



SIERRA SANDS

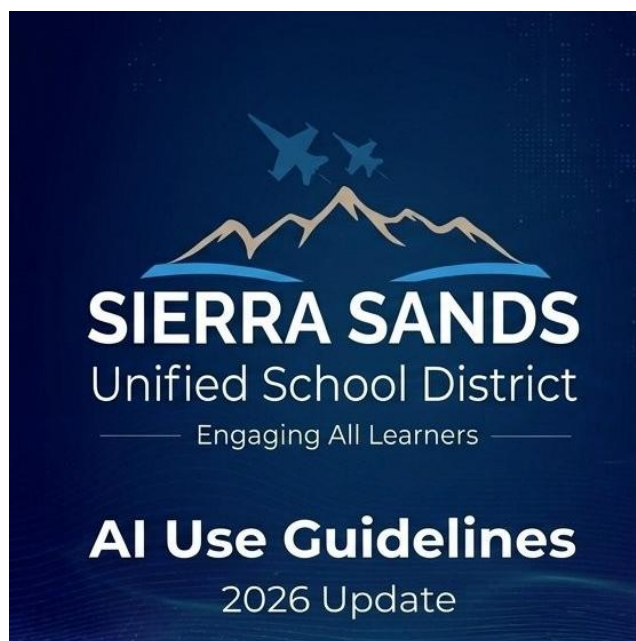
Unified School District

———— Engaging All Learners ————

AI Use Guidelines

2026 Update

AI Use Guidelines for SSUSD Unified School District ssusd.org/page/ai



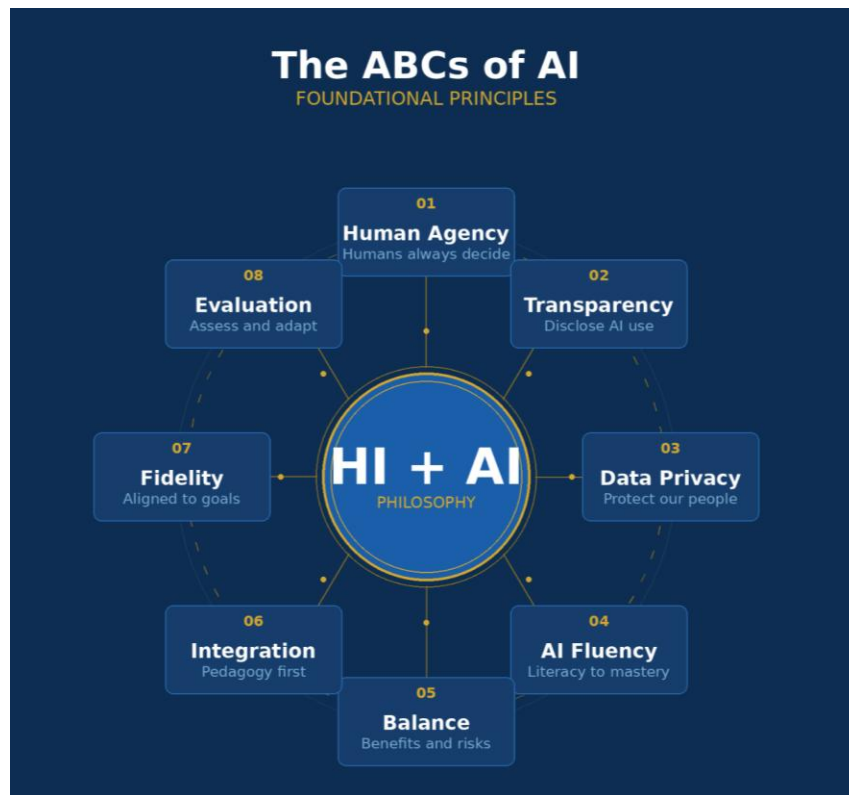
SSUSD's Vision and Guiding Principles:

We believe effective learning amplifies what makes us uniquely human: creativity, empathy, critical thinking, and the ability to connect with one another. AI is a powerful tool that can support and enhance that learning, but it is not a replacement for the people at the center of it.

SSUSD is committed to fostering a culture where AI empowers both students and educators through transparent, purposeful, and pedagogically grounded practices. Every student will have equitable access to AI tools that foster voice, creativity, and real-world problem-solving within a safe and supportive framework. Every educator will be supported in learning with and about AI so they can lead with confidence.

Our approach is rooted in protecting privacy, building AI fluency, and maintaining the balance between innovation and responsibility. This is a living framework, designed to grow as the technology, our understanding, and our community's needs evolve.

