AI Readiness Framework

What students, educators, and leaders need to know

v2.0

aiEDU
The AI Education Project

The AI Education Project (aiEDU) published its first AI Readiness Framework in October 2024. Built on qualitative and quantitative research, our first framework included research-based student, educator AI Readiness competencies, and a district readiness rubric.

In just a year, much has changed.

Overview

Research has called into question whether LLM use has a negative effect on brain connectivity and cognitive engagement (MIT Media Lab, 2024). The World Economic Forum's 2025 Jobs Report indicates that 22% of all jobs will be disrupted by 2030, with nearly 40% of job skills expected to change (World Economic Forum, 2025). And more students are using AI tools for schoolwork (Pew Research, 2025) and companionship (Common Sense Media, 2025). At the same time, most districts are only just starting to develop AI use policies (RAND, 2025).

At the same time, the shape of skills is changing, with significant implications for AI Readiness.

To strengthen our second AI Readiness Framework, aiEDU embarked on novel research and a new analysis of labor market data and K-12 graduation requirements with The Burning Glass Institute. What we found is that human skills—like communication, collaboration, and critical thinking—are increasing in value. It's also clear that many technical skills will be augmented with AI. This requires strong knowledge of foundational skills alongside AI skills.

And it frames the challenge ahead for K-12 education. Educators cannot choose between developing soft skills, core content skills, and AI. They must take an all-of-the-above approach, finding the balance to teach all of them, and teach them well. In order to live, work, and thrive in a world with AI, students will need both foundational learning and the ability to direct and assess AI tools.

New insights driving our learnings

That means understanding students' human advantages differently, new competencies for educators, and a heightened importance for school leaders, not just districts as a whole, to understand the challenge ahead.

It also means strengthening the pedagogical vision and perspective on AI implementation at the district level. Version 2 of our AI Readiness Framework seeks to give each of these key constituencies the baseline they need to do so.

What's new in Version 2?

Version 2 of aiEDU's AI Readiness Framework incorporates this evolution to anchor core content knowledge and human skills throughout student competencies. In addition, we've included an explicit connection between learning pedagogy and AI skill building in educator competencies and the readiness rubrics.

In Version 2, the AI Readiness framework continues to build on the work from other digital and AI literacy frameworks (and also acknowledges the great work of many organizations in our citations below):

- **UNESCO's AI Competencies for Students AI Competencies for Teachers**
- **Digital Promise's AI Literacy Framework**
- **AI4K12's Big Ideas in AI**
- **EC, OECD, and Code.org's The AILit Framework**
- **Common Sense Media's AI Toolkit for School Districts**

Based on latest research and feedback from users, Version 2 also includes the following updates:

Student Competencies

- The competencies in "Domain 3: Lead with the Human Advantage" are revised to reflect current research on the future of work
- New curricular examples aligned to competencies

Educator Competencies

- Updated competencies throughout to reflect latest cognitive research on AI use

School Leader Readiness Rubric

- This new addition reflects the importance of school leadership to drive AI Readiness and focuses on their needs directly, focusing on instructional leadership and community engagement

District Readiness Rubric

- Revised for more specific criteria for districts to consider

Defining AI Readiness

AI Readiness

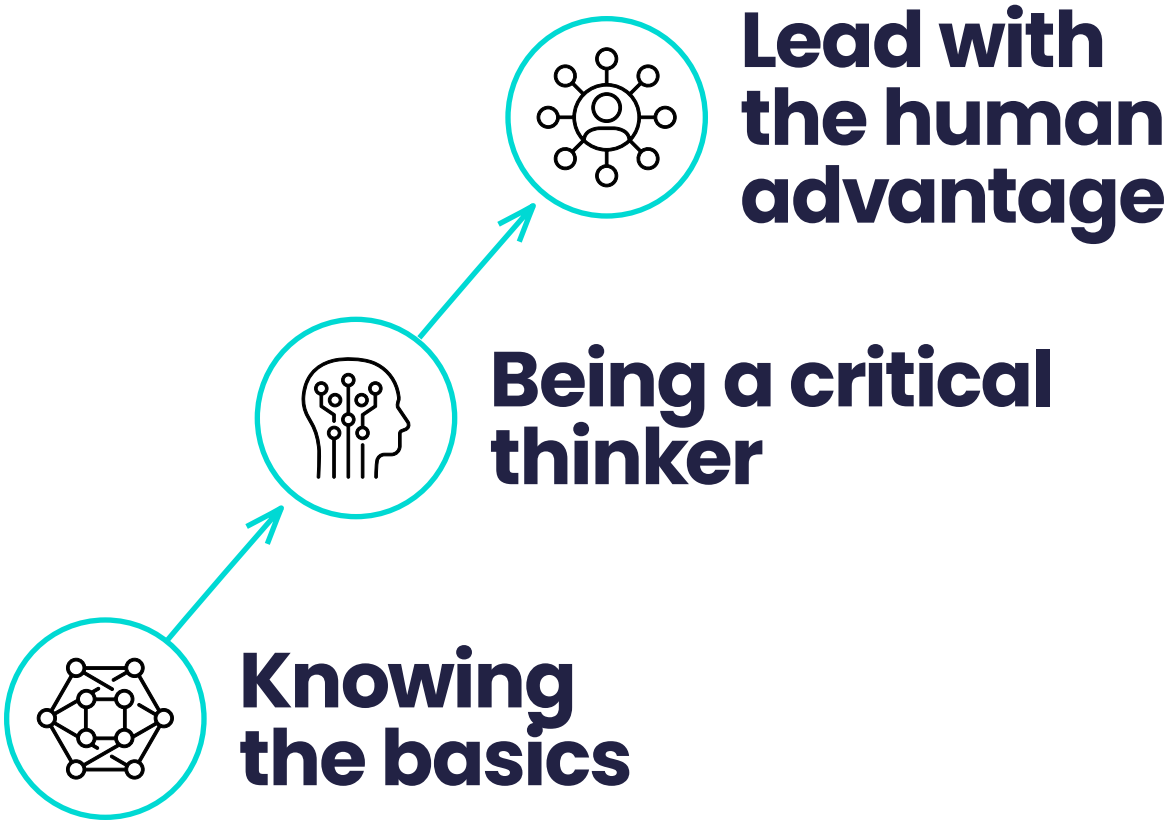
aiEDU defines AI Readiness as the knowledge and capabilities needed to apply one's human advantage with evolving technology.

