

DISTINCT *by* **DESIGN**

THE DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF **MAGNET SCHOOLS OF AMERICA**

ISSUE 2 / 2024

AUTHENTICATE **CLASSROOM LEARNING**

With community connection

UNLOCKING AI'S **POTENTIAL**

Empowering educators and leaders

AI AMPLIFIES LEADERS, **TEAMS AND MAGNET** **SCHOOLS**

The transformative potential of AI

EMBRACING THE **FUTURE OF LEARNING**

AI literacy for educators



MAGNET **SCHOOLS**
OF AMERICA

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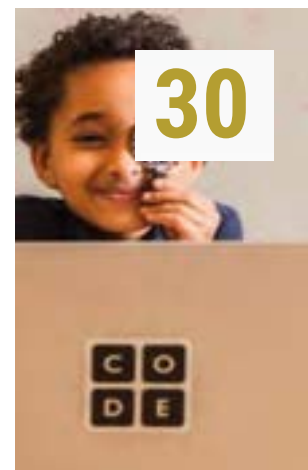
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CEO'S MESSAGE

BY RAMIN TAHERI

Summer is a time to relax, recharge, and have fun. But it is also an ideal time to branch out, learn something new, or sharpen skills in preparation for the school year ahead. This summer, Magnet Schools of America hosted two symposia that offered opportunities for our members to enjoy all of the above: they took a deep dive into specific issues related to the five pillars of magnet schools, they heard working in a small, interactive setting, and they had a great time laughing and learning together. In this issue of *Distinct by Design*, we reflect on our Denver symposium, which exemplified the essence of the second of the five pillars of magnet schools—Innovative Curriculum and Professional Development—by focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on K-12 education.



Although I enjoy using generative AI, I confess that I went into our symposium as a novice, not really understanding the universe of AI platforms available or their capabilities. I also had a bit of trepidation, fearing both the complexity (as I perceived it) of these platforms and AI's implications for the world as I know it. I left Denver feeling equipped to use a variety of different AI tools for different projects. But I also left hopeful—hopeful that AI will help educators rather than replace them; that AI will improve student learning rather than destroy it; and that AI's reach and utility will depend on the humans who understand how to make it useful. What's more, I know that magnet schools—and their teachers and students—will play a vital role in the future of AI and education.

In addition to fascinating pieces from MSA members and other experts who presented in Denver, this issue of *Distinct by Design* includes articles from our magnet community that touch on other magnet pillars, such as family and community partnerships and leadership.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Distinct by Design*. And please consider contributing to a future issue. You can email submissions to communications@magnet.edu.

In partnership,

Ramin Taheri

CEO, Magnet Schools of America

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

America's students are more socioeconomically and demographically diverse than ever, and our schools are resegregating at alarming rates. I resolutely believe magnet schools grounded in integration, innovation, and inclusivity promote school integration while fostering diverse student interaction and providing high-quality academic and non-academic impact for ALL students. As MSA President, I will collaborate with colleagues, membership, and partners to honor the mission and vision of MSA and elevate the impact of magnet programs across the United States.



Kimberly R. Lane, Ed.D.

President

Magnet Schools of America

UPDATE

Lots of great work happens during the summer months for our MSA members! We jokingly think educators might find time for play in the summer, yet that is often the heaviest planning and prepping season as we prepare for our students in the upcoming new school year! Many of our district and school leaders/teachers are attending summer professional learning opportunities, like the *MSA Summer Symposia* [[Denver](#), where we learned lots of great AI tools to support MSA's five pillars or [Baltimore](#), where MSA members celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Brown v. Board decision – a seminal decision that guides our daily school integration work while promoting inclusive environments for all students within

our magnet programs], as well as conducting strategic planning for the 24-25 school year, while others do all of these things while teaching and leading learning in a year-round environment.

Regardless of where you find yourself in the next few months, please find time to rest, reflect and remember that YOU are among friends and colleagues who appreciate the work, dedication, and commitment you bring to the students in your sphere of influence every single day.

In honor of our collective goals and work, I would like to highlight learning that occurred during our two MSA Summer Symposia and give a line-up of what our members can expect in the Fall.

MSA CORE VALUES: Pillars

SUMMER SYMPOSIA: Small but mighty might be a good term for our two MSA Summer events. In both Denver, July 8 – 10, and Baltimore, July 29 – 31, we had **AI** and **Diversity/School Integration** experts, and engaged learners from across the country who collectively shared and explored integrative and innovative ways to align our collective work.

At the end of our time together, it was a highlight to showcase how the sessions intentionally addressed our MSA pillars as noted below:

	Denver Artificial Intelligence in Magnet Spaces	Baltimore 70th Anniversary of Brown v. Board
Diversity	Studied AI's role in creating inclusivity of all students' learning abilities and well as use as a tool for teaching and learning strategies that can intention-ally engage diverse learners	Studied action steps needed to disrupt disproportionality for individual students, student groups, communities, and schools
Innovative Curriculum & Professional Development	Emphasized how AI can create more individualized & personalized, transformative student-centric experiences through THEME-based instructional practices	Emphasized equity-focused coaching practices and targeted professional learning needed to build capacity of teachers, staff, and leaders
Academic Excellence	Addressed how AI can meet academic needs as well as the behavioral health needs of students, honoring student voice and choice while contributing positively to long-term student success	Addressed how educators can create brave spaces and belonging enabling each and every student to bring their true and authentic selves to the educational process and community spaces so that they may reach their unbounded potential
Leadership	Explored how school/ district/ classroom leaders can implement AI, providing structures and frameworks for safe and innovative practices	Explored how to systemically center student voice to inform instructional practices, behavioral interventions, and systems of support within the educational environment and the community
Family & Community Partnerships	Investigated marketing and recruitment strategies using AI and ways to have greater communication with (rather than just to) families and partners	Investigated how we might partner equally with families and caregivers to respect their expertise about their children, inform student learning and offer diverse perspective in developing strategies to confront inequities in classrooms, schools, the district, and in the community

FALL 2024 EVENTS: As we look toward the new school year and Fall 2024, I am honored as President to champion our important MSA work ahead, such as reviewing the 2020-24 MSA Strategic Plan in preparation for a 2025+ plan, prepping for the **2024 Fall Policy Conference (October 2 – 4)** [register here](#), advocating for our [policy](#) / [legislative](#) agenda, actively pursuing [magnet research](#), providing high-quality professional learning and technical support through [NIMSL](#), supporting our new (and current) MSAP and Fostering Diversity grantees, and engaging with our MSA members across our regions.

MSA ADVOCACY:

We are thankful for you, our **members**, as we could not do this work without your commitment and support of the organization and its programs. And, we are also privileged to have great MSA educators and advocates guiding this work as members of our Board of Directors, committees, and project work groups. YOU will definitely be hearing from many of them throughout the year. I share below what I consider to be key topics of focus during the next two years for **MSA advocacy, strategic visioning, and action**.

