Rye City School District
AI Guidelines

Introduction:

The Rye City School District's AI guidelines are designed to uphold the ethical, responsible, and equitable use of artificial intelligence in education. They provide clear and practical standards for integrating AI tools while supporting our commitment to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and global citizenship. The guidelines focus on four primary areas: leadership and vision, AI literacy, professional learning, and data privacy. By outlining expectations for faculty, staff, administrators, and students, the guidelines ensure that AI is used in ways that align with our District's values, including providing an equitable educational environment and ensuring academic integrity.

As AI continues to evolve and influence education, these guidelines will help us with a structured and thoughtful approach to its adoption. AI tools, such as language models and adaptive learning software, offer the potential to differentiate instruction and improve administrative efficiency. However, without clear guidelines, the risk of misuse, privacy violations, or reliance on inaccurate information increases. The guidelines ensure that educators and students can embrace AI's benefits while safeguarding ethical and responsible usage practices.

These guidelines serve as a foundation for fostering critical thinking, communication, collaboration, problem solving, and engaged citizenship, equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate and contribute to a diverse global environment. The Rye City School District emphasizes iterative learning through revision and feedback, supporting a culture of continuous growth where students refine their understanding of AI's potential and limitations. In alignment with The Rye Commitment, these guidelines seek to ensure that AI enhances learning experiences by promoting problem-solving, ethical decision-making, and meaningful engagement with technology.

For faculty, staff, and administrators, the guidelines reinforce the District's commitment to high-quality, relevant, and meaningful professional learning. AI literacy and ethical implementation require ongoing education, and these guidelines provide a framework for supporting educators in evolving and expanding their instructional practices.

The District's commitment to transparency, providing an equitable environment, and community engagement is embedded in these guidelines as we seek to ensure that AI is implemented in ways that reflect fiscal responsibility, inclusivity, and shared decision-making. By seeking feedback and engaging in meaningful discussions about AI's role in education, the District upholds its pledge to continuous reflection and improvement.

Given the dynamic nature of AI technology, the guidelines serve as a flexible framework to adapt to ongoing advancements. The District's Technology Committee will review these guidelines annually to determine if any modifications are necessary. Equipping faculty, staff, administrators, and students with tools to critically evaluate AI applications, understand their limitations, and use them effectively. Guidelines for data privacy, intellectual property, and academic honesty are included to empower the District's community to use AI confidently and responsibly. By fostering a shared understanding of AI's capabilities and challenges, these guidelines create a foundation for innovation and responsible engagement with emerging technologies in an increasingly complex global landscape (See Section V for RCSD-approved policies).

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Leadership and Vision

The Rye City School District Approach to AI

AI is a valuable tool with the potential to greatly enhance teaching and learning experiences for educators and students in K-12 environments. When implemented thoughtfully and responsibly, it has the potential to transform education in meaningful ways:

- **Increasing Productivity:** AI has the potential to automate routine organizational responsibilities, allowing teachers to focus more on the quality of discussion, feedback, and engagement, which improves learning outcomes.
- **Providing Supplemental Learning Support:** AI-powered tools can serve as thought partners, providing resource assistance and academic support beyond regular school hours. This is especially valuable for students seeking additional guidance or resources at home.
- **Differentiating Learning Experiences:** Teachers can use AI to customize lessons and materials tailored to individual student needs, ensuring a more inclusive and effective approach to education.
- **Enhancing Accessibility**: AI tools can support underrepresented groups by offering translation services for multilingual students, voice-to-text and text-to-voice capabilities for students with disabilities, and planning tools for those needing help with executive functioning.

Responsible Use of AI

(See Section V for RCSD-approved policies)

Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Use of AI

1. Leveraging AI for Professional Growth and Efficiency

- Faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to use AI tools to enhance productivity, streamline administrative tasks, and support professional development. Whether assisting with lesson plan development, analyzing data, or facilitating communication, AI should be used thoughtfully to improve outcomes and efficiency.

