Mountain Lakes School District

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Plan
2026 - 2027

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Acknowledgements

Board Members

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District Administrators

Dr. Brad Siegel	Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Ivonne Ciresi	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Gregory Brennan	Interim Business Administrator
Mr. Ray Searles	Director of School Counseling
Ms. Kerry DiGiacinto	Director of Special Services
Mr. David Santos	Director of Technology
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Mr. Darrell Fusco	Supervisor of Social Studies, World Language
Mr. Paul Henry	Supervisor of ELA, Fine and Performing Arts
Mr. Robert Starita	Supervisor of Math, Computer Science and Business

Mr. David Sica	Supervisor of Science & STEM
Ms. Keri Ciasulli	Supervisor of Special Education for Deaf & Hard of Hearing

School Administrators

Mountain Lakes High School	
Mr. Richard Mangili	Principal
Ms. Lisa Cortese	Assistant Principal
Briarcliff Middle School	
Mr. Erik Carlson	Principal
Wildwood Elementary School	
Mr. Patrick Higgins	Principal
Lake Drive Program	
Ms. Julie Lazeration	Principal

AI Plan Writers

Ms. Ivonne Ciresi	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mr. David Santos	Director of Technology
Mr. Paul Henry	Supervisor of ELA, Fine and Performing Arts
Ms. Susan Miele	Briarcliff Middle School
Mr. Dennis Posner	Briarcliff Middle School/Mountain Lakes High School
Mr. Michael Alves	Briarcliff Middle School
Ms. Kate Paccioretti	Mountain Lakes High School

Information Technology Committee

Ms. Ivonne Ciresi	District Office
Mr. David Santos	District Office
Dr. Brad Siegel	District Office
Mr. David Sica	District Office
Ms. Deanna Richter	Mountain Lakes High School/Lake Drive Program
Ms. Claire Busch	Mountain Lakes High School
Ms. Trish Spence-Reid	Mountain Lakes High School
Ms. Christina Doolittle	Briarcliff Middle School
Ms. Susan Miele	Briarcliff Middle School
Mr. Dennis Posner	Briarcliff Middle School/Mountain Lakes High School
Ms. Nicole Verduin	Briarcliff Middle School/Lake Drive Program
Mr. Patrick Higgins	Wildwood Elementary School
Ms. Gretchen Coleman	Wildwood Elementary School
Ms. Megan McCarthy	Wildwood Elementary School
Ms. Julie Lazeration	Lake Drive School

Technology Related Policies

Policy Number	Policy Title
2360	Use of Technology
2361	Acceptable Use of Computer Networks/Computers and Resources
2365	**Acceptable Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
3321	Acceptable Use of Computer Network(s) / Computers and Resources by Teaching Staff Members
4283	Electronic Communications Between Support Staff Members and Students
4321	Acceptable Use of Computer Network(s) / Computers and Resources by Support Staff Members
5512	Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying
7522	School District Provided Technology Devices to Staff Members
7523	School District Provided Technology Devices to Students

Core Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computer-based systems that analyze information and generate outputs or support actions that typically require human-like reasoning, pattern recognition, prediction, or content creation. In this plan, AI includes generative AI tools as well as other AI-enabled systems used in educational or operational contexts.

AI Tools: Software applications, platforms, or features that use AI technologies to perform tasks, generate content, analyze information, assist users, or support decision-making.

AI Literacy: The ability to understand, evaluate, use, and respond to AI tools responsibly, ethically, and effectively in authentic academic, professional, and civic contexts.

Assignment: Any task, activity, product, performance, or work required of a student as part of the student's educational or co-curricular program

Deepfake: Digitally created, altered, or manipulated images, audio recordings, or videos generated through Artificial Intelligence (AI) or similar technologies that falsely depict a person saying or doing something that did not actually occur.

Human Oversight: The expectation that AI outputs, recommendations, or generated content are reviewed, evaluated, and, when necessary, revised by a human user before being relied upon in instructional, academic, or operational contexts.

Purpose & Scope

The purpose of the Mountain Lakes School District Artificial Intelligence (AI) Plan is to establish a clear, intentional framework for the responsible, ethical, and effective use of artificial intelligence across teaching, learning, and district operations. This plan reflects the district's commitment to leveraging emerging technologies in ways that enhance educational experiences while maintaining a strong focus on student learning, professional expertise, and human-centered instruction.

The AI Plan outlines district expectations, guiding principles, and implementation procedures for the use of AI tools. It is designed to provide clarity and consistency while allowing for thoughtful, developmentally appropriate application across grade levels, courses, and professional contexts. This plan operates in alignment with Board policy and related district procedures.