- [Be the Voice](#) in national school integration, diversity, equity, and inclusivity conversations.
- Widen scope of policy influence, i.e., support state-level advocacy – toolkits for state level advocacy.
- Move beyond school integration to classroom integration, becoming a catalyst for honoring students' passions & interests (innovation & choice); for safe educational spaces (school and classroom climate & culture); and equal contributing members (inclusivity of all students and student groups).
- Develop systemic sustainability supports including magnet teacher certification and developing a research component for the organization.
- Allow MSA pillars to provide the foundation for the work of MSA processes & practices.
 - **Diversity:** Inclusivity and equity, integrative practices.
 - **Innovative Curriculum & PL:** Innovative and reformative; transformative student-centric experiences through unique theme-based instructional practices.
 - **Academic Excellence:** Socioemotional & academic teaching and learning – honoring student voice and choice; improved long-term student outcomes goals (their futures – college, work, careers, economic impacts, working in global contexts, etc.).
 - **Leadership:** Culture and climate – growth and future-leaning mindset, asset-based (rather than deficit-based); personalized learning through a specialized curricular lens takes leadership skills and structures of support.
 - **Family & Community Partnerships:** Communication for/with the community; move away from power-dynamics usually experienced in PTAs, etc., to be move inclusive of all families and encouraging families to be co-creators in our work.

- Promote strategic and systemic action built on a foundation of the integrative mission and vision of MSA through innovative, student-centric/choice, and theme-based programming modeling a welcoming and inclusive teaching and learning environment assessable for ALL students and their families, thereby impacting educational opportunities and outcomes that reframes education for district/school/classroom leaders as well as informs policy, advocacy, funding, magnet program implementation and sustainability.

I wish you well as you continue in your educational journey during this 2024-2025 school year. I look forward to talking with you at our upcoming events to learn more about you, your classrooms/schools/districts/states and your membership needs. I welcome you to reach out to me directly at krlane@wcpss.net.

Sincerely, THANK YOU for all you do to impact students, families, staff, and the greater community!

Best,

Kimberly R. Lane, Ed.D.

President, Magnet Schools of America



Integration is creative, and is therefore more profound and far-reaching than desegregation...Integration is genuine intergroup, interpersonal doing. Desegregation then rightly is only a short range goal. Integration is the ultimate goal of our national community. Thus as America pursues the important task of respecting the letter of the law, i.e., compliance with desegregation decisions, she must be equally concerned with the spirit of the law, i.e., commitment to the democratic dream of integration."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

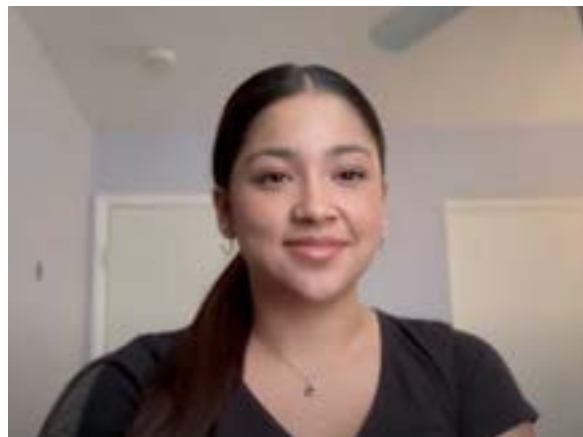
The Ethical Demands for Integrations (1962)

DISCOVERING EXCELLENCE AT EAST CAREER TECHNICAL ACADEMY

At East Career Technical Academy (ECTA), students are not just educated; they are empowered to succeed in life. As Destiny, a senior at the school, shares her journey, it's clear that ECTA is more than just a traditional high school. It is a unique learning environment that emphasizes project-based education, equipping students with essential life skills like communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and the effective use of technology.

Destiny is a proud representative of the Early Childhood program, where students gain valuable hands-on experience by working in the school's very own preschool. She emphasizes how this practical exposure prepares her and her peers for the future. "My school is a project-based school that prioritizes communication, collaboration, problem-solving, technology, and being a good person in society," Destiny says, highlighting the core values ECTA strives to instill in every student.

The hands-on learning opportunities are one of the defining features of ECTA. Programs like Early Childhood allow students to engage directly in real-world applications, helping them bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge



and practical skills. By working in the preschool, students like Destiny learn to apply what they've been taught in their classes in a professional setting, preparing them for careers in education and childcare while still in high school.

Beyond academics, Destiny proudly mentions her school's diverse community. ECTA celebrates and embraces diversity, with various student organizations like ASU, BSU, and Seoul that represent Asian, Black, and Korean cultural groups, respectively. This rich mix of cultures helps foster an environment of inclusivity and mutual respect, which is essential for developing a well-rounded understanding of the world.



“My school is a project-based school that prioritizes communication, collaboration, problem-solving, technology, and being a good person in society.”

“One of my favorite things about our school is our diversity,” Destiny shares, adding that these organizations give students the opportunity to connect with others who share their cultural backgrounds and interests, making the school a vibrant community. The inclusive culture at ECTA prepares students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world, teaching them to value and learn from differences.

ECTA’s commitment to its students’ success is evident in every aspect of the school. According to Destiny, the school pushes every student to reach their full potential, offering opportunities that align with their future goals. Whether it’s through academic support, extracurricular activities, or programs that provide real-world experience, the school’s mission is clear: to prepare students not just for graduation but for life beyond the classroom.

As Destiny sums it up, “East Tech gives you opportunities that work towards your future. We welcome you to our Titan family on top of the mountain.” This metaphor beautifully captures the school’s commitment to helping students reach new heights, academically and personally. The “Titan family” symbolizes a close-knit community where students support each other in their educational journeys.

Destiny’s experience is a testament to the transformative power of ECTA’s approach to education. Through project-based learning, hands-on experiences, a diverse and inclusive community, and a commitment to personal growth, East Career Technical Academy ensures that its students are not just prepared for their careers but for a lifetime of success.

BRIDGING LEADERSHIP AND CREATIVITY

HOW A MAGNET CONFERENCE TRANSFORMED MY CLASSROOM APPROACH

BY ANGIE HUNTINGTON

ROOM 11, FREESE ELEMENTARY, SAN DIEGO, CA



I teach at Freese Elementary in San Diego, CA, an Arts and Culture Museum Magnet School. When I first started, I had the same question that many people do: What exactly does it mean to be a museum school, especially for my second graders? How was I supposed to help them understand our unique magnet theme when I was still figuring it out myself?

To add to that, we're also a Leader in Me school, which emphasizes leadership and personal growth through teaching habits of success. But I kept wrestling with a key question: How could I connect the Leader in Me philosophy with our magnet theme in a way that felt cohesive, rather than like two separate programs running parallel to each other?

That's why I was thrilled when I had the opportunity to attend the Magnet Schools of America (MSA) National Conference in New York this past April. It was a turning point for me, as I began to see how these two important components—our magnet focus and the Leader in Me initiative—could complement each other beautifully.

One of the highlights of the trip was visiting The Williamsburg Bridge Magnet School in Brooklyn. From the moment I walked through the doors, I was greeted by students who radiated leadership



and pride in their school. As a Leader in Me school, just like ours, it was inspiring to see how seamlessly leadership was woven into every part of the student experience. I'm deeply passionate about both Leader in Me and integrating technology into the classroom, so it was exciting to see students creating their own projects, including using QR codes to share their voices with the world. Instantly, I thought, "My kids could do this!"

The more time I spent observing, the more it all started to click. Leadership wasn't an add-on or an extra program; it was embedded in everything the students did. I

"Our students aren't just learning—they're leading, creating, and making meaningful connections between their education and the wider world."

finally understood the connection between our magnet theme and Leader in Me. These students were living proof that when leadership is part of the fabric of the school's identity, it can enhance everything—especially creative and cultural initiatives like ours.