SSUSD's Foundation for AI Use



Human Agency: We embrace an HI+AI philosophy, in which human intelligence works alongside artificial intelligence. AI is a tool that supports and enhances our work; it never replaces human judgment. Educators and students must always remain the decisionmakers in any process that involves AI.

Transparency: When AI is used, its role should be openly disclosed. Students, educators, and stakeholders deserve clarity about when AI contributed to a product or process and to what extent. Honesty about AI's involvement builds trust and models the ethical standards we expect across our learning community.

Data Privacy and Security: Our responsibility to protect students and staff is paramount. Any use of AI must comply with applicable privacy laws and district policies. Personally identifiable and sensitive information must never be entered into AI tools without proper authorization and safeguards.

AI Fluency: We begin with a foundation of AI literacy, understanding what AI is, how it works, and where its limitations lie, and progress toward fluency, where AI

becomes a natural, skillfully integrated part of teaching and learning. Building this capacity across our community is an ongoing commitment.

Balance: We approach AI with both optimism and caution. Understanding the potential benefits of AI requires honestly weighing the risks, including bias, over-reliance, and equity of access. Thoughtful balance ensures that AI serves our community rather than introducing unintended harm.

Purposeful Integration: AI does not replace sound pedagogy; it enhances it. Effective teaching and learning remain rooted in proven instructional practices, and AI should be embraced as a tool to leverage and deepen learning when the opportunity genuinely arises. Technology is most powerful when it serves a clear purpose, not simply because it is available.

Fidelity: AI should be used purposefully and in alignment with our educational goals. Technology for its own sake is not the objective; every application of AI should connect meaningfully to student learning, educator effectiveness, or operational improvement.

Evaluation: We commit to regularly assessing our practices and AI's impact on teaching, learning, and operations. Our guidance is designed to be proactive and adaptable, a living framework that evolves as the technology, our understanding, and our community's needs change.

Strategic Goals

Our foundational principles guide our approach to AI across the district. The following strategic goals translate those principles into practice, with measurable outcomes that keep our work focused and accountable.

HI + AI (Human-Centered) Ensure AI functions as a co-pilot that supports but never replaces the essential human relationship between students and educators. Outcome: <i>AI supports differentiated instruction, in which teachers maintain responsibility for meaning making and guidance.</i>	Equity and Access Bridge the digital use divide for underrepresented students and multilingual learners. Create specific STEM outreach and AI creation opportunities for all populations. Outcome: <i>Equitable access to AI tools for voice, creativity, and problem-solving for all.</i>
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Digital Wellbeing Integrate AI-specific character education into wellness programs. Educate students on AI-driven algorithms and their influence on emotions, social interactions, and digital identity. <i>Outcome: Students learn to question AI thoughtfully and reflect on how it shapes their thinking and well-being.</i>	AI Fluency and Informed Use Build a TK-12 progression that moves students from foundational AI literacy to confident, ethical application, helping students understand how AI works, where its limitations lie, and how to use it as a tool for learning rather than a shortcut around it. <i>Outcome: Students move from passive consumers to informed producers, remaining the primary authors of their work while using AI to assist the process.</i>
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A Conceptual Framework for AI Fluency

Perception How AI detects and interprets input	Representation How AI stores information	Learning How AI adapts over time	Interaction How AI receives input and generates output	Social Impact AI's influence on society
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To achieve our strategic goals, students and educators need a shared understanding of how AI actually works. The following concepts provide that foundation. While they directly support AI fluency, they also inform our approach to human-centered practice, equitable access, and digital well-being. Understanding what AI can and cannot do is the basis for using it wisely.

Perception: How AI detects and interprets input from the world around it, including text, images, sound, and sensor data.

Representation: How AI organizes stores, and structures information so it can be processed and used for decision-making.

Learning: How AI adapts and improves over time by identifying patterns in data, rather than following fixed instructions.

Interaction: How AI receives input from users and generates output, including the design choices that shape how humans and AI communicate.

Social Impact: How AI influences society, including questions of fairness, bias, privacy, employment, and the ethical responsibilities that come with building and using intelligent systems.

Community Partners and Equity | Stronger Together: Partnerships and Access

Successful AI integration does not happen in isolation. It requires partnership across our entire community. We actively engage families, technology leaders, SSUSD's collective bargaining units, and educational experts to build shared understanding and ensure that the conversation around AI extends beyond the classroom.

Our commitment to equity means that AI literacy is not a privilege reserved for some. Every student, educator, and family in the SSUSD community deserves access to the knowledge, tools, and opportunities that AI brings. By working together, we ensure that our approach reflects the diverse needs and perspectives of the community we serve.

