Superintendent's HOPE Note - June 2023

You can't solve a problem on the same level it was created. You have to rise above it to the next level — Albert Einstein
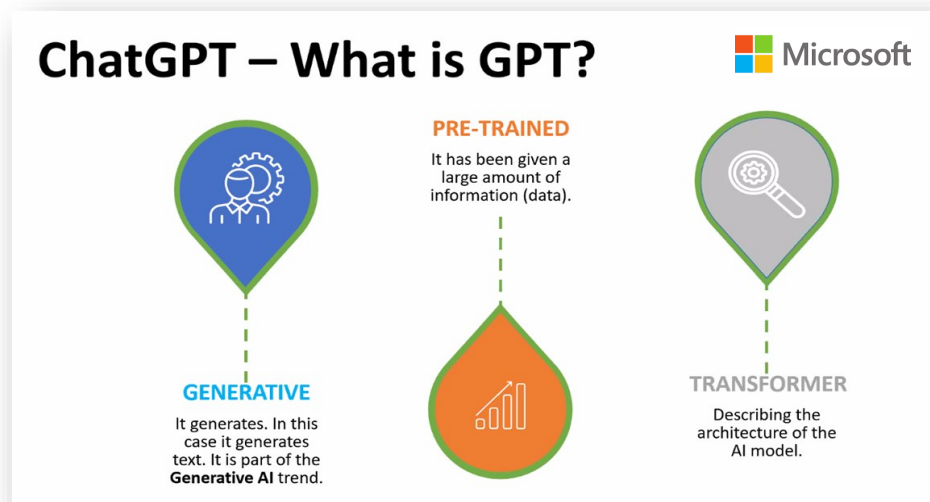
Artificial Intelligence (AI) at STSD

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is trending everywhere. Job displacement, a lack of transparency and control, the loss of human connections, and the fear that AI may surpass human intelligence are just some of the concerns making headlines. For educators, we fear that an overreliance on AI may hinder the development of critical thinking, creativity, and social-emotional skills, which are best nurtured through human interactions. Add to these concerns the erosion of long-standing academic integrity policies, and it is no wonder that institutions of learning are in an uproar.

AI is such a heated debate that the **United States Office of Educational Technology** produced a report entitled [Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Teaching and Learning](#) as recently as last month. If you do not read the full 77-page report, I recommend reading the [Core Message](#) document, which captures the essence of the department's position.

So, what is the role of AI in our district? What is our position on staff use of AI? Does our position change if learners use AI? Moreover, is an AI-generated essay considered plagiarism if the essay is an "original and uniquely generated piece of text"? Does this mean that we can no longer use essays to assess the writing skills of our learners? Will this fundamentally change the way we teach? Are there programs that will flag AI-generated text? If so, how effective are those programs? We have so many questions!

Help is on the way. In August, our technology department and I will provide a high-level overview of AI during our Opening of School Address which will kick off our district-wide conversation about leveraging the good and managing the challenges of AI in our classrooms. Until then, begin by reading the report and come prepared to craft our stance on how we move forward **with** AI. Love it or hate it, AI is here to stay.

Together, we will develop our position on AI in STSD.

Visit the district's webpage to see the [Strategic Plan](#) and the full [Portrait of a Graduate](#)

H.O.P.E ~ Our Strategic Initiatives for the 2023-2024 School

Each year, we engage district staff and stakeholders to review our annual progress and determine strategic priorities for the coming school year. Utilizing our [Leadership Improvement Model](#) and strategic planning process, we prioritize vital initiatives that drive overall improvement across the district. This year's initiatives align with key actions within the district's [Teaching and Learning Plan](#) and our [Strategic Plan](#). Our HOPE Teams met in February and again in May. We emerged with the following initiatives by Critical Success Factor (CSF) for the 2023-2024 school year:

Teaching and Learning (T&L)
- Provide professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies to support learners
- Establish Tier 1 strategies within MTSS
- Provide professional development to improve strategies at Tier 1
- Establish an effective Advisory Model (K-12)
- Implement culturally responsive teaching strategies and practices that increase voice and ownership in all classrooms

Community Engagement
- Engage families using DEI approaches

Facilities, Business & Support Operations
- Reduce contracts that do not support T&L
- Increase grants that support T&L

Team Member Engagement
- Focus on retention, recruitment, and engagement with attention to diverse populations

Technology
- Build T&L suite within the HUB (curriculum, PD calendar, resources list, etc.)
- Develop a schedule for auditing and pruning HUB materials across CSFs

Health, Safety & Security
- Develop student and staff training on emergency protocols
- Provide training on emergency protocols for all support staff (food services, paras, building & grounds, custodians)

Piece of the Puzzle

Please help me congratulate Caitlin Jodoin and Josamarie Stalcar as our Pieces of the Puzzle for June! This dynamic duo has brought new energy and life to the Middle School music department! They have created dynamic and engaging programming in our band, chorus, and orchestra and increased the number of students wanting to participate in the programs. They recently hosted an April Fools concert at STMS that drew over 200 family and community members to our auditorium for a light-hearted and funny concert that everyone enjoyed! Our middle school programming would not be the same without them!