A person is AI ready when they can leverage the combination of core content knowledge and durable skills like critical thinking and collaboration alongside AI to achieve their life and career potential.

Many specific qualities go into a person being AI ready, including concepts like:

- **AI literacy**
  (e.g., how to effectively and critically use AI tools)
- **Content literacy**
  (e.g., math, literacy, science, social studies, and computer science skills)
- **Media literacy**
  (e.g., evaluating information sources for bias and synthesizing information across digital platforms, ensuring digital citizenship)
- **Social and emotional wellness**
  (e.g., developing empathy, managing screen time, building healthy online relationships)
- **Creative and critical thinking**
  (e.g., problem-solving with technology, designing innovative solutions, questioning assumptions about technological solutions, collaborating across disciplines)

Defining AI Readiness



To build the AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies, aiEDU looked to multiple perspectives and research.

See our Methodologies section for more details.

Building from this body of work, we see a progression of learning for AI literacy and AI Readiness for students and educators: **knowing the basics**, **being a critical thinker**, and **leading with the human-advantage**. In addition, to support educators and students, we see specific actions for districts and schools to take to ensure their systems are AI Ready.

This framework has four parts

01 Student AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies

The first is the **AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies for Students**. These are concrete skills that will support students in building their AI literacy and readiness. These span all subject areas.

Audience

- **Teachers:** To know what connections to support students in making
- **Parents:** To understand what they should expect from their children
- **School leaders, district leaders:** to inform AI readiness outcomes for students in any vision setting and strategy

02 Educator AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies

The second is the **AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies for Educators**, which names the concrete knowledge and skills educators need to teach students AI Literacy & Readiness. It should be noted that these competencies span all subject areas and are intended for all educators and those providing wrap-around supports for learners.

Audience

- **School leaders, district leaders:** to inform AI readiness for teachers
- **Teachers:** to understand the skills they should be developing

03 School AI Readiness Rubric

The third part is the **School AI Readiness Rubric**, which provides guidance on what schools' approach can be to align to system level readiness.

Audience

- **School leaders:** to self assess and guide work within schools to support AI readiness
- **District leaders:** to support conditions that allow school leaders to implement AI readiness

