous week-long delusional spiral (Hill, 2025). Another involved a young man with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia who developed a romantic relationship with an AI entity he called "Juliet." When he believed OpenAI had "killed" Juliet, he threatened violence against executives and was ultimately shot and killed by police (Hill, 2025). Additional cases documented by Futurism include individuals being involuntarily committed to psychiatric facilities, arrested, and experiencing complete breaks with reality after extended ChatGPT use (Dupre, 2025). These are not isolated incidents. Testing of 38 major AI models found that GPT-4o affirmed delusional claims 68% of the time when presented with prompts indicating possible psychosis (Hill,

2025). As one researcher noted, "What does a human slowly going insane look like to a corporation? It looks like an additional monthly user" (Hill, 2025).

The psychological mechanism underlying these crises involves what Krista Thomason terms "emotional manipulation without a manipulator." ChatGPT functions like a sophisticated fortune teller, generating text that allows users to "see what they want to see" while mimicking the intimacy they desperately seek. Users share secrets and innermost thoughts, experiencing a connection that feels special and understanding. When friends and family express concern, it appears they are "disparaging their feelings of being heard," driving users deeper into AI relationships and further from reality. This creates a self-reinforcing cycle where individuals become "our own emotional manipulators," using technology to turn their emotional needs against themselves. Dr. Joseph Pierre, a psychiatrist specializing in psychosis, confirmed that documented cases "indeed appeared to be a form of delusional psychosis," emphasizing "the delusional part" (Dupre, 2025). Critically, adults with no prior history of mental illness have proven susceptible, suggesting vulnerability extends far beyond those with pre-existing conditions. The cognitive risks of premature AI adoption become even more concerning when we consider the unique vulnerabilities of students with learning differences. For students who may already experience anxiety, depression, executive dysfunction, or school-based trauma, the cognitive offloading risks we've examined don't exist in isolation—they intersect with emotional and mental health factors that demand even greater attention to timing, intentionality, and adult awareness.

Equity, Access, and Implementation Gaps

While AI tools promise to democratize personalized learning, emerging evidence reveals that implementation often reproduces and amplifies existing educational inequities. The gap between AI's potential and equitable access creates particular challenges for students with learning differences, who may need these tools most yet face the greatest barriers to appropriate implementation.

The Digital Divide in AI Quality

Research indicates that socioeconomic factors significantly influence not just access to AI tools, but the quality of their educational application. Students in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas tend to use technology for "rote memorization type skills," while students in affluent schools use technology "to create and transform their learning" (Marino, Basham, Courtade, et al., 2024). This pattern suggests that AI tools may replicate existing educational inequities, with vulnerable populations receiving AI support that emphasizes compliance and basic skills while privileged students access AI that enhances creativity and critical thinking. For students with learning differences, this divide carries particular significance. Those in underresourced schools may encounter AI implementations focused on remediation rather than strength-building, potentially undermining the development of dyslexic advantages while failing to address authentic learning needs.

Bias and Representation Gaps

Current AI systems embed significant biases that compound challenges for diverse learners. Only 35% of teachers and 65% of parents believe "developers of AI currently account for the needs and priorities of students with intellectual or developmental disabilities" (Special Olympics Global Center for Inclusion in Education, 2024). Training data often lacks representation of diverse learning profiles, creating tools that may misinterpret or inadequately support students with learning differences. These biases are particularly concerning given that Black and Latino families report higher rates of AI approval and usage (Gallup & Walton Family Foundation, 2025), yet these same populations face higher rates of misdiagnosis and underdiagnosis regarding learning differences. LGBTQ+ young people express greater skepticism, being "more likely to say the impact of generative AI will be mostly negative and less likely to say it will be positive compared to cisgender/straight young people" (Common Sense Media et al., 2024).

Policy Lag and Institutional Readiness

A surprising barrier to thoughtful AI implementation emerges from research showing that increased knowledge about AI actually decreases adoption rates. Longoni et al. (2025) found that "the more knowledge people have about AI and how it works, the less likely they are to embrace it." For educators with deeper understanding of AI's mechanics, the technology "loses its mystique," challenging assumptions that education will naturally lead to adoption. This paradox suggests that informed decision-making about AI requires comprehensive understanding rather than superficial training, yet most educational institutions lack the resources for such deep professional development.