2. Promoting Responsible Integration into Teaching and Learning

- AI should be integrated into teaching and learning environments in ways that align with District goals and NYS standards. Faculty, staff, and administrators must ensure that AI is used to foster meaningful engagement with students through supporting, rather than replacing, essential teaching practices and interactions.

3. Ensuring Academic Integrity and Equitable Access

- Faculty, staff, and administrators are responsible for modeling and enforcing ethical AI use among students. This includes educating students on proper AI usage and preventing misuse, such as plagiarism or dependency on AI-generated content. Staff should also prioritize equitable access to AI tools, ensuring that all students benefit regardless of background or resources.

4. Developing Critical AI Literacy

- Understanding how AI systems operate, including their capabilities, limitations, and potential biases, is essential for effective use. Faculty, staff, and administrators should seek opportunities to enhance their AI literacy, allowing them to evaluate AI-generated outputs critically and incorporate these tools responsibly into their work.

5. Upholding Ethical and Privacy Standards

- Faculty, staff, and administrators must adhere to ethical guidelines when using AI. Sensitive student or staff information should never be shared with AI platforms unless explicitly approved by the District. Compliance with District policies, data protection regulations, and legal standards is non-negotiable.

6. Participating in Ongoing Training and Development

- The District is committed to providing professional development opportunities focused on AI literacy and ethical use. Faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to actively participate in these programs, ensuring they remain informed about emerging AI trends and best practices.

Student Use of AI

1. Embracing AI as a Learning Tool

Students are encouraged to explore AI tools to enhance their understanding of academic content, foster creativity, and improve problem-solving skills. It is essential that they approach these tools with curiosity and a critical mindset, recognizing both their potential and limitations.

2. Maintaining Academic Integrity

When permitted to use AI for assignments or projects, students must ensure that their work reflects their own understanding and originality. While AI may assist with brainstorming or planning, all final submissions must represent genuine effort and remain free from uncredited AI assistance. *Students must adhere to the RCSD Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy when completing assignments both at school and at home.*

3. Developing Critical AI Literacy

Students should actively seek to understand how AI systems function, including their potential biases and inaccuracies. Cultivating the ability to evaluate AI-generated outputs critically is a vital part of using these tools responsibly.

4. Upholding Ethical Standards

Ethical considerations must guide all interactions with AI. Students are expected to maintain academic integrity, avoiding the use of AI in ways that constitute cheating or plagiarism (See Section V for RCSD-approved policies**)**. Any misuse of AI to create inappropriate or harmful content is strictly prohibited.

5. Protecting Privacy and Digital Citizenship

Respect for privacy and responsible digital behavior are paramount. Students must refrain from inputting sensitive personal information or sharing confidential data when using AI platforms, ensuring compliance with District policies and broader legal standards. (*Please refer to the Data Privacy section for more information regarding this topic.*)

Ethical Use and Responsibility

Faculty, Staff, and Administrators:

- AI must enhance, not replace, human interaction and instruction.
- Faculty, staff, and administrators must use AI ethically and transparently while protecting student data privacy and the security of AI-generated content.
- Teachers are responsible for setting and communicating clear expectations for student AI usage in alignment with District policies.
- AI may be leveraged to improve teaching, learning, and operational efficiency.

- Transparency is required when using AI in educational or administrative practices—students and colleagues should be informed when AI is involved. Teachers should also be explicit about when AI use is appropriate for assignments and when it is not permitted, ensuring clear guidelines for academic integrity and responsible use.
- AI must support, rather than replace, human decision-making that relies on judgment, empathy, and deep understanding.
- Faculty, staff, and administrators must critically evaluate AI-generated outputs for potential biases or inaccuracies.
- Faculty, staff, and administrators must demonstrate ethical behavior and thoughtful decision-making when integrating AI.
- By modeling responsible AI use, faculty, staff, and administrators help prepare students for an evolving technological landscape.