When I returned to San Diego, I couldn't wait to share what I'd learned with my students. The timing was perfect—our Open House was the following week, and the second-grade theme for our museum was "wishes." My class had painted wish rocks, and I recorded each student talking about their wish for the world using Flip. Inspired by what I saw in



Brooklyn, my co-teacher and I printed out QR codes for each student, which we placed on paper rocks and displayed in the windows. When parents scanned the codes, they could watch their children express their hopes and dreams. It was a hit! The parents absolutely loved it, and it gave our students an opportunity to lead, share their creativity, and connect with their families in a meaningful way.

Since then, my students have been on a creative roll, developing their own games on Scratch as part of a project for our upcoming Farmers Market. This idea came from one of the sessions I attended on virtual reality (VR), though we've had to get creative without access to VR headsets. Still, the innovation and leadership spirit is there, and we're making it work!

Looking back, attending the magnet conference was an eye-opening experience. It not only helped me understand our school's museum theme better, but it also showed me how the Leader in Me framework could be seamlessly integrated into everything we do. Our students aren't just learning—they're leading, creating, and making meaningful connections between their education and the wider world. It's a journey I'm grateful to be on, and I'm excited to see where it takes us next!



COMMUNITY CONNECTION AUTHENTICATES CLASSROOM LEARNING

**BY ELIZABETH LUNA, CTE DEPARTMENT CHAIR,
ATHENS DRIVE MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL**

As a founding pillar, family and community partnerships are a sign of a highly effective school. These connections with community members, industry leaders, and local businesses support the education of all students, connecting the real-world to the school building. This engagement is often seen within board members, job fairs, and speakers. However, students struggle to connect with professionals through these more-typically established connections.

The need to authentically connect the community to the classroom, teacher, and students should not be overlooked. To truly support the values found in this pillar, industry professionals must be actively engaged in the classroom. Professionals connected to classrooms, beyond a guest speaker, is the key to authenticating learning and helping students link concepts to their future.

I have seen the impact that partnerships within the high school classroom can have on students, including increasing engagement and validating learning. Teachers also find value in the relationships built, working closely with someone to bring better educational merit to their lessons. Below, I list three ways that every teacher should consider connecting their classroom to a community partner and impacts on student learning.

1. Site Visit

More than a field trip, a site visit should be focused on students learning through a specific lens. Students visit a site to understand a topic and then apply that learning to a larger project. Example: Students in a graphic design class visit a community garden to learn more about sustainable agricultural practices and the garden itself. They use this exploration to ask questions and understand the business. After, they produce products that support the business owner's goals while applying specific skills they are working on in class.

Students Gain:

- Physical engagement and exposure to companies in which they might not otherwise have access
- Skills used to support real-world needs
- Knowledge that extends past the classroom subject matter
- Voice and choice around project development

2. Content Area Expert

How often are teachers asked to teach about a topic in which they are not experts? Instead, business partners fill the content void, partnering with a classroom teacher. Example: A science teacher is hitting standards around

water contamination and testing. A water department specialist partners with the teacher, discussing the content connections, supporting the lecture, and helping develop activities focusing on content as applied to the local water system.

Students Gain:

- Local connection
- Exposure to job opportunities
- Standards brought to life, updated curriculum

3. Project Support

Brought in to support content delivery, an expert attends class sessions to support a teacher's pre-established project. Example: Local professionals attend an entrepreneurship class early in a project to review ideas and offer support to students. In some cases, they come into the classroom multiple times. At the end of the project, professionals return as a review board for the work - giving direct feedback to students.

Students Gain:

- Ability to receive feedback
- Validation in their work
- Natural growth in the quality of their work
- Variety of Perspectives

Though I am sure there are more ways for community members to become involved. As a deeper connection grows, students learn more about career opportunities, application of their skills, and are connected to the current world. It is important to remember that this relationship authenticates classroom learning, increasing student engagement and by-in, making teaching more enjoyable.



PRESENTATIONS

Proposals Due November 1

[Submit a Proposal](#)

Accepting Panels,
Presentations,
Roundtables,
and Workshops





DENVER SUMMER SYMPOSIUM RECAP

20th Street
Park Ave
38th Ave
Junction I-70

HOW CAN MY STUDENTS TRUST WHAT THEY FIND ON THE INTERNET?

BY JEFF WALSH, CEO AND FOUNDER OF SOOTH.FYI

A growing trend on Instagram is Gen Z'ers asking "is this story real?" in response to content surfacing in their feeds. They're smart to be asking. An unprecedented number of new forces are reshaping our information ecosystem. If the internet created the infrastructure that supercharged information flow, these new forces are heavily influencing the kind of information that's flowing.

Generative AI products like ChatGPT (or Gemini, CoPilot, etc.) top the list of these new forces. They're great at assisting with discrete, time-consuming tasks or answering basic questions. But don't confuse their confidence with competence when it comes to complex or nuanced queries. Even if a response is free of errors or fabrications, it should be considered much like Wikipedia – an ok starting point, not an end point.

The more important consideration, however, is their widespread accessibility. Generating reams of misinformation can now be accomplished with the click of a button (according to NewsGuard, there are already close to 1,000 AI-generated unreliable news sites, many of which are self-sustaining via

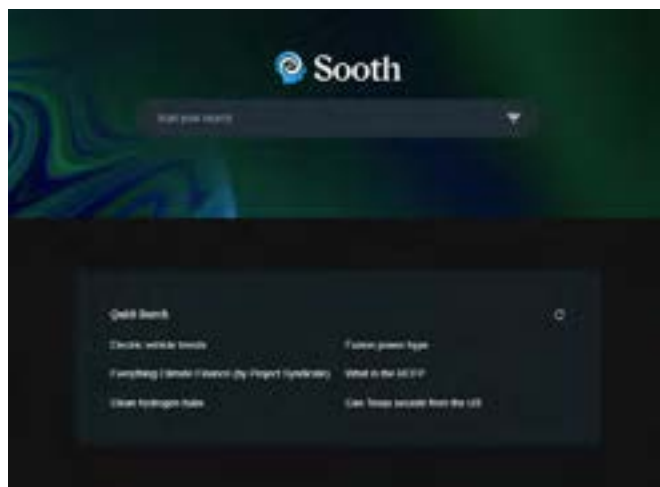
ads.) Mass proliferation of AI generated content will inevitably circle back on itself, resurfacing either as answers to user queries (this is already happening) or as new training data for future language models. Finally, ingestion and regurgitation of copyrighted work – in particular, news stories – is putting publishers at risk of losing much-needed site traffic and subscription revenue.

That's bad timing because Americans' trust in "mass media" is already at an all-time low according to Gallup; it's not the ideal time to be kicking out the other leg from under the media stool. But are Americans truly untrusting of the news, or are they just seeking alternative views that emphasize facts they think are most relevant? Do we understand the difference between truth and bias? This is where it can get complicated; catering to audiences and advertisers can lead to relegation of journalistic standards.

One way to ensure media survival might be through subscriptions. According to the Reuters Institute, only 22% of Americans paid for any news last year. The same 2024 report also states that most Americans are unwilling

to pay for more news. It already feels like there are too many paywalls, doesn't it? That probably explains why 67% of Americans rely on social media as their main source of online news. Here, it's worth quoting from the Netflix documentary *The Social Dilemma*, "if you're not paying for the product, you are the product."