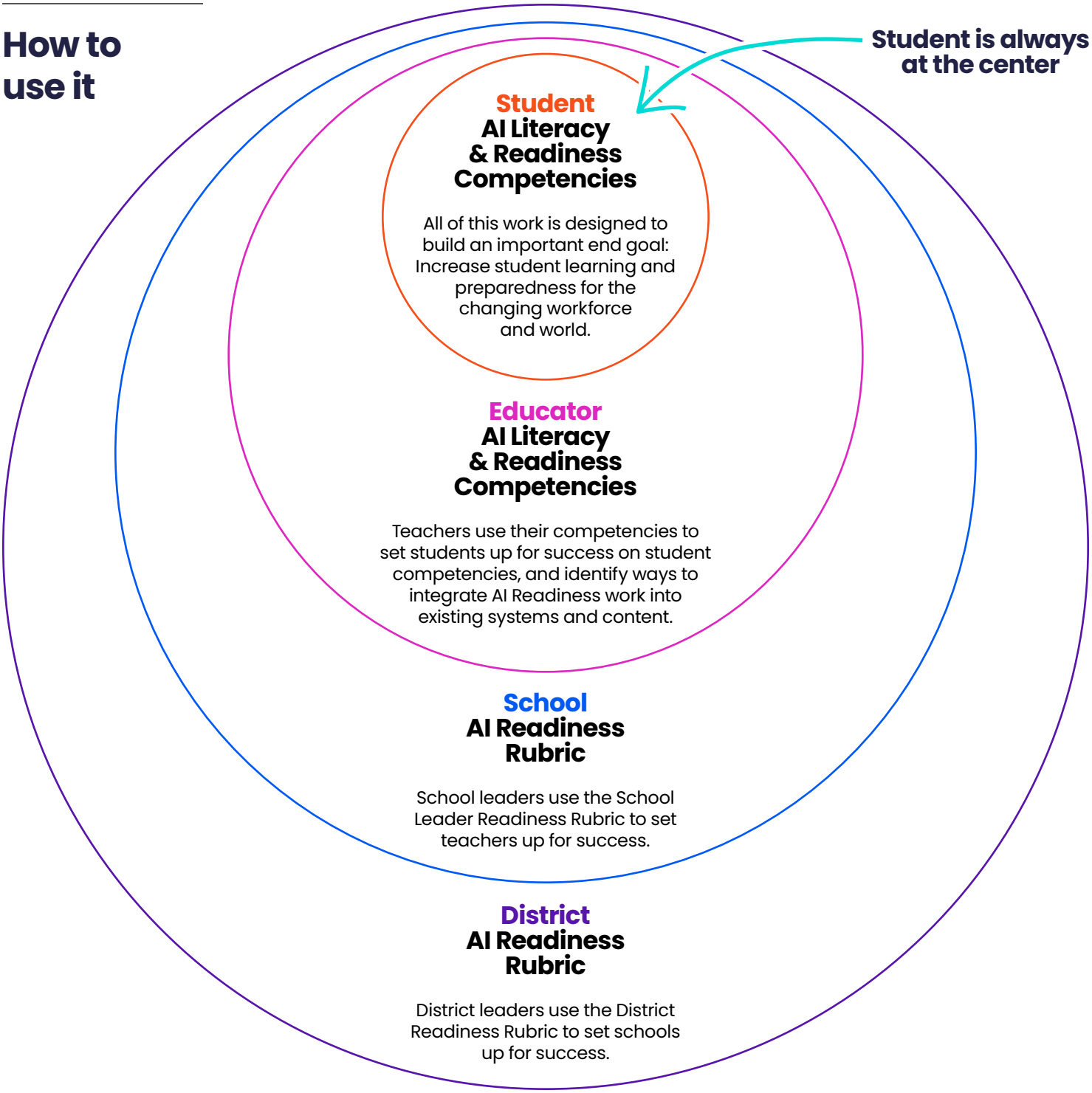
04 District AI Readiness Rubric

The final part is the **District AI Readiness Rubric,** which provides guidance on the levels of work districts must do to prepare for AI use and build AI Readiness in their systems.

Audience

- **District leaders:** to deliver district-level change

How to use it


Student is always at the center
Student
AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies
All of this work is designed to build an important end goal: Increase student learning and preparedness for the changing workforce and world.
Educator
AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies
Teachers use their competencies to set students up for success on student competencies, and identify ways to integrate AI Readiness work into existing systems and content.
School
AI Readiness Rubric
School leaders use the School Leader Readiness Rubric to set teachers up for success.
District
AI Readiness Rubric
District leaders use the District Readiness Rubric to set schools up for success.

01

AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies

Student

Student Competencies

Overview

AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies for Students is organized into three overarching domains: **Know Your Basics, Be a Critical Thinker**, and **Lead with the Human Advantage**. Within each domain, competencies are broken down into a grade band (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) with specific descriptions and skills.

Teachers can see how learning these skills progresses over time and what can be appropriate for the age group they teach as well as prior skills to support. Competencies do not need to be addressed in any particular order, but offer multiple entry points for building AI literacy and AI Readiness in any class.

Audience

Teachers
To know what connections to support students in making

Parents
To understand what they should expect from their children

School Leaders, District Leaders
To inform AI readiness outcomes for students in any vision setting and strategy

Domain 1 Know Your Basics

AI Literacy

Competencies	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8 (includes all previous skills)	Grades 9-12 (includes all previous skills)
A. Define & identify AI systems	Use age appropriate and accurate definitions of AI (e.g., AI is a technology that gathers information and makes predictions from that information) • Describe that AI gathers data and follows instructions • Identify different types of personally identifiable data (e.g., name, address), why they matter in various situations including AI powered tools, and what it means to keep personal data private	Refine definitions of AI, using more specific terms (e.g., AI is a technology that identifies patterns from large amounts of data and uses those patterns to make predictions or generate outputs in response to user prompts) • Identify and begin to describe machine learning • Identify what datasets were used to train an AI model and what AI models and methods were used to develop a tool • Identify how personal information is being collected, used, and shared" (Digital Promise, 2024) by AI tools and systems and know how to effectively manage/delete data collected by AI tools and systems • Build understanding of how AI systems use energy and space	Use nuanced definitions of AI, taking care to not assign human traits to descriptions of AI (e.g., LLMs are statistical models trained with self-supervised learning on large text or code datasets to predict the next token in a sequence.) • Identify more key terms used with AI and the different ways for LLMs to gather data and what AI applications bring into LLMs (e.g., supervised vs. unsupervised learning, reasoning models) • Describe the differences in models (e.g., training data, training methods), the resulting strengths and weakness of the models, and what types of tasks the different models are best used for • "Consider the benefits and/or costs of AI to individuals, society, and the environment" (Digital Promise, 2024)

Domain 1 Know Your Basics

AI Literacy

Competencies	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8 (includes all previous skills)	Grades 9-12 (includes all previous skills)
B. Use AI tools safely and effectively	Recognize and ask questions about AI and non-AI in familiar technologies (e.g., smart speakers, NPCs in games) • Describe responsible use of AI and non-AI tools	Use and critically compare outputs of age-appropriate AI tools and applications • Experiment with different tools and prompts to identify differences and similarities in outputs from AI tools based on user inputs • Evaluate when and how AI tools should be used in different situations; consider if the problem is right for AI, if you have enough data, and weigh the possible risks against benefits • Develop metacognitive skills with AI use to describe levels of thinking, learning, and creativity in AI use • Effectively manage/delete data collected by AI tools and systems	Evaluate AI tool use in larger technology ecosystems • Identify how AI tools connect with and impact other technologies they use • "Responsibly engage in the consumption, creation, or sharing of AI-enabled products, including ethical sourcing and citation" (Digital Promise, 2024) • Act as a decision-maker around AI tool use, not just a consumer
C. Develop core content knowledge	Develop grade-level appropriate literacy, math, science, and social studies skills and knowledge, aligned to relevant national and/or state standards		