Students:

- Students must use AI responsibly, ensuring that their academic work reflects their own understanding and effort. Transparency in AI usage is essential to maintaining academic integrity.
- AI should only serve as a tool to support learning and creativity, not as a substitute for independent thought. Students must refrain from plagiarism and improper reliance on AI-generated content.
- Students must assess AI-generated outputs critically, recognizing that these tools may produce biased or inaccurate information. Independent verification of AI-assisted work is strongly encouraged.
- Engaging with AI ethically helps students develop essential digital literacy skills, preparing them to navigate and contribute to a technology-driven global society.
- Students must respect privacy and digital responsibility by refraining from sharing personal or sensitive information on AI platforms.
- When incorporating AI-generated content, students must provide proper attribution and adhere to citation guidelines, such as APA format, as established by their instructors.
- Students will only have access to age-appropriate AI tools that enhance learning and creativity while ensuring the security and privacy of their data.
- Students should receive clear information on how AI tools function, along with direct instruction and support to use them effectively and ethically.
- Students are responsible for generating original content that aligns with faculty expectations. AI must complement, rather than replace, independent learning and critical thinking.
- Any misuse of AI tools will be reported to maintain academic integrity and uphold ethical standards within the learning environment.

By adhering to these principles, students can effectively and responsibly integrate AI into their education while upholding academic and ethical standards (See Section V for RCSD-approved policies).

Professional Learning

AI Training for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

The Rye City School District is committed to providing a comprehensive and ongoing professional learning plan to equip faculty, staff, and administrators with the knowledge and skills needed to integrate AI effectively and responsibly. Professional learning is structured on three levels to address the diverse needs of educators. At the individual level, faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to explore professional interests that align with their instructional roles and areas of expertise. Building-level opportunities focus on meeting established goals and objectives specific to each school, while District-wide initiatives emphasize alignment with broader District goals.

Professional learning in AI will incorporate high-quality, research-based practices to foster educators' growth and ensure the meaningful integration of AI tools across grade levels K-12. Training will include workshops on understanding AI fundamentals, sessions on ethical use and instructional strategies, collaborative opportunities for sharing best practices, and ongoing support tailored to individual, departmental, and building needs. AI has the power to enhance learning, streamline operations, and foster innovation, but its use must align with the District's values of academic integrity and responsible citizenship. These guidelines provide a structured framework to ensure AI is implemented ethically, transparently, and inclusively, empowering educators to confidently integrate AI into their teaching practices. By fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and continuous learning, the District ensures that professional development in AI remains adaptive, innovative, and impactful.

AI Training for Students

The Rye City School District is committed to providing students with meaningful opportunities to learn about and engage with AI in ways that enhance their educational experience and prepare them for a technology-driven future. Instruction in AI will be integrated across grade levels, ensuring students develop age-appropriate knowledge and skills. Lessons will focus on foundational concepts such as understanding how AI works, its potential applications, and its limitations, as well as fostering critical thinking and ethical use.

Students will engage in hands-on experiences that demonstrate how AI can support creativity, problem-solving, and academic growth. Classroom activities will emphasize responsible and thoughtful use, including discussions about the ethical implications of AI and its role in society. Opportunities to collaborate on AI-related projects will encourage teamwork and innovation, helping students apply what they learn in real-world contexts.

Data Privacy

NYS Ed Law 2-D

New York State Education Law 2-D is a comprehensive regulation aimed at protecting the privacy and security of student data and personally identifiable information (PII) in K-12 education. It establishes clear guidelines for school districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and third-party vendors who handle student and teacher data. Here are the key aspects of NYS Education Law 2-D:

Scope of the Law

- Who is protected?
  The law applies to all PII from students, teachers, and principals.
- Who must comply?
  School districts, BOCES, and any third-party vendors or contractors who receive PII to provide educational services.

Data Protection Standards

- Schools must adopt policies to protect PII in alignment with the law and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework.
- Encryption is required for data both at rest and in transit.