This is all bad news for students and educators. Not only do these powerful, new forces heighten the urgency for teaching information literacy, but they simultaneously render it more difficult to do so. We are at risk of moving toward a future where accessing diverse, trustworthy, original insights and facts becomes a herculean task. Is it responsible to burden our educators and students with such an unedifying challenge?



This is exactly why we are building Sooth.fyi, the only internet search platform specifically designed for students. What started as a project to solve a problem for knowledge workers reoriented 18 months ago to focus on education because that's the area of greatest need and potential impact.

A beautifully designed and intuitive interface that delivers you diverse insights into today's



pressing issues. All content retrieved comes exclusively from thousands of the internet's most reliable and diverse original sources of news, research, data, and insights. No ads, chatbots, dubious or commercial content get in your way. You can immediately verify the source reliability (using NewsGuard's Reliability Ratings) and bias (using AllSides Media Bias RatingsTM), access all the content – including that which is typically behind paywalls, build research collections, take notes, generate bibliographies, and collaborate with colleagues and classmates. Seamlessly translate content for your English Language Learners or auto rewrite it into lower reading levels. Monitor your information diet to ensure you're consuming from a wide variety of source types and perspectives. When confronted with potentially dubious information, verify it using our one-of-a-kind Misinformation Toolkit. And when you need a break, scroll the latest headlines across a range of topics on our news feed instead of "doomscrolling" on social media. This is Sooth.fyi and we're just getting started.

Jeff's presentation at the MSA Summer Symposium was titled "Bias, Misinformation, and Polarization: How Can My Students Find Anything on the Internet?"



"By embracing AI literacy, we can prepare our students for a future where adaptability, creativity and critical thinking will be more crucial than ever."



AI LITERACY FOR EDUCATORS: EMBRACING THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

BY HECTOR VERDUZCO DISTRICT, ADMINISTRATOR, MEMBER DISTRICT LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (LAUSD)

In an era where artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming every aspect of our lives, the education sector stands at a crucial crossroads. Hector Verduzco, a National Board Certified Teacher and Magnet District Administrator at Los Angeles Unified School District, recently delivered an insightful presentation titled "AI Literacy for Educators: Understanding and Implementing AI in the Classroom" at the 2024 Denver MSA Summer Symposium.

The presentation began with a powerful quote from Alvin Toffler: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." This set the tone for a deep dive into the world of AI and its implications for education.

THE AI REVOLUTION: A NEW PRINTING PRESS

Drawing a compelling parallel, he compared

the AI revolution to the invention of the printing press in the 15th century. Both innovations democratized access to information, albeit in different ways. While the printing press made written knowledge widely available, AI is revolutionizing how we process and generate information.

However, the AI revolution is occurring at a much faster pace and has the potential for even more far-reaching effects across all aspects of human life and cognition. This rapid change underscores the urgency for educators to adapt and prepare their students for an AI-driven future.

UNDERSTANDING AI AND ITS EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS

The presentation provided a clear overview of AI, defining it as computer systems or machines that mimic human intelligence to perform tasks. He introduced key concepts

such as narrow AI, generative AI, and large language models (LLMs), explaining their roles in shaping the future of education.

The presentation highlighted several practical applications of AI in education:

Content Creation: AI can assist in developing lesson plans, worksheets, and quizzes.

Personalized Learning: AI-powered systems can provide adaptive explanations and examples tailored to individual student needs.

Language Learning: AI can facilitate conversation practice and translations.

Creative Projects: AI tools can aid in story illustrations and music composition.

Accessibility: AI can enhance learning experiences through text-to-speech and image descriptions.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While the potential benefits of AI in education are significant, the presentation didn't shy away from addressing common concerns among educators. These include job security, ethical considerations like cheating and plagiarism, reliability of AI outputs, and the potential loss of the human element in teaching.

He emphasized the importance of viewing AI as a tool to enhance teaching and learning rather than replacing teachers. As George Couros aptly put it, "Technology will not replace great teachers, but technology in the hands of great teachers can be transformational."

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION AND BEST PRACTICES

The presentation provided actionable insights for educators looking to incorporate AI into their teaching practices. He stressed the importance of:

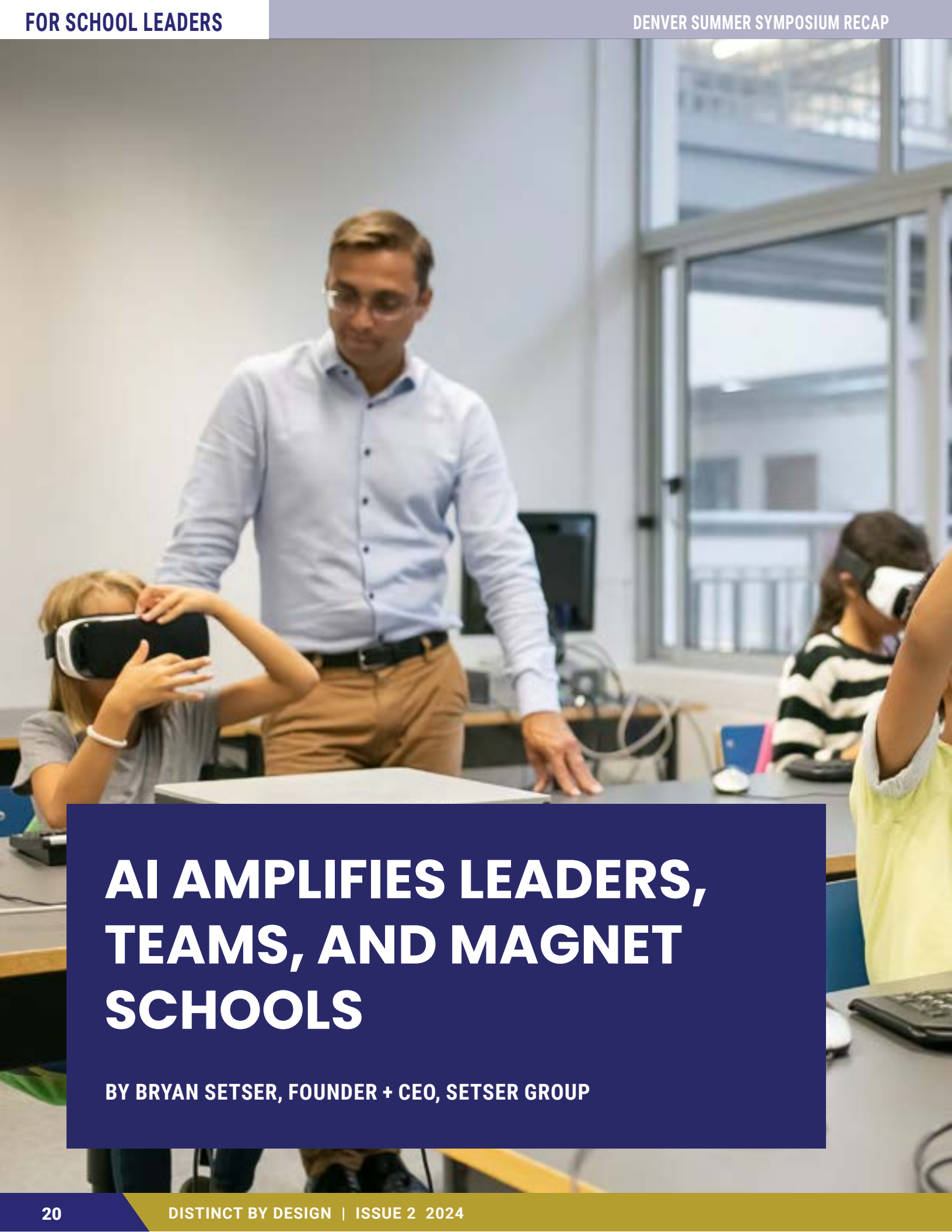
- Data privacy compliance
- Mitigating algorithmic bias
- Maintaining accountability
- Obtaining informed consent from parents and students
- Using AI ethically with a focus on enhancing learning experiences