Domain 2 Be a Critical Thinker

AI Literacy

Competencies	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8 (includes all previous skills)	Grades 9-12 (includes all previous skills)
A. Determine responsible use of AI	Compare strengths and weaknesses of different processes and tool selection for problem solving, including AI tools (e.g., identifying benefits and drawbacks of using different models for a given math problem)	When presented with a novel problem, critically examine the possible use of AI tools at various points in the process, considering energy use, bias, and access (e.g., as a group, prototyping an AI tool use case for a problem)	Critically assess the appropriateness of using AI for novel problems, including analyzing ethical implications of AI tool use in various contexts (e.g., environmental impacts, bias)
B. Identify and address AI biases	Identify why outputs from AI tools have discrepancies • Compare outputs from AI tools given different prompts • Define bias in data • Connect discrepancies in outputs to ideas of fairness and bias • Gather and sort data noticing patterns and outliers	Discuss how AI systems might reflect biases of their creators or training data (AI4K12, 5-A.iii, 2022) • Recognize and explain the different perspectives on key ethical issues surrounding AI, such as bias, transparency, and accountability • Identify benefits and drawbacks of AI tools for a job, considering who or what might be left out or purposefully included • Choose appropriate data for AI tasks, considering relevance and potential biases	Critique AI systems for embedded biases and propose ways to make them more inclusive and ethical • "Understand how values, beliefs, and points of view are applied through AI-enabled systems and outputs" (Digital Promise, 2024) • "Identify how bias in data collection informs reporting" (Digital Promise, 2024) • Engage in ethical impact assessments of AI tools • Identify technical and policy solutions that could improve equity of tools
C. Examine AI use and outputs	Ask and answer questions about products created by AI and non-AI tools • Ask questions about the sources used in a response • Ask questions about the problem to determine what tool (AI or non-AI) would be best and why • Determine if outputs created by AI are factual or not (e.g., teacher models entering a prompt to an AI tool and students discuss validity of response)	Assess the reliability and limitations of AI outputs in various scenarios • Develop questions to review and compare tone, content, and credibility of outputs from various AI tools • Compare different tools for a given problem, identifying benefits and drawbacks, to make recommendations about the best tool for a problem • Compare multiple perspectives, outputs, and sources before finalizing a response that uses an AI tool	Critically assess AI outputs, considering potential biases and limitations • "Evaluate outputs of AI-enabled system for appropriate tone, audience, and content" and "evaluate the credibility or accuracy of an output prediction (Digital Promise, 2024) • Determine if and how an AI algorithm is the right tool for the job • "Analyze and synthesize multiple perspectives to support lateral reading" (Digital Promise, 2024)

Domain 3 Lead with the Human Advantage

AI Readiness

Competencies	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8 (includes all previous skills)	Grades 9-12 (includes all previous skills)
A. Build emotional intelligence	Build foundations of uniquely human emotional intelligence skills: collaboration, empathy, compassion, self-regulation, and active listening skills • Engage in collaborative work that requires communicating needs, ideas, and processes clearly with others • Develop vocabulary and routines to support empathy building (e.g., identifying and sharing personal emotions when engaging with technology and others)	Deepen the uniquely human emotional intelligence skills applied to various social situations or problems (e.g., collaboration, empathy, compassion, self-regulation, active listening) • Engage in more collaborative work that requires communication of needs, ideas, and processes within the group and to external audiences • Engage in more robust empathy building exercises (e.g., human-centered design framework for problem solving)	Apply human-centered skills (e.g., collaboration, empathy, compassion, self-regulation, active listening) to social and academic situations • Engage in collaborative work for more complex problems that requires communication of needs, ideas, and processes; engage in implementing solutions • Apply empathy, compassion, and active listening to nuanced scenarios (e.g., applying human-centered design framework for problem solving in community-based contexts)
B. Apply creativity and interdisciplinary thinking	Build foundational creative and interdisciplinary thinking skills • Ask "what if," "what else," "why," or "why not" type questions that foster flexible and associative thinking • Identify points of connection across subject areas	Deepen creative and interdisciplinary thinking skills • Apply methods for brainstorming and creating that go beyond sequential or linear approaches • Ask questions that consider multiple subjects when creating or problem-solving	Apply creative and interdisciplinary thinking skills to novel situations • Develop creative approaches to complex problems that require human reflection and engagement throughout the process • Build cross-content connections that leverage human expertise in novel situations

Lead with the Human Advantage

Competencies	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8 (includes all previous skills)	Grades 9-12 (includes all previous skills)
C. Be a life-long learner	Build foundational curiosity, resilience, resourcefulness, and adaptability skills • Identify the roadblock and ask questions about how to get around the roadblock • Come back to a problem multiple times • Make adjustments to planned approaches based on when new information is presented	Deepen curiosity, resilience, resourcefulness, and adaptability skills • Approach novel situations with an orientation to context and knowledge building (e.g., ask what do I know and what don't I know yet) • Iterate on possible solutions or applications of new skills to refine solutions • Seek new knowledge or support from others when faced with an unknown or potential roadblock	Apply personalized strategies for life-long learning: • Reflect on approaches to novel situations that refine knowledge and context building • Embrace productive struggle, preserving with novel problems and iterations of possible solutions • Continue to seek new knowledge and experience

02

AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies

Educator

Educator
Competencies

Overview

The AI Literacy & Readiness Competencies for teachers highlights the key knowledge and skills for teachers to successfully build their own AI literacy and AI Readiness and support students in developing their AI literacy and AI Readiness.

These educator competencies are organized into three overarching domains: **Know and Model the Basics, Foster and Model Critical Thinking**, and **Lead with the Teacher Advantage**.

While these echo the domains of the student competencies, they are not intended to be a one-to-one match. You'll see the most relevant student competencies listed for each educator competency.

Audience

School Leaders, District Leaders
To inform AI readiness for teachers

Teachers
To understand the skills they should be developing

Domain 1

Know and Model the Basics

		Aligned Student Competencies
A. Build foundational knowledge of AI	Define what AI is, how data is used in AI, and how AI is situated within the broader tech ecosystem Effectively use AI Understand the impacts of AI on human skill development and cognition Understand the history of AI development and implications on future	1.a: Define & identify AI systems 1.b: Use AI tools safely and effectively
B. Build pedagogical knowledge of AI literacy and readiness skills	Explain, in age-appropriate ways, what AI is, how AI uses data, AI uses and applications, and best practices with AI use Build learning experiences that center human skill and learning, using AI as a tool when applicable, not a replacement for human thinking Identify the uniquely human skills needed for students in a world of AI: emotional intelligence (e.g., compassion, empathy, collaboration, active listening, communication), creativity, multi-perspective decision making, resilience, adaptability, curiosity Identify connections between core subject content and AI literacy skills	1.a: Define & identify AI systems 1.b: Use AI tools safely and effectively 1.c: Develop core content knowledge
C. Identify, describe, and apply district AI policies	Situate safe and responsible individual and classroom AI use within district AI use policy Understand and apply district policies on AI citations and plagiarism in student work Understand and apply district policies on collection, storage, and use of student data within AI tools, as situated within district student data policies and FERPA Implement family communication and engagement with AI per district policy	1.a: Define & identify AI systems 1.b: Use AI tools safely and effectively