Parental Rights

- Parents and eligible students have the right to inspect and review PII.
- They must be informed about how their data is collected, stored, and used.

Vendor Responsibilities

- Vendors providing services to schools must sign a Data Privacy Agreement (DPA) that adheres to NYS Education Law 2-D requirements.
- Vendors must not use PII for marketing, advertising, or any purposes beyond the agreed-upon educational services.

Data Privacy and Security Policies

- Districts must publish a Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security on their websites.
- This document outlines how PII is safeguarded and the rights of parents and students under the law.

Data Breach Notifications

- Vendors and districts are required to promptly notify affected parties in the event of a data breach.
- The timeline and manner of notification are specified by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). See the RCSD website for additional Data Privacy information.

Chief Privacy Officer (CPO)

- The law designates a Chief Privacy Officer at NYSED to oversee compliance and provide guidance.
- The CPO investigates complaints and ensures consistent enforcement of the law.

Why NYS Education Law 2-D Matters

- The law emphasizes transparency, accountability, and security in the use of educational data. It ensures that schools and their partners take proactive measures to safeguard PII, fostering trust among students, parents, and educators. By adhering to NYS Education Law 2-D, districts not only comply with state mandates but also create a safer digital learning environment for all stakeholders.

Evaluation, Approval, and Implementation of Educational Technology Tools

The Rye City School District is committed to thoroughly evaluating all teacher and student applications utilized across the District. Education Framework is a trusted solution for managing K-12 student data privacy, designed to ensure the safety of students and mitigate the risk of data breaches. By adhering to the requirements of FERPA, COPPA, and state-specific legislation, it provides peace of mind for District administrators, educators, and parents alike. At the core of the Education Framework is EdPrivacy, an intuitive platform that simplifies student data privacy management. The platform rigorously evaluates and monitors the security and compliance of online applications, enabling schools and districts to confidently navigate the complex landscape of data privacy. As a technology department, we rely on Education Framework to evaluate the instructional technology tools used within our District. Each tool is scored on a scale from 1 to 5 based on its adherence to data privacy standards and compliance requirements. Only tools that achieve 4.5 or higher are approved for use, ensuring that our instructional technology is both effective and secure. Education Framework serves as a critical partner in safeguarding student data and supporting a secure, compliant, and innovative educational environment.

The Rye City School District *Approved Web Tools Guide* is a comprehensive resource that highlights all instructional technology tools approved for teacher and student use, ensuring they meet stringent data privacy and security standards, including compliance with FERPA, COPPA, and NYS Education Law 2-D. Each tool is evaluated through a rigorous vetting process using Education Framework, and only those with high scores are included. Teachers who wish to suggest new tools can submit a District-wide form for consideration, allowing the tools to be thoroughly evaluated before approval. The guide provides detailed instructions for accessing and using each tool, along with step-by-step user guides and practical instructional strategies to help staff effectively integrate technology into their teaching. By aligning tools with curriculum goals and supporting differentiated instruction, the guide empowers educators to enhance learning experiences while maintaining a secure and compliant digital environment.

Rye City School District's Approved Policies

These documents outline the policies, expectations, and ethical responsibilities guiding the use of technology and AI within the Rye City School District. The approved policies reflect the District's commitment to safety, equitable access, and responsible digital citizenship. The Approved Web Tools Guide lists all Ed Law 2D-approved websites available for use by faculty, staff, and students in Rye. In the event of a vendor data breach, the District is required to report it promptly. The Code of Conduct sets behavioral expectations for students, staff, faculty, and administrators, fostering a respectful and inclusive learning environment. The Faculty and Student Acceptable Use Policies provide clear guidelines for the appropriate and responsible use of technology, ensuring academic integrity, data privacy, and ethical digital engagement.

- Approved Web Tools Guide
- Code of Conduct
- Employee Acceptable Use
- Information and Data Privacy, Security, Breach, and Notification
- Student Acceptable Use