The presentation also covered effective prompting techniques for interacting with AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Perplexity and strategies for verifying AI-generated information to address concerns about reliability.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

As we stand on the brink of an AI-driven educational landscape, the presentation served as both a wake-up call and a roadmap for educators. By embracing AI literacy and thoughtfully integrating these tools into our classrooms, we can prepare our students for a future where adaptability, creativity and critical thinking will be more crucial than ever.

The journey toward AI literacy in education is just beginning, but with forward-thinking educators leading the way, we can ensure that our students are well-equipped to thrive in the rapidly evolving world of today and tomorrow.

A man in a light blue button-down shirt and glasses is standing and assisting a young girl with a VR headset. The girl is wearing a grey t-shirt and is holding the VR headset to her eyes. In the background, another student is also using a VR headset. The setting appears to be a modern classroom or lab with large windows.

AI AMPLIFIES LEADERS, TEAMS, AND MAGNET SCHOOLS

BY BRYAN SETSER, FOUNDER + CEO, SETSER GROUP

At the 2024 Denver Summer Symposium, Bryan Setser of Setser Group showcased the transformative potential of AI for enhancing the effectiveness of leaders, teams, and magnet schools. Here are some key insights shared during the session.

THE AI LEARNING QUESTIONS FOR MAGNET SCHOOLS

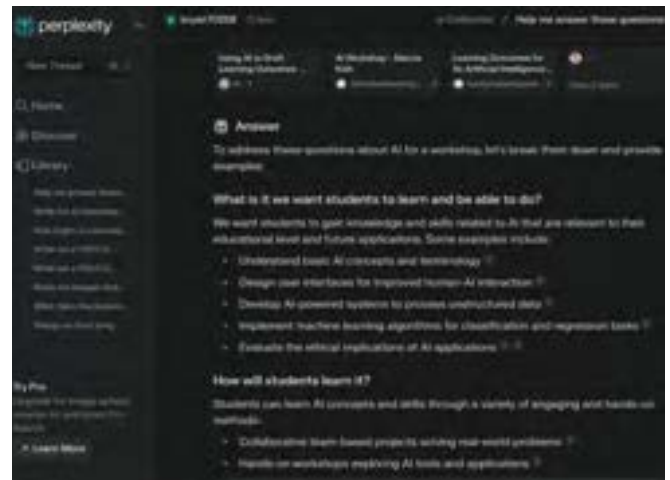
Before delving into AI applications, it's essential to address fundamental questions about student learning:

- » **What do we want students to learn and be able to do?**
- » **How will students learn it?**
- » **How will we know students learned it?**
- » **What if students do not know it?**
- » **What if students already know it?**

These questions form the foundation for developing a robust AI curriculum and ensuring educational goals are met. By focusing on these questions, educators can design learning experiences that are both comprehensive and adaptable to individual student needs.

During the session, Setser challenged the audience to engage with these questions using Perplexity.ai.

As they peer-reviewed responses, he posed a crucial question: "What's missing?" His answer was profound—humanity. He encouraged the audience to infuse more



human elements into their answers, such as tone, sentiment, and persuasive language. Finally, he emphasized the importance of collaboration between humans and AI, highlighting that the last draft should be a joint effort to improve the quality of student work using tools like HumanizeAI.

AI FOR EDUCATORS

AI isn't just a tool for students; it's a powerful resource for educators as well. Setser introduced the audience to the AI for Education prompt library and added a few of his own insights:

How can AI foster community engagement? GenAI enhances community connections through personalized outreach, event planning, and feedback analysis.

How can AI drive smart communication? AI-driven platforms enable targeted messaging and real-time translation, breaking down language barriers.

How can AI optimize events?

Predictive analytics can be used to plan successful community events by anticipating participation and preferences.

How can AI analyze feedback? Natural language processing (NLP) tools can gain insights from community input, helping to understand and address concerns.

How can AI support virtual engagement?

AI-powered chatbots and virtual tours provide 24/7 interaction opportunities for the community.

“AI isn’t just a tool for students; it’s a powerful resource for educators as well.”

Setser guided the audience in modeling these approaches for implementation at their magnet school sites. He also introduced ChatGPT and Claude tactics to build on the work being done in Perplexity.ai, demonstrating access to various AI tools for all.

EMBRACING AI IN MAGNET SCHOOLS

Magnet schools, known for their specialized curricula and innovative teaching methods,

are ideally positioned to leverage AI. The benefits are substantial:

Personalized Learning: AI tailors educational content to meet individual student needs, ensuring that each learner receives the necessary support to succeed.

Automated Administrative Tasks: AI handles routine tasks such as attendance tracking, grading, and scheduling, freeing educators to focus on teaching.

Enhanced Data Analysis: AI tools analyze academic performance, operational efficiency, and resource allocation, providing valuable insights for informed decision-making.

Community Engagement: AI facilitates effective communication with parents and the broader community, ensuring all stakeholders are engaged.

THE ROAD AHEAD

As magnet schools explore and implement AI, the focus should remain on creating meaningful and impactful learning experiences. Here are some practical examples of AI applications:

Personalizing Learning Paths: AI-driven platforms assess student performance and suggest personalized learning paths, ensuring each student is appropriately challenged.

Automating Routine Tasks: From grading assignments to scheduling parent-teacher meetings, AI automates many administrative tasks, reducing the burden on educators.

Analyzing Academic Data: AI tools provide detailed analysis of student performance, helping educators identify areas for improvement and tailor teaching strategies.

Enhancing Community Engagement:

AI-powered tools facilitate better communication with parents and the community, ensuring everyone is informed and involved in the educational process.

By embracing AI, magnet schools can enhance their ability to deliver high-quality education, foster innovation, and create a supportive and engaging learning environment for all students. The integration of AI is not just about technology; it's about reimagining education to meet future needs.

“Magnet schools are ideally positioned to leverage AI.”