Partnerships and Community Access

We connect with families, technology leaders, collective bargaining units and educational experts to make AI literacy accessible to everyone in the SSUSD family.

Family Engagement

- Host AI Family Nights for home learning
- Provide multilingual AI guides for all families
- Share transparent updates on tools in use district-wide
- Create take-home activities bridging school and home

Student Outreach

- AI workshops focused on underrepresented students
- Coding initiatives targeting equity gaps
- Mentorship connecting students with AI professionals
- Opportunities to influence AI Policy development
- Scholarships and pathways to CS and AI careers

AI Community Roundtables

We host regular roundtables to move beyond one-way information sharing. These sessions are spaces for genuine dialogue, where families and students help shape how AI is used in SSUSD; not just receive updates about it. REGISTER: [SSUSD.org/airoundtable](https://ssusd.org/airoundtable)

Dialogue over Deposit: Roundtables replace one-way updates with a two-way conversation. Community voices inform district AI decisions before they are finalized.

Agency: Students and families are active participants in our AI journey, not just end users. Their input directly shapes district practices and tool decisions.

Collective Empowerment: By understanding how AI works and how it affects their lives, our community transforms AI from something that happens to them into something they can shape and direct.

Our Commitment to Equity

AI Tools that Reflect Student Diversity

Every AI tool adopted by SSUSD is evaluated for bias, cultural responsiveness, and accessibility. We prioritize tools that support multilingual learners and students with diverse needs. Equity is not an afterthought. It is the foundation of every AI decision we make in SSUSD.

Identify Bias

AI tools adopted by SSUSD are evaluated for bias, cultural responsiveness, and accessibility before classroom use.

Equal Creation

Equity means equal opportunity to CREATE and problem-solve with AI, not just consume it. Every student is a producer.

Multilingual Access

Translation tools and multilingual resources ensure every family can participate fully in the AI literacy journey.

The Educator's Role | [SSUSD.org/edtechhub](https://ssusd.org/edtechhub)

Learning WITH AI — Workflow Using AI as a thought partner to enhance daily practice • Use AI as a thought partner for lesson planning and instructional design • Draft communications and resources efficiently • Create varied, accessible learning materials that meet diverse learner needs • Seek opportunities to differentiate instruction and make knowledge accessible to all learners • Save administrative time to focus on student relationships.	Learning ABOUT AI — Pedagogy Building student understanding of how AI works and where it falls short • Integrate AI concepts across all subjects, grounded in California CS Standards • Teach data privacy, bias identification, and fact-checking as essential skills • Foster critical thinking about AI-generated content • Demonstrate the strengths and limitations of AI by modeling best practices in the classroom • Reinforce ethical use concepts through use of transparency badges.
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Guiding Educator Practices | *start a conversation, not an accusation*

Verification First Model thoughtful questioning. Always verify AI outputs before sharing with students or using instruction. Treat fact-checking not as distrust of the tool but as a teachable habit students will carry with them.	Bias in the Open Discuss potential biases in training data and AI models openly as part of regular instruction. When AI gets it wrong, use the moment as a learning opportunity rather than a reason to walk away from the tool.	Human Connection AI supports learning; humans build the relationships that matter most. No tool replaces the trust, encouragement, and responsiveness that define great teaching. Continue to prioritize what only a teacher can bring to a classroom.
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Setting Clear Expectations for AI Use

The Guiding Educator Practices (above) can help guide how teachers engage with AI. The following guidance helps translate those actions into clear, consistent expectations for students across classrooms, syllabi, and rubrics.

Communicate with Clarity: Be explicit in course materials about how AI may and may not be used for each assignment or project. Students deserve clear guidance, not assumptions. When expectations are transparent, students are empowered to make good decisions rather than left to guess where the boundaries are.

Model What Good Practice Looks Like: Demonstrate thoughtful, purposeful AI use in your own teaching. When students see their teacher verifying outputs, naming limitations, and using AI as a thought partner rather than a shortcut, they internalize those habits far more effectively than through any written policy.

Treat Missteps as Teachable Moments: When a student's use of AI falls outside expectations, approach the situation with curiosity before consequence. A conversation about why the boundary exists and how to use the tool more thoughtfully will do more for a student's long-term growth than a punitive response alone.

The Student's Role | ssusd.org/page/ai-student-guide

AI offers extraordinary opportunities for learning and creation. SSUSD empowers students to engage with these tools thoughtfully, building the digital literacy needed to use AI with confidence, honesty, and awareness.

