



# **Navigating the AI Revolution: A Playbook for School Leaders**

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# Introduction

Technologists have long envisioned Artificial Intelligence (AI) capable of thinking like humans and automating tasks to simplify our lives. We already experience AI in tools like smartphone assistants. Two main forms of AI currently exist: Machine Learning is trained to use algorithms, and Generative AI (GenAI) uses vast amounts of data to generate new responses. GenAI's potential in education is undeniable, but schools risk being left behind without thoughtful preparation.

Many technologies have aspired to revolutionize education. We are naturally skeptical of overblown claims, but there is reason to believe GenAI stands apart from past promises. Consider the rapid adoption of the internet compared to GenAI's meteoric rise: *ChatGPT reached 180 million users in under a year, while it took seven years for the internet to reach the same mass of users.*

Generative AI is moving faster than any technology we've ever seen in society, with major impacts on nearly every industry, including education. GenAI will never replace teachers or leaders, but can act as a valuable assistant or "second brain" to help augment the human skills of teaching and leading. Experts call AI a "force multiplier" due to its potential to:

- **Accelerate learning and productivity:** Automate tasks, personalize learning, and provide real-time feedback
- **Address inefficiencies:** Streamline processes and optimize resource allocation
- **Present risks:** Requires careful planning and ethical considerations
- **Demand adaptability:** The future is uncertain, necessitating ongoing training for leaders and teachers and organizational agility
- **Shape future skills:** Prepare students for jobs requiring AI understanding

It's important to understand Generative AI will impact every employee and student in some way. As a leader, it's up to you to ensure these impacts are proactive, not reactive. In short, GenAI demands immediate attention and planning as a transformative technology in our society. The challenge lies in balancing proactive adoption while avoiding rushed and reactive implementation.

This playbook aims to provide school and district leaders with a brief playbook to start leading the transformation of schools into the AI era.

# Your Role

During major transformations, two leadership mindsets may emerge:

- **Hands-off responsibility:** AI is an IT issue
- **Serious ownership:** Leaders validate and lead transformation with a dedicated team

Embrace the second mindset! Your engagement and willingness to learn sets the tone for others, signaling AI's importance.

In addition to your ownership of the process, developing a cross-functional team is critical. Our experience suggests this change will be unlike most, if not all, changes our system has faced. A cross-functional team representing diverse perspectives should guide this transformation and:

- Have a clear charter and timeline
- Establish norms and ethical principles
- Embrace continuous learning and growth
- Hold each other accountable

Prior AI expertise isn't required but willingness to engage with the reality of its impact is. Consider including technical, administrative, academic, legal, student, and family representatives. Potential team objectives include:

- Understand GenAI capabilities
- Develop ethical and privacy principles for AI use
- Prototype AI learning structures
- Identify key AI value opportunities
- Identify key AI risks to address
- Formulate short-term and long-term strategy to optimize opportunities and mitigate threats

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# Your GenAI Strategy

Given GenAI's transformative nature, you'll need short-term and long-term plans and an adaptive mindset. AI is here, but where it is going is unclear; a solid process will support you to act quickly, as needed. Explicit strategy demonstrates commitment and outlines how AI will impact your schools.

## Strategic Considerations:

- **Organic and functional approach:** Acknowledge that AI may appear unexpectedly, requiring adaptable strategies
- **Phased approach:** Focus on learning AI's potential, identifying best use cases, and setting a reasonable implementation pace
- **Value proposition:** Explain to your community how AI will be used, why, and what safeguards will be in place
- **AI-driven planning:** Use AI as a tool to evaluate your plan and suggest updates based on new trends

## The Framework for AI Use

This simple framework can guide your strategic planning. It outlines key areas, beliefs, and questions to consider when planning.

## Conceptual AI

### Vision for AI in Your School

We believe GenAI augments educators, not replaces them.

### Questions

What are the overall goals, challenges, ways to empower educators, and how to create community involvement.

### Considerations

Goals for AI integration, digital citizenship, teacher support, ethical use, critical thinking, and adaptability.

### Policy Guidance

We believe a well-thought-out policy ensures effective and safe AI use.

### Questions

What are our safety concerns, concerns about student well-being, and the ethical implications of AI.

### Considerations

Data privacy policies, acceptable use guidelines, intellectual property issues, impact monitoring, ethical decision-making framework, data governance, and code of conduct.

# Applied AI

## Teacher Guidance

AI can save time for more personalized learning.

## Questions

What are the best use cases, time-saving methods, ongoing learning structures, personalized learning strategies, and pilot programs to employ?

## Considerations

Initial training, PD, assessment use, productivity examples, collaborative planning tools, diverse learner differentiation, and teacher judgment.

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## Support Staff Guidance

AI can improve support staff productivity.

## Questions

What are the best use cases, time-saving methods, ongoing learning structures, and small trials to employ?

## Considerations

HR, Maintenance, Financial, Communication, Safety & Security, and Legal & Risk Management systems readiness levels.

## Leader Guidance

AI can save time for supporting teachers and students.

## Questions

What are the best use cases, time-saving methods, ongoing learning structures, and small trials to employ?

## Considerations

Personal productivity and organization, data-driven decisions, professional development, stakeholder engagement, automating tasks, communication enhancement, crisis management, and support staff guidance.

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## Effective AI Tools

A critical evaluation mindset is crucial.

## Questions

What are emerging best practices and tools, criteria for judging effectiveness, and alignment with current technology systems and processes?

## Considerations

Proven tools, criteria for evaluating tools, trial and feedback processes, scalability, and impact on learning.

# Executing the Strategy

As you work through a strategic planning process, the biggest question you need to answer is what will be the impact of GenAI on each element of your organization- from classroom to boardroom. Take a bias towards action: don't miss opportunities or delay learning. Consider the following actions in your strategic planning efforts:

- Build foundational AI literacy for various staff groups with initial training, small projects, and tool reviews. Integrate discussions on ethics, risks, and hands-on learning.
- Incentivize early adopters: Run small trials or projects using improvement science or design thinking and share learnings to create a learning culture.
- Start with responsible AI use and choose focus areas based on having:
  - High value for solving key problems or improving key aspects.
  - Clarity and confidence in expected impact.
  - Low cost, speed, and risk with prototyping focus.
  - Alignment with overall strategy, ease of implementation, and validation.
- Continually monitor execution and update your strategic plan by choosing new focus areas annually based on need and gathering feedback through surveys and data collection.

## Conclusion

GenAI is a paradigm shift requiring intentional management. School leaders who envision the strategic landscape ahead will be best positioned to navigate this transformative era. Remember, embracing a proactive and responsible approach to AI holds the potential to significantly enhance learning, empower educators, and prepare students for the future.

We are here to help. If you would like to discuss how we can support you with harnessing the potential of AI in your district or school, contact us at [Info@dailysel.com](mailto:Info@dailysel.com).