Here's a phased plan Setser shared for successful AI integration:

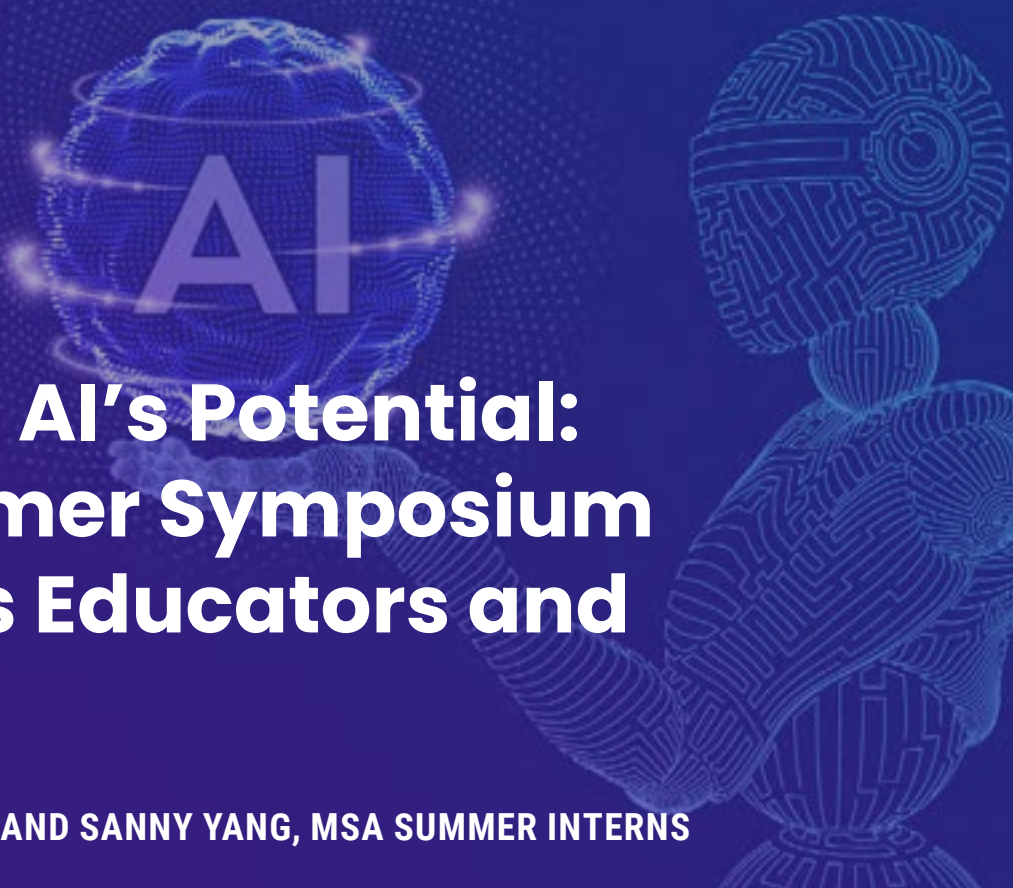
By following this phased approach, magnet schools can successfully integrate AI via transformative educational experiences that prepare students for any future. As we design with educators and machines, we create amazing AI experiences that amplify leaders, teams, and organizations.

Implementing GenAI: Your Next Steps

Embrace the AI revolution in your magnet school. Start with small pilots, prioritize training, and scale up gradually.

Phase	Action	Timeline
Assessment	Identify key areas for AI integration	1-2 months
Planning	Develop implementation roadmap	2-3 months
Training	Upskill staff on AI tools	3-6 months
Implementation	Roll out AI solutions	6-12 months
Evaluation	Assess impact and refine strategy	Ongoing



A blue-toned graphic featuring a glowing sphere with the letters 'AI' in the center, surrounded by a grid of dots and lines. To the right, a stylized figure is composed of circuitry and geometric patterns, holding a sphere. The background is a dark blue gradient.

Unlocking AI's Potential: MSA Summer Symposium Empowers Educators and Leaders

BY ALLISON LANDERGAN AND SANNY YANG, MSA SUMMER INTERNS

Magnet Schools of America (MSA) launched its 2024 Summer Symposia series with a compelling event from July 8-11 in Denver, Colorado, under the theme “Understanding AI and its Impact on Leaders, Educators, and Students in K-12 Education.” Ramin Taheri, CEO of MSA, welcomed attendees with an insightful keynote, emphasizing the urgent need for education leaders to embrace AI’s transformative power.

A highlight of the symposium was a keynote address from Hadi Partovi, CEO of Code.org. Partovi shared his inspiring journey from fleeing war in Iran to founding Code.org, with a mission to provide equitable access to computer science education. His message reinforced the importance of AI in bridging educational gaps. Following this, Code.org’s Andy Teipen showcased innovative tools designed to empower educators to seamlessly

incorporate AI into their teaching.

Rachel Scott, Ph.D., led a dynamic session titled “Exploring the World of AI Tools,” guiding participants through generative AI technologies and challenging them to reconsider their personal approaches to AI integration. The morning also featured insights from symposium sponsors, Cari Warnock of CDW and Tracy Clements from GoGuardian. Their session, “Embrace or Sabotage AI: How to Use Tech to Keep Kids Safe,” emphasizing a human-centric approach to AI and offered actionable strategies for using technology to safeguard student well-being. Read more about this session in the next article.

After a networking lunch, Kade Sochor, Member District CCSD/Board Member delivered a thought-provoking presentation, “Making Magnet Schools Buzz with AI.”

She explored how AI can revolutionize school communications, fostering stronger connections between schools and their communities. Hector Verduzco, District Administrator, Member District Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), followed by [advocating](#) for AI's potential to transform content creation. The day concluded with a session by Jeff Walsh, CEO of Sooth.fyi, who addressed critical challenges in the digital age. His presentation, "Bias, Misinformation, and Polarization: How Can My Students Find Anything on the Internet?" focused on navigating the complexities of online information and teaching students to critically evaluate content.

Day two of the symposium focused on leadership and the future of AI in education. Bryan Setser kicked off the morning with ["AI Amplifies Leaders, Teams, and Magnet Schools,"](#) promoting AI's role in streamlining educational processes and encouraging continuous learning. Josh Hunter, Member District WCPSS and President Kimberly Lane, Ed.D. then offered a hands-on session, "Using AI to Amplify Magnet Themes in Core Instruction," allowing participants to develop AI-driven lesson plans tailored to magnet themes. John Matthew Cortez, Pinellas County Schools, wrapped up the morning with "Is the Sky the Limit: Exploring the Current Boundaries of AI." He provided a clear definition of AI and discussed its interdisciplinary applications, offering a deeper understanding of AI's potential in both

personal and professional contexts.

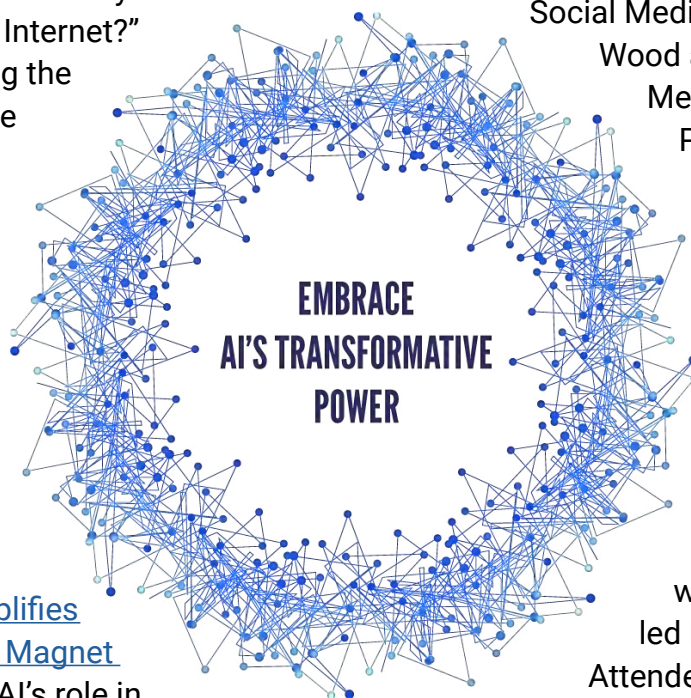
After lunch, a panel of education leaders provided real-world perspectives on AI integration in schools. Superintendent Michael Gaal (Colorado Springs School District 11), Superintendent Evonne Alvarez, Ph.D. (Lynn Public Schools), and Chief Technology Officer Jeff Konishi (Aurora Public Schools) shared insights from their districts' AI initiatives. The day ended with an interactive workshop, "Creative Synergy: Unleashing ChatGPT for

Social Media Brilliance," led by Claire Wood and Helena Greenblatt from Member District Albuquerque Public Schools. Participants explored the use of ChatGPT and Canva to elevate school social media strategies, making for an engaging and practical conclusion to the day.