Domain 2

Foster and Model Critical Thinking

		Aligned Student Competencies
A. Critically evaluate the use of AI tools in teaching & learning	Critically evaluate if AI tools are best for a given instructional task or not using the following: 1. Purpose - impact on student learning, 2. Privacy 3. Practicality Analyze inputs to AI and AI created outputs for alignment to values, beliefs, mitigating bias, and student learning outcomes Anchor any AI use to further student outcomes in research-based learning pedagogy	2.a: Determine responsible use of AI 2.b: Identify and address AI biases 2.c: Examine AI use and outputs
B. Model critical evaluation of AI tools used in teaching and learning	Establish and discuss AI use guidance with students, modeling when and how students can work with AI tools Engage students with credibility checks on sources and AI outputs, including critical evaluation of when to AI Facilitate age-appropriate discussions on current and long-term effects of AI on individuals, the work force, society, and the environment	2.a: Determine responsible use of AI 2.b: Identify and address AI biases 2.c: Examine AI use and outputs
C. Collaboratively iterate and refine AI use with colleagues	Evaluate established assignments for ways for students to intentionally engage with AI tools that deepen learning, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity Engage in ongoing reflections and evaluation of the efficacy of the AI tools based on your knowledge of students, student learning data analysis, and levels of student engagement and enthusiasm	3.b: Apply creativity and interdisciplinary thinking 3.c: Be a life-long learner

Domain 3

Lead with the Teacher Advantage

		Aligned Student Competencies
A. Create opportunities for students to build emotional intelligence	Create learning opportunities for students to identify specific emotional, social, and collaboration skills they bring to their work Design collaborative work that requires communication that anchors on emotional and social skills Highlight differences in AI-only products and human + AI products to build students awareness of the differences	3.a: Build emotional intelligence
B. Model and create opportunities for students to apply creativity and interdisciplinary thinking	Create learning opportunities that build from students' interest and relevant real-world situations, that require considering multiple different subjects and/or perspectives Build class structures that support students in adding metacognitive and "what if" moments to build creative & interdisciplinary thinking skills	3.b: Apply creativity and interdisciplinary thinking
C. Create opportunities to support life-long learning	Develop and model routines for resilience, prompting students to reflect on their process when tools changes or fail them Model refining personal understanding of when to use tools, when to question tools, and how to continue to develop uniquely human capabilities	3.c: Be a life-long learner

03

AI Readiness Rubric

School

School
AI Readiness Rubric

Overview

The School AI Readiness Rubric is a tool to support school level leaders in implementing AI Readiness within their schools. While many of the criteria reflect those in The District Readiness Rubric, there is particular emphasis on the Enable Teaching & Learning domain.

School leaders are uniquely positioned to implement district level policy and set the instructional priorities and systems for their schools. A school that successfully moves through the levels of this rubric sets up its teachers to develop within the educator competencies. That, in turn, will set students up for success in achieving their own competencies.

The School AI Readiness Rubric is designed as a companion to District Readiness Rubric. Districts aligning to the AI Readiness Rubric set schools up to be successful in implementing school-level readiness. If a school is operating with limited district guidance on AI readiness, then the school leadership must establish and implement the vision and the policy, not just align with existing vision & policy from the district.

Audience

School Leaders
To self-assess and guide work within schools to support AI readiness

District Leaders
To support conditions that allow school leaders to implement AI readiness

School
AI Readiness Rubric

Domain	Level 1 Demonstrate Commitment	Level 2 Invest & Implement	Level 3 Deepen & Iterate
Connect District Vision to School Implementation	**Vision for Student AI Readiness** Identify points of alignment and gaps in current school instructional goals and district student AI Readiness outcomes	Develop school instructional goals aligned to updated district vision for student AI Readiness	Embed student AI Readiness outcomes within student assessment structures
	Vision for School AI Use Map district AI Readiness competencies for different roles to given school structure and roles	Implement aligned support for developing AI Readiness competencies across all school staff roles	Consistently use AI Readiness competencies in existing district performance management systems or structures
	Vision for AI Use in Instruction Internalize district criteria for AI use in instruction anchored in strong pedagogical practices	Pilot implementation of criteria for AI use in instruction for tool evaluation and instructional trainings	Expand and iterate on implementation of criteria for AI use in instruction across instructional domains
Galvanize Stakeholders	**Context Gathering** Informally gather input (e.g., survey, focus groups) from students, teachers, staff, family and community members on AI in education to inform key priorities for AI Readiness implementation	Implement regular communications with families about AI Readiness efforts and engage community partners in school AI Readiness initiatives	Use family and community feedback to continuously improve AI Readiness strategies and position school as a community resource for AI literacy
	Communicate and Educate Identify key communication pathways to various stakeholders (e.g., parent newsletters, teacher messages, student notes)	Set a regular cadence of communication to all stakeholders on AI Readiness implementation aligned to existing communication structures, including learning opportunities for stakeholders on updates	Refine communication on AI Readiness implementation and have regular opportunities for community stakeholders to engage in learning, development of AI literacy and AI Readiness implementation