Students are not just learning how to use AI. They are learning how to think about it: how it shapes what they see, what it gets right, where it falls short, and why transparency matters. These habits of mind are as important as any technical skill.

As AI continues to evolve, the tools and platforms of today will give way to new ones. What endures are the transferable, human skills that no tool can replace. We want our students to think critically, problem-solve, read deeply, write clearly, and develop their own ideas. Equally important are the skills that make learning collaborative: communicating, compromising, creating, and working alongside others. These are the capabilities that will serve students long after any specific AI platform has changed, and they remain at the heart of everything we do.

AI Transparency Badge System

ssusd.org/page/ai-trust-and-transparency

When using AI in your work, share your process using the SSUSDUSD Badge System. Badge disclosure is paired with a brief reflection, not just on what AI helped produce, but on how you thought through it, questioned it, and made it your own.

Download these at: [SSUSD.org/aibadges](https://ssusd.org/aibadges)

 Human Intelligence This work is entirely your own. No AI tools were used. <i>Reflection: N/A</i>	 Assist AI helped you begin. Your thinking and voice drive the final product. <i>Reflection: Note what AI suggested and how you changed it.</i>	 Collaborate AI and you worked together as genuine partners throughout. <i>Reflection: Describe how you verified AI accuracy and checked for bias.</i>	 AI-Driven AI produced most of the work. Your role was direction and critical review. <i>Reflection: Explain how you evaluated the AI output before submitting.</i>
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Sample of SSUSD's Transparency Badging System

Boundaries That Protect Our Community

Using AI well also means recognizing where its use causes harm. The following are not permitted in SSUSD.

Harassment and Impersonation: AI tools may not be used to manipulate media, impersonate others, or intimidate in any form. All users are expected to use these tools for educational purposes while upholding values of respect and inclusivity.

Misrepresenting AI Work as Your Own: Students and staff should not submit AI-generated work as original work without prior approval and proper documentation. Teachers will be clear about when and how AI tools may be used, and existing Academic Integrity procedures apply. When questions arise, the goal is a conversation that builds understanding, not just a consequence.

Equitable Access: When an assignment permits AI tools, those tools will be made available to all students. No student should be at a disadvantage because of unequal access outside of school.

Digital Wellbeing and Mental Health | *Understanding How AI Shapes Our Digital Lives*

AI does not just live in the tools we use for schoolwork. It quietly shapes the content we see, the notifications we receive, and the digital environments we spend time in every day. Building awareness of how these systems work is essential to maintaining healthy relationships with technology.

Awareness and Healthy Habits	Ethics and Digital Citizenship
• Understand how the platforms you use decide what to show you and why • Recognize when content is designed to keep you scrolling rather than inform you • Know the difference between AI-generated and authentic content • Set personal boundaries for healthy, intentional technology use	• Explore the ethical implications of deep fakes and AI-driven misinformation • Understand how AI can be used to harm others, including cyberbullying, and know how to respond • Practice empathy and kindness in digital spaces • Report harmful AI-generated content and know where to turn for support

Core Student Guidelines ssusd.org/page/ai-student-guide

Thoughtful Questioning: Develop the habit of questioning and fact-checking AI-generated information before using it in your work.

Data Privacy: Protect personal identifiable information (PII) and use caution before sharing any sensitive data with generative AI tools.

Authenticity: Ensure your unique human voice and critical thinking are evident in your work. AI can assist the process, but your ideas should lead it.

Transparency: Use the Badge System to disclose your level of AI use on assignments, making your process visible and honest.

Academic Integrity: Understand that how you use AI reflects your commitment to honest, original work. When in doubt about whether AI use is appropriate for an assignment, ask your teacher before submitting.

Data Privacy and Security

Our Four Privacy Commitments

Student Data is Not a Product AI tools adopted by SSUSDUSD are vetted to ensure student data is never sold, shared, or used for purposes beyond learning. Data collected in the service of education stays in the service of education — full stop.	Transparency in Every Tool Families and staff are informed about what data is collected, how it is used, and how long it is retained, before any tool enters the classroom. No surprises, no fine print.
Vendor Accountability Every AI vendor must meet district privacy standards and comply with FERPA, COPPA, and applicable California state regulations before adoption. Non-compliant tools are not permitted in SSUSDUSD classrooms.	Security by Design AI tools are evaluated for cybersecurity protections to safeguard student information from unauthorized access or misuse. Security is a requirement, not an afterthought.