The symposium concluded on Wednesday with a collaborative session led by Scott and Teipen.

Attendees developed AI-focused professional development strategies and reflected on their learning experiences. The energy and enthusiasm throughout the symposium were palpable, as participants left equipped with new tools, strategies, and a deeper understanding of AI's transformative potential in education.

MSA thanks all the presenters, sponsors, and attendees for contributing to a successful event. We look forward to seeing how AI will continue to shape the future of magnet schools, empowering educators and students alike to thrive in an ever-evolving technological landscape.





BRIDGING THE GAP

How Schools Can Balance AI Innovation and Fiscal Responsibility to Enhance Learning and Support Student Mental Health

BY CARI WARNOCK, CDW AND TRACY CLEMENTS, GOGUARDIAN

As the educational landscape evolves, some schools are hesitant to embrace new technology due to high costs. Some schools face the challenge of meeting the expectations and needs of parents and students with limited resources. How can they bridge the gap between educational innovation and fiscal prudence, especially in the AI arena? The role of IT leaders, instructional designers, and school administrators becomes even more crucial. They must step up and make strategic decisions that shift the focus from 'nice-to-have' technologies to 'need-to-have'

essentials that enhance learning outcomes and instructional effectiveness.

It's probably no surprise to hear AI today. It's a hot topic on the hearts and minds of many folks inside and outside of education. It has implications not just for teachers and students, but also administrative staff, leaders, and the systems we all use. This image is intentionally chosen- okay, actually it was created with AI (DALL-E 3 with prompts from Chat GPT 4)- but it was chosen because the Office of EdTech used

a great analogy, “We envision a technology-enhanced future more like an electric bike and less like robot vacuums. On an electric bike, the human is fully aware and fully in control, but their burden is less, and their effort is multiplied by a complementary technological enhancement.”

There is a lot of discussion related to AI in schools. These discussions usually focus on lesson planning, assessment, grading, data interpretation, and concerns of cheating. Although not commonly a part of AI discussions, we are going to focus on how AI can help support student mental health and safety in schools. AI can be utilized to identify concerning online behaviors, assist with providing interventions, SEL/Wellness related lesson planning, communication, and developing coherent systems of support.

“We envision a technology-enhanced future more like an electric bike and less like robot vacuums.”

Cari Warnock, CDW, and Tracy Clements, GoGuardian, presented at the Summer Symposium highlighting how AI can be utilized to ease the burden on schools when it comes to identifying and responding to mental health concerns. In a climate where needs are great and mental health resources are in high demand, it is important to engage AI to help utilize mental health resources in the most effective manner possible.

Tracy shared her experience with using AI/

ML to help identify mental health concerns in a school setting. Initially, she was very skeptical and hesitant to believe that utilizing AI would be genuinely helpful. After seeing the software identify concerning situations not identified by other methods, she learned to embrace the technology. She saw over time that the software was helping her team of school counselors identify concerns further upstream and they were able to spend more time working directly with students who needed assistance and less time trying to identify who needed them. Using AI empowered software enabled her team of counselors to have a greater impact without adding additional staff.



It is imperative to understand responsible use of AI in order to ensure you are utilizing ethical and privacy focused AI tools. A human-centric design places human beings at the center of AI usage. When vetting AI tools, schools should keep the principles identified by organizations such as Home | EDSAFE AI and About – Digital Promise in mind in order

to select tools built with privacy, equity, and accountability in mind.

CDW Education offers a comprehensive suite of services to future-proof your technology investments and deliver cost-effective classroom technology solutions in K-12 education. These services range from obtaining second opinions and RFP ideas to discussing integration partners and phasing out obsolete technology. Go Guardian Beacon is a perfect example of a partnership that allows CDW to help schools keep kids safe. Cari Warnock, CDW Education Ambassador, and Tracy Clements, Go Guardian Education Strategist: Student Safety and Mental Health recently presented at the MSA AI Symposium and shared free resources for magnet schools to consider.

“It is imperative to understand responsible use of AI in order to ensure you are utilizing ethical and privacy focused AI tools. A human-centric design places human beings at the center of AI usage.”

GoGuardian is an educational technology company with a mission to empower K-12 leaders with effective tools to create safe and engaging learning for every student. GoGuardian’s suite of tools ranges from digital guardrails to student safety support.



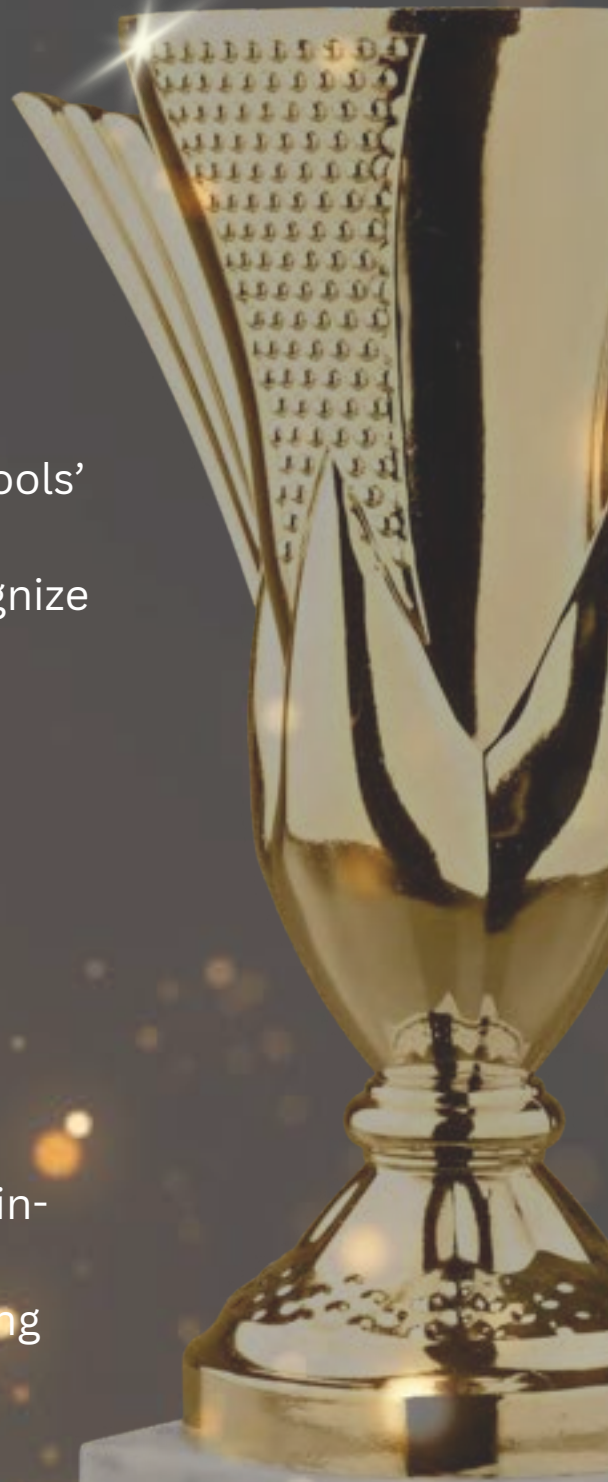
DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR MSA Merit AWARDS