District Vision & Guiding Principles

The Mountain Lakes School District believes that teaching and learning are fundamentally human endeavors. AI may support educational work, but it will not replace human judgment, professional expertise, student thinking, or the relationships at the center of strong schools. AI should be used to enhance learning, expand access, and support effective practice, not to diminish student agency or reduce the role of educators.

Guiding Principles for AI in Teaching and Learning

1. Human-centered learning is essential.
Teaching and learning are fundamentally human endeavors. AI may support educational work, but it will not replace human judgment, professional expertise, student thinking, or the relationships at the center of strong schools.

2. AI is a tool to enhance, not replace, learning.
AI should be used to strengthen instruction, expand access, and support effective practice—not to diminish student agency or reduce meaningful cognitive work.

3. Student thinking and voice remain central.
All use of AI in learning environments must preserve and prioritize students' original thinking, creativity, and understanding.

4. Responsible use is taught, not assumed.
Students must be explicitly taught how to use AI safely, ethically, and appropriately as part of their developmental learning journey.

5. Developmental appropriateness guides all AI use.
AI exposure and application will vary by grade band, ensuring that younger students engage in limited, guided experiences while older students develop increasing independence and critical evaluation skills.

6. Equity and access are priorities.
The district will work to ensure equitable access to AI-supported learning while being mindful of barriers, over-reliance, and unintended impacts on student experience.

7. Critical thinking and evaluation are essential skills.
Students and staff must be able to question, evaluate, and verify AI-generated content, including recognizing limitations, bias, and inaccuracies.

8. Transparency and integrity guide decision-making.
Use of AI in instruction and assessment should be transparent, clearly defined, and aligned with maintaining academic integrity and trust in student learning.

9. Professional capacity building is necessary.
Educators will be supported through ongoing professional learning to make informed decisions about when, how, and why to integrate AI into instruction.

10. Policies and practices will evolve with the technology.
Because AI is rapidly changing, district guidance will remain flexible, iterative, and responsive to new research, tools, and ethical considerations.

Ethical Use and Safeguards

The Mountain Lakes School District recognizes the importance of fostering transparency, trust, and collaboration with parents/guardians regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the educational program. The district is committed to ensuring that parents/guardians are informed about how AI may be used to support teaching and learning, how student data and student-created content may be collected and utilized, and the safeguards in place to protect student privacy and intellectual property in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

At the start of each school year, the district shall provide parents/guardians with information regarding the role of AI in the educational environment, including the types of approved AI tools that may be used, the educational purpose of such tools, and how student information may be handled within those platforms. The district shall establish procedures to obtain parent/guardian consent where required by law, regulation, or district practice.

The district shall ensure that all AI tools and platforms used within the educational program comply with applicable federal and state student data privacy laws and district policies, including but not limited to:

- **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, which protects the privacy of student education records. Personally identifiable information (PII) shall not be disclosed when using AI tools unless specifically authorized and permitted by law.
- **The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)**, which applies to online services directed toward children under the age of thirteen. AI tools used with students must demonstrate compliance where applicable.
- **The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**, which provides parents/guardians with rights related to the collection and use of student information, including activities involving third-party services or commercial purposes.
- **The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)**, which requires schools to maintain internet safety protections and supervise student access to online content.

Intellectual Property

The district also recognizes the importance of protecting student and staff intellectual property when using AI tools. Information entered into AI systems, including prompts, ideas, drafts, creative work, or other original content, may be stored, processed, or used by providers in ways that are not always visible to users. Educators shall help students understand the importance of protecting original work, providing appropriate attribution, and using AI responsibly and ethically.

The approval of any AI tool shall be subject to district review for privacy, security, instructional alignment, and responsible use expectations.

Harmful, Unethical, or Misleading Uses

To support safe, ethical, and responsible use of artificial intelligence, the district will clearly identify uses of AI that are not permitted and that may constitute violations of the Code of Student Conduct or other district policies. The use of AI to harm, intimidate, deceive, or otherwise negatively impact students, staff members, or members of the school community is strictly prohibited. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Using AI tools to bully, harass, threaten, impersonate, embarrass, or intimidate others;
- Creating or distributing deceptive, manipulated, or synthetic content, including deepfakes or altered images, audio, or video, intended to mislead or cause harm;
- Using AI to generate or spread false, misleading, or inappropriate information;
- Representing AI-generated work as entirely one's own when such use is not permitted by the teacher, assignment expectations, or district guidance;
- Using AI in any manner that violates the district's Code of Student Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy, academic integrity expectations, or other district rules and procedures.