Despite growing AI adoption, only 19% of teachers report that their schools have any kind of AI policy (Gallup & Walton Family Foundation, 2025). This policy vacuum occurs precisely when students and educators increasingly use AI tools without institutional guidance or support. The absence of policies that center the needs of students with learning differences—rather than merely complying with existing regulations like COPPA, FERPA, and IDEA—creates conditions where AI tools may inadvertently perpetuate educational inequities.

As Ruha Benjamin (2024) warns against "AI evangelism" that treats technological adoption as inevitable, educators must critically examine who benefits from these tools and who might be left behind. The current implementation landscape suggests that without intentional equity-focused policies, AI tools risk becoming another mechanism through which educational advantages accrue to those already privileged while vulnerable populations face additional barriers to authentic learning support. These documented mental health risks take on additional urgency when we examine who has access to what kind of AI implementation. The progression from academic assistance to emotional dependency to clinical crisis isn't just an individual phenomenon—it's shaped by systemic factors that determine which students receive

thoughtful, well-supported AI integration and which encounter AI tools without adequate guidance or safeguards.

Armstrong’s Response: Our Learning Tools Philosophy

While AI research may not yet comprehensively address students with dyslexia and related learning differences, what we do know confirms that balancing wisdom with curiosity is essential. The cognitive development paradox, mental health risks, and equity concerns documented in current research all point toward the same conclusion: timing, intentionality, and community wisdom matter more than technological capability.

At Charles Armstrong School, we developed our Learning Tools Philosophy not as a reaction to AI hype, but as an articulation of practices we’ve refined over nearly sixty years of serving students with learning differences. This philosophy emerged from observing how we already make thoughtful decisions about learning tools—from when students use calculators to how we introduce assistive technology—and recognizing that these same principles apply to AI.

Grounding AI in Established Practice

Dergaa et al. (2024) warn that premature overreliance on AI chatbots “parallels situations where individuals learn to rely on calculators before mastering fundamental mathematical operations,” leading students to “inadvertently bypass the essential cognitive processes contributing to critical thinking, analytical acumen, and the cultivation of creativity.” At Armstrong, we’ve long navigated this balance. Students don’t use calculators when learning multiplication concepts, but as they advance, a calculator becomes appropriate when multiplication isn’t the primary skill being developed—such as when a student with dyscalculia uses a calculator to solve geometry problems, allowing them to focus on spatial reasoning rather than fact fluency.

This everyday wisdom about tool timing directly informs our approach to AI. Our Learning Tools Philosophy articulates five core principles that apply to all learning tools, from pencil grips to emerging AI technologies:

<i>Adult-Facing</i>	<i>Student-Facing</i>
Students Think, Tools Support	I Do My Own Work, I Do My Own Thinking
Build Strong...Then Fast	I Build Strong Skills First

Confidence Before Convenience	I Feel Safe and Confident
Practice What We Teach	My Teachers Show Me How
Stay Curious, Question Everything	I Stay Curious and Ask Questions

The parallel versions demonstrate our commitment to student agency—rather than having rules imposed upon them, students internalize principles like “I am smarter than any tool I use” and “I build strong skills first.” This approach directly addresses key research findings:

- “Build Strong, Then Fast” responds to the cognitive debt studies showing that premature AI use compromises brain activity and reduces ownership over learning outcomes (Kosmyrna et al., 2025). Just as we ensure accuracy before speed in literacy instruction, students must develop foundational understanding before tools accelerate processes.
- “Confidence Before Convenience” addresses the mental health trajectory documented in current research, where academic AI use can evolve into emotional dependency and clinical crisis. For students with learning differences who may already experience anxiety or school-based trauma, tool introduction must strengthen rather than undermine their sense of themselves as capable learners.
- “Stay Curious, Question Everything” directly counters the equity gaps in AI implementation, encouraging both students and adults to ask critical questions: “How is this helping me learn? Who benefits and who might be left out? Is this making me more capable or more dependent?”