The MSA Merit Awards elevate a magnet schools' dedication to diversity and an unwavering commitment to academic standards to recognize member magnet schools/programs that demonstrate an exemplary commitment to academic standards, curriculum innovation, desegregation/diversity efforts, specialized teaching staffs and parent and community involvement.

2024-2025 Merit Award categories are:

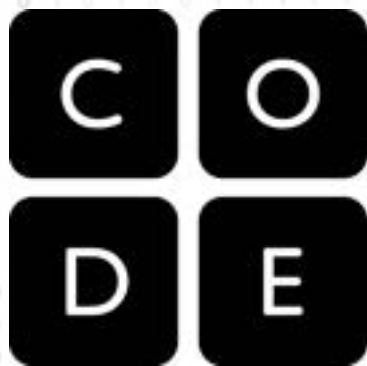
- (1a) School of Excellence – Whole School Magnet
- (1b) School of Excellence – Program Within-a-School*
- (1c) School of Excellence – New & Emerging
- (2a) School of Distinction – Whole School Magnet
- (2b) School of Distinction – Program Within-a-School*
- (2c) School of Distinction – New & Emerging

**SUBMIT AN APPLICATION BY
8 PM ET FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15**



AI AND EDUCATION: THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF COMPUTER SCIENCE IN SCHOOLS





Computer science education is crucial for students of all ages, not just as preparation for tech careers. While CS does lead to great job opportunities, its importance goes far beyond that. It's a fundamental part of a well-rounded education in today's world.

With the rise of artificial intelligence that can generate content, understanding computer science is more important than ever. AI is being used in many areas, including education. We must understand how it works, its capabilities, and its limitations. This knowledge helps us critically evaluate AI-generated content, consider the ethical implications, and potentially contribute to future AI development.

RESOURCES FROM CODE.ORG:

Free High-Quality Computer Science Curriculum for K-12:

Code.org's curriculum is high-quality, inclusive, and engaging for both teachers and students and free. We emphasize integrating CS across other subjects, showing how it applies to many areas of study. Learn more at <https://code.org/administrators>

District Program: The Code.org District Program is a free program supporting school district leaders who want to expand CS and AI education across their schools. Learn more at <https://code.org/districts>

AI 101 for Teachers: An online course introducing teachers to AI and its potential in education. Learn more at <https://code.org/ai/pl/101>

TeachAI: Code.org collaborated with other organizations to develop a toolkit to help schools create AI policies and communicate with parents, staff, and students about using AI in education. Learn more at <https://www.teachai.org/toolkit>

[Click Here](#) for 24'-25' new products and updates.

As we bring more CS education into schools, it's important to remember that it's a fundamental skill, not just a career path. The skills students gain from studying CS are valuable in our rapidly changing technological world. By using resources like those from Code.org, schools can overcome barriers to teaching CS and ensure all students have access to this essential education. This prepares your students for the future, no matter what career they choose.



NATIONAL MAGNET SCHOOLS MONTH STUDENT POSTER CONTEST

2024 WINNER

**LILLIAN
REAVES**

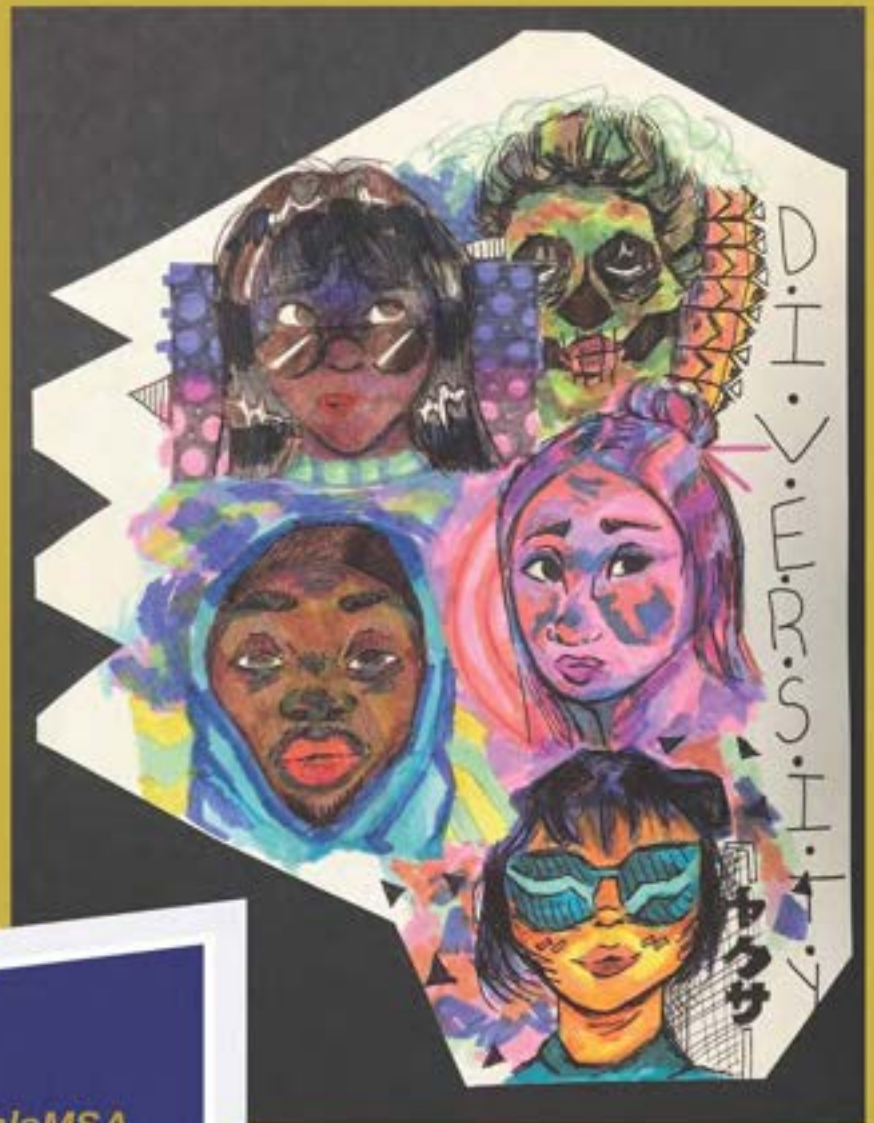
Grade 11

Irmo High International
School for the Arts

District Five of Lexington and
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