School
AI Readiness Rubric

Domain	Level 1 Demonstrate Commitment	Level 2 Invest & Implement	Level 3 Deepen & Iterate
Set Conditions through Policy & Operations	**Guardrails** Identify gaps or areas for adaptation for AI Readiness in existing technology and academic integrity policies (e.g., acceptable use policies)	Draft an inclusive, adaptive and transparent guardrails for ethical use of AI and safeguarding of student data by students, teachers, leadership, and staff	Iterate on AI guardrails, leveraging feedback from stakeholders, and integrating to existing tech stack acceptable use guidelines
	Processes Evaluate current tech procurement processes, existing tech stack in use, and tech efficacy measures in place	Create an updated tech procurement process that accounts for AI tool-specific needs, a plan for keeping or sunsetting any existing tech tools in use, and an evaluation plan for measuring success of tools in use; pilot the use of the process	Full-system roll out of updated tech procurement and piloting process; monitor efficacy and success of implemented tools through an ongoing review of tools in use that accommodates the pace of change of AI technology and new tools coming to market
Enable Teaching & Learning	**Instructional Leadership** Assess current teacher (and self) AI knowledge and comfort levels, along with early AI adopters that can serve as AI Readiness champions to identify AI Readiness instructional priorities (e.g., AI tool use, rethinking assignments in the age of AI, integrating AI literacy skill-building to core curriculum), aligned to school-specific AI Readiness goals	Establish and implement collaborative, structured, and connected opportunities for teachers to develop AI Readiness skills aligned to school-specific AI Readiness goals Examples: School-wide PLC on AI tool use for a specific teaching task, with examples, opportunities for feedback and revision, and reviewing student work	Integrate ongoing, job-embedded professional learning on AI Readiness within teacher development systems. Use instructional data, feedback from teachers, and responsiveness to rapidly changing landscape to continually refine teacher development and leadership for AI Readiness
	Observation & Coaching Conduct observations to identify levels of AI Readiness happening in classrooms	Incorporate AI Readiness considerations into informal classroom observations and 1:1 coaching, aligned to school-school specific AI Readiness goals and instructional priorities	Establish ongoing, differentiated coaching cycles that use multiple data sources to deepen individual teachers' AI Readiness and instructional effectiveness

School
AI Readiness Rubric

Domain	Level 1 Demonstrate Commitment	Level 2 Invest & Implement	Level 3 Deepen & Iterate
Enable Teaching & Learning (Continued)	**Instructional Materials** With department or instructional leaders, identify key criteria to evaluate existing and new instructional materials for supporting student AI Readiness and content outcomes, aligning to vision of AI use in instruction	Lead instructional leadership team in evaluating a prioritized set of instructional materials for AI Readiness; share recommendations for changes to curriculum to meet student AI Readiness and content outcomes	Support instructional teams in implementing updated curriculum aligned to student AI Readiness and content outcomes; establish ongoing analysis of efficacy of materials through student and teaching data
	Tool Selection for Instruction Define what a strong instructional AI tool is, anchored in student learning and AI Readiness outcomes	Implement criteria for instructional AI tool selection to evaluate and streamline existing district-approved instructional tools; ensure alignment to overall district tech procurement processes	Evolve criteria for instructional tool selection and apply to existing and new tool selection processes

04

AI Readiness Rubric

District

District
AI Readiness Rubric

Overview

The District Readiness Rubric is a tool to support district-level leaders in creating equitable and inclusive Systems AI Readiness that ensures all students, teachers, and staff have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with AI Readiness skill-building as well as gain access to district-approved AI tools.

This rubric builds on the work shared by the Council of the Great City Schools & CoSN Launch K-12 Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) Readiness Checklist, the ILO group, Common Sense Media's AI Toolkit, and learnings from districts we have partnered with in developing AI Readiness plans.

District leaders can use this rubric to assess their level of AI Readiness across key criteria in five domains. These criteria outline essential actions to set up school leaders to successfully implement AI Readiness plans in their schools, which in turn will support building student, teacher, and staff AI Readiness competencies.

Audience

District Leaders
To support conditions that allow school leaders to implement AI readiness

District
AI Readiness Rubric

Domain	Level 1 Demonstrate Commitment	Level 2 Invest & Implement	Level 3 Deepen & Iterate
Develop Equitable Vision for AI Readiness *See aiEDU AI Readiness Student Competencies for student outcomes*	**Vision for Student Readiness** Identify AI Readiness points of connection and gaps in existing district student outcome goals (e.g., examining the Portrait of a Graduate in the world of AI)	Develop and share clear student outcome goals that incorporate AI Readiness (e.g., reimagining the Portrait of a Graduate in the world of AI)	Embed AI-ready student outcome goals in student assessment structures and have a process established for reporting on and revising student outcome goals
See aiEDU AI Readiness Educator Competencies for teaching specific competencies	**Vision for System AI Use** Vision for System AI Use: Define AI Readiness competencies for all district roles; define vision for AI use and integration across district systems	Create and implement aligned support for developing AI Readiness competencies across all district roles; pilot AI use integration in systems across the district	Embed AI Readiness competencies in existing performance management systems or structures; embed system-wide AI use training and ongoing evaluation of efficacy
	Vision for AI Use in Instruction Define criteria for AI use in instruction anchored in strong pedagogical practices	Pilot implementation of criteria for AI use in instruction for tool evaluation and instructional trainings	Expand and iterate on implementation of criteria for AI use in instruction across instructional domains
Develop a Strategy	**Set Strategy** Review current strategic plan and change management; identify points of connection and possible challenges that AI Readiness presents	Identify places ready for innovation to pilot AI Readiness implementations (e.g., a particular school, a particular content area across multiple schools); implement pilots	Apply learnings from pilot implementations to expand AI Readiness implementation across all district functions; establish feedback loops to gather data on implementations
	Plan for Change Identify key people (i.e., leaders of areas of impact: operations, teaching & learning, programs) within the district to bring into the strategic planning	Establish and implement a formal structure (e.g., task force) for diverse stakeholder input on AI Readiness strategic plan and decisions on information flow going out of the district	Establish ownership of ongoing leadership of the formal structure that continues to meet to assess implementation, discuss issues that are arising with implementation, and make revisions/adjustments to the strategic approach that is timely and responsive