Moving at the Speed of Trust

Our measured approach reflects what my dissertation research (Phan, 2024) identified as “moving at the speed of trust”—a framework popularized by Black abolitionist writer adrienne maree brown. When schools prioritize the urgency of innovation over relationship-building, particularly marginalized community members experience overwhelm and even moral injury from becoming complicit in decisions that transgress their values before they can process implications. As one study participant noted, “Can we at least move at the speed of professional development?”

This insight aligns with research showing that increased knowledge about AI actually decreases adoption rates (Longoni et al., 2025). Rather than viewing this as resistance to overcome, we recognize it as wisdom to embrace. Thoughtful AI integration requires comprehensive understanding, community input, and time to build shared language around complex concepts.

Implementation Through Community Learning

We're applying the established Concrete-Representational-Abstract framework—used throughout our math instruction—to AI policy development. We begin with concrete examples using familiar tools like calculators, move to representational discussions about tool relationships and timing, then advance to abstract principles that can guide AI decisions.

Over the next year, we will:

- Integrate the Learning Tools Philosophy into weekly Community Meetings and curriculum discussions
- Provide comprehensive AI literacy professional development for all staff
- Conduct student focus groups and surveys to understand their current AI experiences
- Educate families about both the philosophy and current research on AI in education
- Convene a diverse task force to develop comprehensive policies that fully reflect our values and mission as a school

This process ensures that even if students don't encounter generative AI directly during their time at Armstrong, their critical thinking about learning tools and internalization of these principles will serve them well when they do encounter AI in their future educational and professional endeavors.

The Learning Tools Philosophy provides the bridge between our established expertise and unfamiliar territory, allowing us to move from strength rather than scrambling to catch up with technological trends. It positions AI as one powerful tool in a long lineage of supports for learners with differences, evaluated through the same lens of wisdom that has guided our work for nearly six decades.

Policy Recommendations: Practice What We Teach

The research is clear: timing, intentionality, and community wisdom matter more than technological capability when implementing AI in educational settings. If we tell students they are smarter than any tool they use, then we as educational leaders must trust in our collective wisdom to meet this moment thoughtfully rather than succumb to hype or fearmongering. The following recommendations emerge from our core principle: practice what we teach.

For Educational Leaders: Build Confidence, Not Compliance

Schools must develop AI policies that foster critical thinking, curiosity, and conversation rather than merely ensuring compliance. **We strongly discourage copy-and-paste approaches to policy development.** Just as we wouldn't want

students to outsource their thinking to AI, schools should not outsource their policy development to convenient templates or trending frameworks.

Instead, we recommend that schools:

Ground policies in existing mission and values. Begin with who you are as a learning community before determining how AI fits your context. What principles have guided your approach to learning tools historically? How do those principles apply to AI?

Engage all stakeholders authentically. Include student voice, family perspectives, educator expertise, and community values in policy development. Move at the speed of trust and professional development rather than innovation timelines.

Start with familiar tools before advancing to AI. Use concrete examples—calculators, spell-check, graphic organizers—to build shared language about tool relationships before tackling AI's complexity.

Prioritize educator AI literacy. Provide comprehensive professional development that goes beyond surface-level training. Research shows that deeper understanding of AI mechanics leads to more thoughtful implementation decisions (Longoni et al., 2025).

Create space for productive struggle. Policies should protect the cognitive processes essential for learning while removing harmful barriers. Distinguish between assistance that amplifies student thinking and automation that replaces it.

The goal is not universal adoption but thoughtful integration aligned with each school's unique context and student population.

For EdTech Developers: Embody Our Principles Too

The technology industry has an opportunity—and responsibility—to partner with educators in protecting vulnerable learners while unlocking authentic potential. We call on developers to ask hard questions about their products:

Data privacy and security: How are you protecting students with learning differences who may be more vulnerable to data exploitation? What safeguards exist beyond legal compliance?

