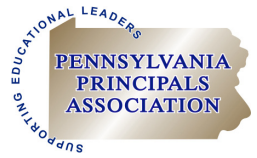


# Executive Director's Notepad . . .

## Did I Cheat?



By Dr. Eric C. Eshbach,  
PA Principals Association  
Executive Director

*I cheated.*

There, I admitted it. No, I did not cheat my way through high school or college. Yes, I wrote my entire doctoral dissertation on my MacBook Pro, using data that I ran through SPSS (a statistical software platform). No, I have never tried to lie on my tax returns.

In all honesty, when faced with the deadline for this article and after recently listening to a conference speaker on artificial intelligence, I asked ChatGPT to draft an article for me. In fact, my input direction to ChatGPT was, "Write a five-paragraph article on the pros and cons of using artificial intelligence in K-12 public education." It took less than 30 seconds to generate the article below. The results may not impress you as much as they did me, but they lead to an amazing realization and conversation about the capabilities of technology and the impact it is having on our world.

Let's look at how ChatGPT helped me write my article and my interaction with this artificial intelligence. (The ChatGPT-generated article is in regular type. My comments are in italics.)

Add AI stock photo

### Pros and Cons of Using Artificial Intelligence in K-12 Public Education

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has gained significant attention in recent years for its potential to transform various industries, including education. In K-12 public education, AI holds both promises and challenges. This article explores the pros and cons of using artificial intelligence in K-12 public education, highlighting the potential benefits as well as the concerns associated with its implementation. *Okay, I was not an English major, but I have always been told that I write well. I thought this was a great opening paragraph based on my input direction. It makes me sound like an educated professional. Good start, ChatGPT!*

#### 1. Pros:

**AI-powered Personalized Learning:** One of the major advantages of AI in education is its ability to personalize learning experiences for students. AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data to understand individual student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. This enables the creation of tailored learning paths, adaptive assessments, and customized feedback, helping students to learn at their own pace and achieve better educational outcomes. *An excellent way to begin is to explain exactly what AI is and how it can benefit students. While I would have changed some wording (such as adding the word "an" before "individual student's strengths..."), the paragraph is written well. The content also provides key understandings that we, as educators, have for what would be considered a strong function of any instructional program. That is, the fact that it can be tailored to the specific needs of the student.*

**Intelligent Tutoring Systems:** AI can act as an intelligent tutor, providing students with instant feedback and guidance. These systems can identify areas where students are struggling and offer targeted interventions to address their specific needs. Intelligent tutoring systems can enhance

*Continued on next page*

student engagement, provide immediate support, and free up teachers' time, allowing them to focus on higher-order instruction. *Intelligent tutoring is not a term I was familiar with before ChatGPT spat it out. It makes perfect sense, however, that AI performs the tasks of monitoring and adjusting in a nearly immediate time frame.*

**Enhanced Administrative Efficiency:** AI can automate administrative tasks, such as grading papers and managing records, reducing the burden on teachers and administrators. This efficiency gain allows educators to dedicate more time to instructional planning, student support, and other crucial aspects of teaching. *The fact that I used ChatGPT to write this article is evidence that this paragraph is accurate! While I have spent additional time digesting what it wrote for me, it has definitely freed up time I would have dedicated to mapping out my article, researching, writing, editing and producing a final draft.*

## 2. Cons:

**Lack of Human Interaction:** One of the primary concerns regarding the use of AI in K-12 education is the potential reduction in human interaction. Education is not solely about imparting knowledge but also about building social skills, empathy, and collaboration. Overreliance on AI systems may deprive students of valuable interpersonal interactions with peers and teachers, which are essential for their holistic development. *This is the argument we frequently hear about artificial intelligence. I cannot emphasize enough the importance relationships and human interaction have on our youth. We have all witnessed the downside to smartphones, gaming systems and even the one-to-one laptop programs we have promoted in our schools. Online education may work for some but not for all (as many of us observed during the pandemic), and for those who find it effective, there is still the need to build relationships and an understanding of other humans.*

**Ethical and Privacy Concerns:** AI systems require access to extensive amounts of student data to function effectively. This raises concerns about privacy, data security, and the ethical use of student information. Safeguards must be in place to protect sensitive data, ensure transparency in AI algorithms, and prevent potential biases that could impact student outcomes. *I am now concerned about the information I had to enter into ChatGPT to produce this article. Although I was not required to provide a credit card number or any personal data, is that information accessible on other platforms that use the same email address as the one I had to enter?*

**Technological Barriers:** Implementing AI in K-12 public education requires substantial technological infrastructure and resources. Not all schools have the necessary equip-

ment, connectivity, or expertise to integrate AI effectively into their classrooms. The digital divide could widen if AI implementation is not approached with equity in mind, leaving disadvantaged students further behind. *While I agree there is limited infrastructure, especially in our rural and poor urban areas, I somewhat disagree with this paragraph. ChatGPT is easily accessible on cell phones. When I last observed a group of students (even at the elementary level), there did not seem to be a shortage of cell phones.*

In conclusion, artificial intelligence has the potential to revolutionize K-12 public education by personalizing learning experiences, providing intelligent tutoring, and streamlining administrative tasks. However, concerns regarding reduced human interaction, ethical considerations and technological barriers must be addressed. The key lies in finding the right balance between AI and human instruction, ensuring student privacy and equitable access to AI technologies. With careful planning, AI can complement traditional teaching methods and support educators in fostering a rich, engaging, and effective learning environment for all students. *I fully concur with this paragraph. The question lies in how we, as educators, find that "right balance." Dr. Snell and I often talk about worthwhile student work and lament over our own children completing word search puzzles for homework or 50 math problems requiring basic multiplication. In an AI world, that type of student work becomes even more ineffective (not that it was ever effective). In an AI world, our teachers need to design work for students that requires creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking. We need to assign tasks that require human interaction. We need to expect our students to have in-depth conversations and interactions leading to problem solving that are not the result of rote memorization.*

I encourage you to explore the world of AI by carefully setting up an account. It could make your life easier. In addition to this article, I have used it to help me compose reference letters, craft interview questions and even design a diet to follow that will allow me to lose 20 pounds. *Now, if it can keep me on that diet and ensure that I actually lose weight, I will truly sing its praises!*

**Author's Note:** Hours after I completed this article, the U.S. Department of Education released a report on *Artificial Intelligence in Education*. The report offers insights and recommendations for educators. It can be found at <https://tech.ed.gov/files/2023/05/ai-future-of-teaching-and-learning-report.pdf>