AI Companions

AI chatbots and virtual companions are becoming more common, offering support in mental health, customer service, and even personal relationships. While they can provide comfort and assistance, concerns include over-reliance on AI for emotional support, data privacy risks, and the potential for manipulation. Users should approach AI companions cautiously, ensuring they do not replace human connections.

Establishing Staff Guidance and Student Transparency

Educators are empowered to determine appropriate AI use in their classrooms, subject to all relevant student privacy laws (see Student Privacy, Data Security, and Safety section). We encourage educators to explore AI tools and use them creatively to enhance their productivity and instruction. However, it's important to note that AI should not be used as a replacement for district curriculum or the teacher's own expertise. Rather, AI should complement and augment the teacher's skills and knowledge, serving as a powerful tool in the educator's toolbox.

Responsible uses for educators include:

Content Creation and Enhancement: AI can support the development of engaging multimedia content, spark creative ideas for lessons and activities, and assist in differentiating curricula based on student needs.

Communication and Operational Efficiency: AI-powered tools can help draft emails, create newsletters, and streamline administrative tasks such as scheduling and data analysis.

Assessment and Feedback: AI can enhance assessment design, provide initial feedback, and assist with formative assessments. However, certified educators must oversee all graded assessments and ensure alignment with learning standards.

Research and Professional Development: AI can efficiently gather and summarize educational resources and research papers and offer personalized professional development opportunities based on educators' interests and career goals.

Accessibility and Inclusion: AI tools can enhance accessibility through real-time captioning, text-to-speech, language translation, and content differentiation.

Education is about more than just getting good grades—it's about developing skills, knowledge, and a deep understanding of content. While AI can be a powerful learning tool, it's meant to enhance learning, not replace human thought and effort. Responsible AI use should deepen learning and creativity, not serve as a shortcut to avoid authentic engagement with coursework.

Responsible uses for students include:

Obtain permission: Teachers will communicate AI policies to students, but when in doubt, ask before using an AI tool on an assignment. Teachers have the final say on when and how AI may be used in class.

Ensure data privacy: Protect personal data when interacting with AI systems and do not enter personally identifiable information (for example: name, address, photos, social security number, phone number, email, birth date, PINs, passwords, medical history, education, family information, etc).

Understand the limits of privacy: Do not assume that your prompts, questions, or any data entered into an AI system will remain private or protected. AI platforms may store, analyze, and use your information for further training and development. Always exercise caution and avoid sharing personal, sensitive, or confidential information.

Verify AI outputs: AI systems generate responses based on patterns in their training data, which may be incomplete, biased, or outdated. These systems can magnify social biases, present obsolete information, or confidently state incorrect facts. Students are ultimately responsible for all material created as part of coursework and the Mountain Lakes School District.

Prioritize human originality: Use AI to enhance your thinking and creativity, not as a replacement for your ideas and work. Build upon or significantly transform the AI-generated content with your analysis, voice, and insights.

Protect your learning: Before using AI, ensure you understand the assignment's goal. Then use AI to support that learning goal, not offload it.

Maintain transparency: Always disclose AI use in your coursework using the teacher's preferred method for the assignment. See “AI Citation Guidance” on page 17 of this document.

Adhere to Academic Integrity Guidelines: AI is a tool and does not replace your thinking. Be aware of teacher expectations and when in doubt, ASK for clarification about using AI in your assignments. Be mindful of Academic Integrity Guidelines and the consequences of violations.

Always have respect for others: Remember to use AI technologies in ways that honor the rights and dignity of others, steering clear of behaviors like harassment or bullying.

The AI Assessment Scale:

The AI Assessment Scale (AIAS) is a framework that helps schools define when and how students can use artificial intelligence on assignments and assessments. It outlines five levels of AI use—from no use at all to full, guided use of AI tools—so expectations are clear and consistent.

Importantly, no single level is “better” than another. Instead, the AI Assessment Scale helps educators make intentional decisions about AI use based on the purpose of the learning task, ensuring that student thinking and understanding remain at the center.

Teacher Communication Responsibilities

Teachers who permit AI use are responsible for clearly communicating expectations at the time the assignment is given. That communication should identify:

- whether AI use is allowed,
- what type of AI use is allowed,
- what tool or tool category may be used, if relevant,
- what documentation, citation, disclosure, or reflection is required,
- and what kinds of use are not permitted.

Teachers should also model responsible AI use where appropriate and help students understand how to evaluate outputs for accuracy, bias, tone, quality, and fit for purpose. Clear teacher communication is essential to responsible student use. Reference the AIAS with students as needed.