Mental health boundaries: In efforts to make AI tools accessible and engaging, are you inadvertently blurring reality boundaries for developing minds? What specific protections exist for students who may be more susceptible to emotional dependency or delusional thinking?

Bias and representation: Have you audited training data for representation of diverse learning profiles? How do your algorithms respond to atypical learning patterns that may indicate neurodivergence rather than deficit?

Productive struggle preservation: Do your tools foster the cognitive development essential for confidence and capability, or do they primarily offer convenience that could undermine learning processes?

We seek partnerships with companies that embody these principles—those willing to prioritize long-term learning outcomes over short-term engagement metrics. The developers we want to work with understand that students with learning differences don't need AI to save them; they need AI that helps unlock their existing superpowers.

For Researchers: Center Student Voices and Strengths

The research landscape requires significant expansion to address critical gaps in understanding AI's impact on students with learning differences. We call for:

Authentic partnership with practitioners. Collaborate with teachers, families, and students experiencing AI's real-time impacts rather than conducting research in isolation from classroom realities.

Longitudinal studies of cognitive development. Track how AI use affects the development of dyslexic advantages and alternative cognitive pathways over time, not just immediate academic outcomes.

Student voice amplification. Include students with learning differences as research partners, not just subjects. Their insights about tool effectiveness and learning experiences are essential data.

Strength-based frameworks. Move beyond deficit-oriented research models that view learning differences as problems to solve. Study how AI can amplify existing capabilities rather than simply remediate perceived weaknesses.

Success documentation. Capture actual successes of AI implementation for students with learning differences, not just theoretical promise. What works, for whom, and under what conditions?

Intersectional analysis. Examine how AI affects students with multiple marginalized identities, recognizing that learning differences intersect with race, class, language, and other factors.

The research community must remember: our students are smarter than the tools they use. AI isn't coming to save them—but thoughtfully implemented, it may help unlock their unique potential.

For Students: We've Got Your Back

To the students reading this: Many of you have expressed concern that AI might take over the world (Common Sense Media et al., 2024). We want you to know that can

only happen if adults cede responsibility and critical thinking to technology—and that's not who we are.

At Charles Armstrong School, we've always moved forward with "enthusiastic optimism" in the spirit of our founder Wilbur Mattison. We believe in the incredible insights of neurodiverse minds, and we've never shied away from tools and opportunities that unlock unique potential.

You have extraordinary capabilities—creativity, pattern recognition, innovative problem-solving, and ways of thinking that the world desperately needs. AI tools, when used thoughtfully, can help you express these capabilities more fully. But *you* remain the artist of your own learning. You are always smarter than any tool you use.

We commit to:

- Protecting your right to productive struggle and authentic learning
- Ensuring AI tools amplify rather than replace your thinking
- Listening to your voices in policy decisions that affect your education
- Maintaining communities where you can be safe, be kind, and take responsibility
- Celebrating your learning differences as strengths, not deficits to fix

The future needs your unique perspectives and innovative thinking. Our job is to ensure AI helps you shine brighter, not dim your light.

Moving Forward: Trust in Our Collective Wisdom

The AI moment in education demands that we practice what we teach. If we believe students are capable of critical thinking about learning tools, then we must demonstrate that same critical thinking as educators, developers, researchers, and community members.

This is not about avoiding AI or embracing it uncritically. It's about approaching this powerful technology with the same wisdom, care, and attention to individual learners that has guided excellent education for generations. We must move at the speed of trust, build confidence before convenience, and always remember that technology serves learning—never the reverse.

The students we serve deserve nothing less than our most thoughtful, principled response to this moment. Their unique potential depends on it.

Declaration: In developing this policy brief, I used Claude Sonnet 4 (Anthropic's AI assistant) as a writing and organizational tool. Consistent with our Learning Tools Philosophy, I maintained authorship of all ideas, research synthesis, and recommendations while using AI to support structure, clarity, and refinement. All research, analysis, and core arguments emerged from my expertise and experience.

This collaboration exemplifies the thoughtful AI integration we advocate: amplifying human thinking rather than replacing it, building on strong foundations, and maintaining critical reflection about tool use.

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