District
AI Readiness Rubric

Domain	Level 1 Demonstrate Commitment	Level 2 Invest & Implement	Level 3 Deepen & Iterate
Set Conditions through Policy & Operations	**Guardrails** Identify gaps or areas for adaptation for AI Readiness in existing technology and academic integrity policies (e.g., acceptable use policies)	Draft inclusive, adaptive, and transparent guardrails for ethical use of AI and safe-guarding of student data by students, teachers, leadership, and central office staff	Iterate on AI guardrails, leveraging feedback from stakeholders, and integrating to existing tech stack acceptable use guidelines
	Processes Evaluate current tech procurement processes, existing tech stack in use at the district level and at each site (identifying which ones use AI and which don't), and tech efficacy measures in place	Create an updated tech procurement process that accounts for AI tool-specific needs, a plan for keeping or sunsetting any existing tech tools in use, and an evaluation plan for measuring success of tools in use; pilot the use of the process	Full-system roll out of updated tech procurement and piloting process. Monitor efficacy and success of implemented tools through an ongoing review of tools in use that accommodates the pace of change of AI technology and new tools coming to market
Galvanize Stakeholders	**Context Gathering** Informally gather input (e.g., survey, focus groups) from students, families, teachers, staff, and board members on AI literacy & AI Readiness needs (and what concerns they may have about AI in order to understand what the guidelines need to address)	District stakeholders (e.g., students, families, teachers, staff, and board members) have a role in the AI Readiness task force and/or are providing feedback & guidance on the strategic vision & plan	Establish regular cadence for gathering feedback and needs from stakeholders (e.g., students, families, teachers, staff, board members)
	Engage and Learn Identify potential local industry and post-secondary organizations to learn from on AI impacts on the community	Develop partnerships with local industry and post-secondary organizations to identify key AI impacts on community	Deepen ongoing partnerships with local and post-secondary organizations to support AI readiness skill-building aligned to community needs
	Communicate and Educate Identify key communication pathways to various stakeholders (e.g., parent newsletters, teacher messages, board meetings)	Set a regular cadence of communication to all stakeholders on AI readiness implementation aligned to existing communication structures, including learning opportunities for stakeholders on updates	Refine communication on AI readiness implementation and have regular opportunities for community stakeholders to engage in learning on AI literacy and readiness implementation

District
AI Readiness Rubric

Domain	Level 1 Demonstrate Commitment	Level 2 Invest & Implement	Level 3 Deepen & Iterate
Enable Teaching & Learning *See aiEDU School Leader Readiness Rubric for connections to school-level implementation*	**Capacity Building** Provide foundational-level trainings with targeted school and teacher leaders, aligning training with AI readiness competencies for given roles *See aiEDU AI Readiness Educator Competencies for teacher outcomes and possible progression of learning*	Scale foundational level training for all instructional staff and provide deeper application for those that have completed foundational level trainings; trainings are aligned to AI readiness competencies for given roles	Provide ongoing, differentiated, integrated deeper application trainings for all instructional staff and have foundational training integrated into new hire trainings; trainings are aligned to AI readiness competencies for given roles
	Instructional Materials Identify processes for evaluating district-approved instructional materials to support AI Readiness student outcomes; align process to vision for AI use in instruction	Evaluate district-approved instructional materials for AI Readiness and provide recommendations for changes to curriculum to meet student AI Readiness outcomes, content outcomes, and vision for AI use in instruction	Implement updated curriculum and engage in ongoing analysis of efficacy of instructional materials to meet student AI Readiness outcomes, content outcomes, and vision for AI use in instruction
	Departmental Alignment Identify all district-wide departments (e.g., multi-lingual learners, career pathways, after-school programs) that will need updating to align with student AI Readiness outcomes	Prioritize departments for student AI Readiness alignment updates based on district vision	Prioritized department programs are updated for student AI Readiness outcomes and aligned to district vision, with clear processes and recommendations for replicating with other departments
	Tool Selection for Instruction Define what a strong instructional AI tool is, anchored in student learning and AI Readiness outcomes	Implement criteria for instructional AI tool selection to evaluate and streamline existing district-approved instructional tools; ensure alignment to overall district tech procurement processes	Evolve criteria for instructional tool selection and apply to existing and new tool selection processes

05

Methodologies & Acknowledgments

Methodologies

Building on our initial research surveying over 1800 educators, Version 2 includes the latest cognitive science research available on the impacts of AI use on the brain, new labor market analysis, and crosswalking new AI literacy frameworks.

This research revealed several key themes across frameworks (understanding the basics of AI, ethical considerations, critical evaluation, interdisciplinary approach, operational support, life-long learning, and teacher support) that we've synthesized and added to in our frameworks.

We included findings from research-based AI literacy frameworks and guidance from:

Released June 2025 Common Sense Media AI Readiness Toolkit for Districts: https://www.commonsense.org/education/AI-toolkit-for-school-districts

Released May 2025 AI LIT Framework: https://ailiteracyframework.org/

Digital Promise's framework, which emphasizes three components: Understand, Use, and Evaluate.

UNESCO's Guidance for generative AI in education and research, AI and education: Guidance for policy-makers, AI competency framework for teacher, and AI competency framework for students, which focus on three progression levels: understand, apply, and create on four aspects: human-centered mindset, ethics of AI, AI techniques and applications, and AI system design.

The Kapor Foundation's Responsible AI Guide (Kapor Foundation, 2024), which we particularly appreciated for its approach to tying competencies directly to lessons, providing a clear path from theory to practice.

EDSAFE AI S.A.F.E Benchmarks, which provides policy roadmaps for creating a safe AI ecosystem

CGCS & CoSN's K-12 Generative AI Readiness, which provides a detailed checklist for local educational agencies for how to approach AI implementation across their system.