Level	Description	Expectation
No AI	The assessment is completed entirely without AI assistance in a controlled environment, ensuring that students rely solely on their existing knowledge, understanding, and skills	You must not use AI at any point during the assessment. You must demonstrate your core skills and knowledge.
AI Planning	AI may be used for pre-task activities such as brainstorming, outlining and initial research. This level focuses on the effective use of AI for planning, synthesis, and ideation, but assessments should emphasise the ability to develop and refine these ideas independently.	You may use AI for planning, idea development, and research. Your final submission should show how you have developed and refined these ideas.
AI Collaboration	AI may be used to help complete the task, including idea generation, drafting, feedback, and refinement. Students should critically evaluate and modify the AI suggested outputs, demonstrating their understanding.	You may use AI to assist with specific tasks such as drafting text, refining and evaluating your work. You must critically evaluate and modify any AI-generated content you use.
Full AI	AI may be used to complete any elements of the task, with students directing AI to achieve the assessment goals. Assessments at this level may also require engagement with AI to achieve goals and solve problems.	You may use AI extensively throughout your work either as you wish, or as specifically directed in your assessment. Focus on directing AI to achieve your goals while demonstrating your critical thinking.
AI Exploration	AI is used creatively to enhance problem-solving, generate novel insights, or develop innovative solutions to solve problems. Students and educators co-design assessments to explore unique AI applications within the field of study.	You should use AI creatively to solve the task, potentially co-designing new approaches with your instructor.

Perkins, Furze, Roe, & MacVaugh (2024). The AI Assessment Scale

Grade Level Progression

Grade Band	Focus Area	What This Looks Like
K–3	Awareness of technology and automation	• Most learning is **hands-on, play-based, and screen-light**, with technology used sparingly and always with teacher guidance • Teachers may demonstrate how tools respond to questions, but students are **not independently using AI tools** • Students focus on speaking, drawing, building, and creating—developing their own ideas first
4–5	Foundations of AI and digital citizenship	• Students are introduced to AI concepts through **guided, short, and purposeful use** of digital tools • Teachers model how to ask questions and think about whether answers are accurate • Strong emphasis on **balanced technology use** and responsible digital habits
6–8	Understanding how AI systems learn and the concept of bias	• Students explore how AI works, including how it learns from information and why it can make mistakes • AI may be used for brainstorming or feedback, always with **clear structure and limits** • Students learn to question results and not rely on AI as their only source
9–12	Critical analysis, ethical use, and creation of AI tools	• Students use AI to support learning in **thoughtful and purposeful ways**, not as a replacement for their own work • Teachers emphasize evaluating accuracy, identifying bias, and using AI responsibly • Students may analyze or design AI-supported solutions in advanced coursework

Administrative Oversight and Risk Management

Tool Approval and Use

All instructional technology tools, including those with AI or AI-enhanced features, must be formally reviewed and approved prior to use in the district. The approval process is designed to ensure that all tools meet district standards for student data privacy, security, and confidentiality, in compliance with applicable state and federal laws. In addition, tools are evaluated for educational appropriateness, usability, and alignment to instructional goals, as well as their potential impact on student learning experiences.

A key component of the review process includes consideration of bias, fairness, and transparency, particularly for tools that generate content, provide recommendations, or influence instructional decisions. The district seeks to ensure that tools support equitable access and do not introduce or reinforce unintended bias in student learning environments.

Tool evaluation and approval are conducted through a structured review process led by district administrators, with input from instructional leaders and relevant stakeholders. When appropriate, the district's IT Committee is engaged to provide additional technical review and guidance. This collaborative review structure ensures that technology decisions are made thoughtfully, balancing innovation with responsibility, safety, and alignment to district values.

Tool Oversight & Review Process

AI implementation in the district is treated as a continuous cycle of monitoring, review, and refinement rather than a one-time approval. The district establishes clear procedures for monitoring how approved tools are used, reviewing concerns or emerging issues, updating approval decisions, identifying implementation gaps, and refining guidance over time.

This ongoing review includes formal oversight in which AI Coordinator(s), supervisors, administrators, and staff periodically evaluate how AI-related activities are being implemented to ensure alignment with this Policy and the district's AI Plan. The process also incorporates opportunities for staff feedback and regular reconsideration of what is effective, what requires clarification, and what may need adjustment.