Protecting Our Community: The Laws That Guide Us

Every AI tool used in SSUSDUSD must meet the legal standards that protect our students, families, and educators. These laws are not obstacles to innovation. They are the foundation that makes responsible innovation possible. Privacy is not a policy checkbox. It is a promise we make to every student and family in SSUSDUSD.

FERPA Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act — protects student education records.	COPPA Children's Online Privacy Protection Act — governs data on children under 13.	CA AB 1584 California law requiring student data ownership and strict vendor limits.	SOPIPA Student Online Personal Information Protection Act — bans targeted advertising to students.
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Implementation and Governance

Our foundational principles only matter if they are reflected in how we make decisions day to day. This section outlines the practical systems that ensure every AI tool entering our classrooms has been thoughtfully reviewed, every educator is supported before implementation, and every family is informed along the way.

AI Tool Vetting and Approval

Before any AI tool reaches a classroom, it moves through a six-stage review process designed to protect students, support educators, and ensure instructional value.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Identify Staff or admin nominates an AI tool for consideration	Privacy Review FERPA, COPPA, and California compliance check	Pedagogy Evaluation Instructional value and equity review	Provide Training Educators receive professional learning before classroom use	Communicate with Families Families are informed of approved tools and their purpose	Monitor and Review Ongoing effectiveness check through usage data and teacher feedback

Professional Learning for Educators

ssusd.org/page/edtechhub

AI integration is only as strong as the support behind it. Our professional development is designed to meet educators where they are and grow with them, building from shared foundations toward deeper expertise. Every tier is grounded in the belief that pedagogy and practice matter more than any single platform.

Foundation | All Staff: AI literacy basics, the Badge System, Responsible Use Policy, and data privacy protocols. This tier also includes hands-on exploration of AI tools and their possibilities in the classroom, giving every staff member a confident starting point.

Intermediate | Instructional Staff: Practical application rooted in teaching and learning, not technology for its own sake. This tier focuses on accessibility supports, differentiation strategies, personalized feedback, and creative learning solutions that make AI a meaningful part of instruction.

Advanced | AI Lead Teachers: Deep exploration of AI ethics facilitation, Universal Design for Learning, and Project-Based Learning frameworks. AI Lead Teachers serve as site-based coaches, supporting colleagues and responding to the unique needs of each school community.

Ongoing | All Staff: Continuous access to curated resources, district guidance, and a shared knowledge network through SSUSD's EdTech Hub. This includes opportunities for on-site training, collaborative learning communities, and space to share what is working across the district.

The ABC's of AI

A Family Guide to AI @ SSUSD

SSUSD is thoughtfully integrating artificial intelligence into teaching and learning. This guide shares what that means for your family, how we protect your child, and how you can be part of the journey.

What is our approach?

We follow an HI+AI philosophy, Human Intelligence paired with Artificial Intelligence. AI is a tool that supports learning. It does not replace teachers, and it does not replace your child's thinking. Educators remain the decision-makers in every classroom, and students are expected to be the primary authors of their own work.

How do we protect your child?

Privacy first: Every AI tool is vetted for compliance with federal and state privacy laws (FERPA, COPPA, SOPIPA, CA AB 1584) before it enters a classroom.

Data is never sold: Student data collected through AI tools is used for learning purposes only. It is never sold, shared with advertisers, or used for targeted marketing.

Tools are reviewed continuously: Approved tools are monitored through educator feedback and usage data. If a tool no longer meets our standards, it is removed.

You will be informed: Families receive clear communication about which AI tools are in use, what data is collected, and how it is handled. No surprises.

What will my child experience?

Your child will learn both with AI and about AI. That means using AI as a thought partner for learning while also building an understanding of how AI works, where it falls short, and why transparency matters. Students use our AI Transparency Badge System to disclose when and how AI was part of their work, paired with a brief reflection on their process.

What skills are we building?

AI tools will change. The skills that matter most will not. We are focused on helping students think critically, problem-solve, read deeply, write clearly, and develop their own ideas. Equally important are the collaborative skills that define great learning: communicating, creating, compromising, and working alongside others.

How can our family get involved?

[Quarterly Community AI Roundtables](#): Your voice helps shape how AI is used in SSUSD

REGISTER: [SSUSD.org/page/airoundtable](https://ssusd.org/page/airoundtable)

Multilingual resources: Guides and materials available in your home language

Talk with your child: Ask them what AI tools they are using and what they are learning about how AI works.

Questions? We are here to help. Reach out to your school site or visit the SSUSD [EdTech Hub](#) for resources, guides, and upcoming events or email the [IT Help Desk](#)