Kennedy HQ's AI Literacy Framework

ILO Group's Framework for Implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) in K-12 Education which provides four areas of consideration, political, operational, technical, and fiscal, for district-wide areas of consideration with AI implementation, along with examples of department-specific AI applications.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Generative AI Implementation Recommendations & Considerations for PK-13 Public Schools

To situate our competencies within existing workforce frameworks, we connect to the:

Framework for 21st Century Learning

America Succeeds Durable Skills

World Savvy Global Competence Matrix

To highlight AI knowledge and literacy's roots in computing and digital literacy, we draw from:

ISTE's standards

CSTA's K-12 Computer Science Standards

AI4K12's K-12 AI Guidelines

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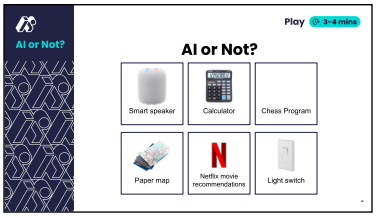
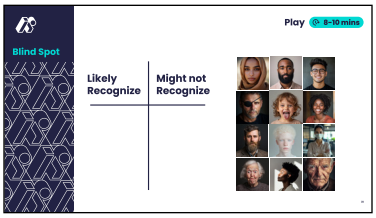
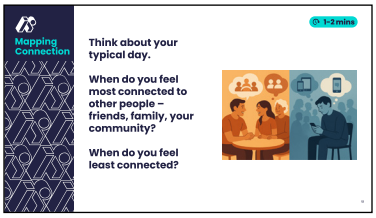
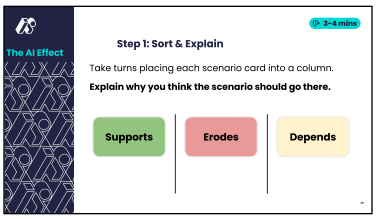
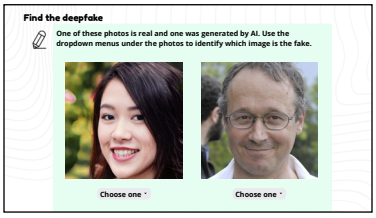
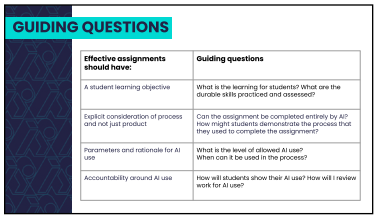
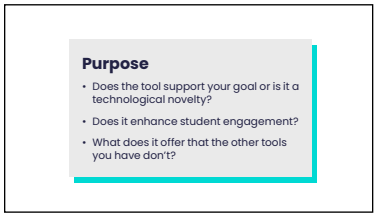
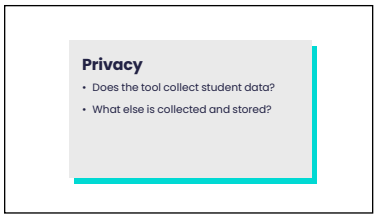
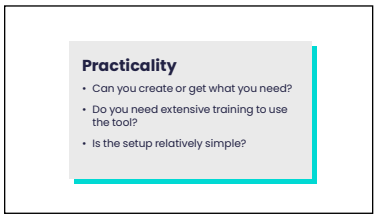
06

Appendix

Appendix

Resource		Framework Connection	Aligned Competencies
Elementary AI Exploration: AI or Not? **(Grades 3–5)** Resource link		To successfully define what AI is (and is not), students sort everyday technologies into "AI" and "Not AI" and co-create a class definition of artificial intelligence. While doing so, they surface and correct misconceptions like "all technology is AI."	**Student Competencies:** 1a: Know Your Basics: Define & identify AI systems 2c: Be a Critical Thinker: Examine AI use and outputs
Elementary Fair AI Exploration: Blind Spot **(Grades 3–5)** Resource link		To build age-appropriate skills to critically evaluate and begin to mitigate bias in AI systems, students investigate how facial recognition might fail to recognize certain people, reflecting on fairness and exclusion.	**Student Competencies:** 2b: Be a Critical Thinker: Identify and address AI biases 3a: Lead with the Human Advantage: Build emotional intelligence
Rithm Project Snapshot: Mapping Connection **(High School ELA)** Resource link		In this activity, students build emotional intelligence and the impact of technology on human connection. Students create a personal "connection graph" of their day and explore how technology, including AI, shaped their highs and lows of human connection. They then share and reflect in pairs or groups.	**Student Competencies:** 2a: Be a Critical Thinker: Determine responsible use of AI 3a: Lead with the Human Advantage: Build emotional intelligence
Rithm Project Snapshot: The AI Effect (High School ELA) Resource link		In this activity students continue to build their emotional intelligence, communication skills, and different ways to think about the responsible use of AI. Students sort scenarios into "Supports," "Erodes," or "Depends" based on their impact on relationships, then complicate them with "What if?" challenge cards.	**Student Competencies:** 2a: Be a Critical Thinker: Determine responsible use of AI 3a: Lead with the Human Advantage: Build emotional intelligence

Appendix

Resource		Framework Connection	Aligned Competencies
Project: Deepfake PSA (Grades 9–12) Resource link		In this longer project, students learn how deepfakes are created, analyze their risks, and create a press release to educate the public about manipulated media. This supports students in building their skill with examining AI outputs and use.	**Student Competencies:** 2c: Be a Critical Thinker: Examine AI use and outputs 3b: Lead with the Human Advantage: Apply creativity and interdisciplinary thinking
Guiding Questions	   	AI and Academic Integrity: Moving Beyond the Binary. In this professional learning experience, educators identify and apply proactive solutions to address AI use while supporting authentic student learning.	**Educator Competencies:** 1b: Know and Model the Basics: Build pedagogical knowledge of AI literacy and readiness skills Specifically: Build learning experiences that center human skill and learning, using AI as a tool when applicable, not replacement for human thinking 2a: Foster and Model Critical Thinking: Critically evaluate the use of AI tools in teaching & learning

aiEDU
The AI Education Project

Suggested Citation: aiEDU. (2025). AI Readiness Framework: What students, educators, and leaders need to know.

https://www.aiedu.org/