All AI use remains subject to meaningful human oversight and accountability; while AI may support tasks, it does not replace human decision-making in areas requiring professional judgment, fairness, instructional expertise, privacy, or the protection of student rights. District staff are responsible for reviewing AI-generated outputs before use, confirming their accuracy and

appropriateness, applying professional judgment, safeguarding student interests and district values, and ensuring compliance with district expectations and applicable laws and policies. Approval of any AI tool does not eliminate the requirement for human review.

Approved AI Tools

Tool	Approved Use	Key Considerations
Brisk Teaching (Grades 6–12)	Teacher-supported instructional use; limited student-facing AI activities	Student data is processed through secure systems and is not used to train public AI models. Use is restricted to educator-directed instructional tasks.
Google Gemini (Google Workspace for Education)	Teacher and student use (Grades 6–12, per district access settings)	Protected under Google Workspace for Education terms. Student data is not used to train public models. Access and features are managed by district administrators.
NotebookLM (Google Workspace for Education)	Research, summarization, and study support (Grades 6–12)	Operates within Google's education environment with similar privacy protections. Designed to support learning through source-based synthesis.

Other district-approved instructional tools may include embedded AI features and can be located on our district site : Digital Learning Portal

Academic Accountability

Academic Integrity Concerns

Educators are encouraged to communicate clear expectations about AI use to students proactively to avoid academic integrity violations. Educators and students should refer to the guidelines on pages 11 and 12 of this plan. Misuse of AI, including representing AI-generated work as your own, may be addressed through existing instructional, school, or district processes where appropriate.

Citation, Disclosure, and Documentation of AI Use

Transparency in the use of AI is an important part of academic integrity and responsible digital citizenship. Students are expected to acknowledge when and how AI tools are used in their learning, in ways that are appropriate to the task, grade level, and teacher expectations.

The format for disclosure may vary depending on the nature and extent of AI use. In some cases—such as brainstorming ideas, organizing thoughts, or summarizing notes—a brief disclosure statement may be sufficient. In other cases, particularly when AI is used to generate or significantly shape written or creative work, a more formal citation or documentation may be required.

Teachers will provide specific expectations for when and how AI use must be disclosed, and students are expected to follow those guidelines consistently.

Student Disclosure Expectations

When disclosure is required, students should clearly and honestly identify their use of AI. Depending on the assignment and grade level, disclosure may include:

- the name of the AI tool used
- the purpose of its use (e.g., brainstorming, editing, summarizing, drafting support)
- the type of prompt or prompt strategy used (when appropriate)
- the portion of the assignment influenced by AI
- student revisions, edits, or evaluation of AI-generated content

In some cases, students may also be asked to submit supporting evidence of their process, such as prompts, screenshots, annotations, or short reflections, as directed by the teacher.

Documentation and Citation Expectations

The expectation for documenting AI use will vary based on:

- grade level
- assignment type and complexity
- the extent to which AI use is permitted
- course-specific or disciplinary citation practices

The teacher will provide guidance and examples to support students. Teachers will determine whether AI use must be cited and the appropriate method for doing so within their instructional context.

Suspected or Confirmed Misuse

If teachers suspect or confirm misuse of AI tools leading to an academic integrity violation, follow the procedures outlined in the school's Student Handbook/Code of Conduct.

Things to consider when making a claim of misuse include:

- How did the teacher/staff member discover the violation?
- What is the evidence?
- Have they spoken with the student? What is an age-appropriate response?
- Does the child understand what cheating is?
- Have there been previous violations?

AI and Grading

While AI tools can offer valuable assistance in the educational process, the district maintains that certified teachers must conduct all formal grading. AI can be leveraged to provide initial feedback and support formative assessments, which may inform a teacher's evaluation of student learning, help streamline the grading process, and offer students preliminary insights. However, the final review and assignment of grades for all summative assessments and official records must be performed by qualified educators. This ensures that grading decisions are made fully considering context, individual student needs, and the nuanced understanding only human teachers can provide.

A Note on AI Detectors

The Mountain Lakes School District does not endorse the use of commercial AI detectors as the sole means of determining academic dishonesty. These tools are unreliable and can produce both false positives and false negatives. Instead of relying solely on these detectors, we encourage teachers to foster a culture of academic integrity through open discussions about appropriate AI use, clear guidelines for assignments, and the development of critical thinking skills that showcase students' original thought processes.

Plan Note

This AI Plan is a living document that will evolve alongside technological advancements and growing insights. Through continuous learning and dialogue, the Mountain Lakes School District AI plan can remain current, ethical, and aligned with the District's educational goals. This approach allows for harnessing AI's potential while upholding a commitment to excellence and integrity in education.