Shaping the District's Vision for Artificial Intelligence (AI)

April 2025

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Message from Dr. Hill

Dear Families, Staff, Partners, and Friends,

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is committed to preparing our students for success in a rapidly evolving digital world. As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to shape industries, communication, and learning, we recognized the importance of developing a vision for AI in education that reflects the voices of our entire community.

Earlier this year, we embarked on a bold journey to engage thousands of families, educators, and community members in shaping our district's approach to AI. The response was extraordinary. More than 10,000 individuals shared their perspectives through surveys, focus groups, and interviews, providing invaluable insights into how AI can support students, enhance learning, and streamline school and district operations while ensuring safe, ethical, and responsible use.

Your input has been informative and invaluable. From expressing excitement about AI's potential for personalized learning to voicing concerns about academic integrity and data privacy, your input will help us craft an AI vision statement and guiding principles that balance innovation with responsibility.

This report summarizes what we heard from you – your hopes, your concerns, and your ideas. It outlines key themes, from the importance of AI literacy for students and staff to the need for clear policies and ongoing professional learning.

We want to continue taking time to develop a thoughtful vision, which we are excited to complete and share in July.

We are deeply grateful for the time, energy, and thoughtfulness our community brought to this effort. This process reaffirmed that when we work together, we build stronger, more student-centered solutions.

As we move forward, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools remains committed to ongoing engagement and collaboration. AI will continue to evolve, and so will our approach. We invite you to stay connected, provide feedback, and partner with us in shaping a future where AI serves as a tool for empowerment and excellence.

Thank you for your engagement, your voice, and your trust in CMS. Together, we are setting a bold and responsible course for AI in education.

In service and partnership,

Dr. Crystal L. Hill
Superintendent

Community Engagement Summary

Experiences and Perceptions

High Engagement

The Community Survey gathered input from more than 10,000 individuals. There is significant interest in AI across the CMS community, and leaders recognize a range of existing applications of AI within the district, both for personal use and work-related tasks. For example, staff are already using AI: 44% say they have used AI at work, including majorities of teachers who teach middle and high school grades, and over 60% of school administrators.

Accelerating AI Adoption

Many stakeholders expressed enthusiasm for AI's potential. Majorities of survey respondents said they use at least some kind of AI tools all the time or often. While 79% of respondents have used AI at home and 49% at work, usage for education remains lower. "It is here" was a common sentiment, reflecting a perception that use of AI is a part of reality whether the district actively engages with AI or not. Leaders are committed to a proactive approach, recognizing the national momentum toward widespread use.

Thoughtful, Incremental Approach

A plurality of survey respondents (36%) said the best path forward is with thoughtful, incremental implementation of AI. One-third said they are unsure or have mixed feelings about the direction AI in education should take. Much smaller percentages want bold change or no change. The most common feelings about AI were *curiosity* and *concern*, and many survey respondents said they were both curious *and* concerned. While curiosity and concern about AI exist across all educator roles, school-level educators tend to be less optimistic and more skeptical about its impact compared to district-level educators.

Need for Responsible Use

As exploration moves forward, stakeholders also acknowledge key risks. The biggest concerns among families were AI's impact on human connection and interpersonal skills as well as academic integrity – 59% expressed strong concern about both issues. Among staff, academic integrity is the top concern, especially for high school teachers.
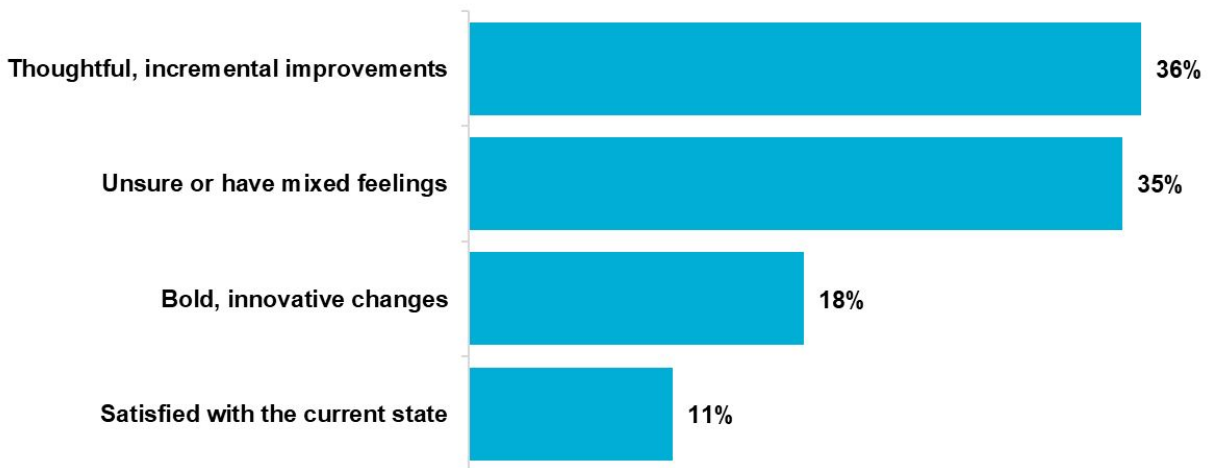
Community Engagement Summary

Experiences and Perceptions

Most Common Feelings About AI

Curious
Concerned
Conflicted
Skeptical
Uncertain
Fascinated
Hopeful

Opinions on AI Use in Education

Opinion	Percentage
Thoughtful, incremental improvements	36%
Unsure or have mixed feelings	35%
Bold, innovative changes	18%
Satisfied with the current state	11%

Community Engagement Summary

Experiences and Perceptions

AI Types Used "All the Time" or "Often"

Predictive AI	67%
Conversational AI	59%
Generative AI	41%

Where AI is Used

Home	79%
Work	49%
School	17%
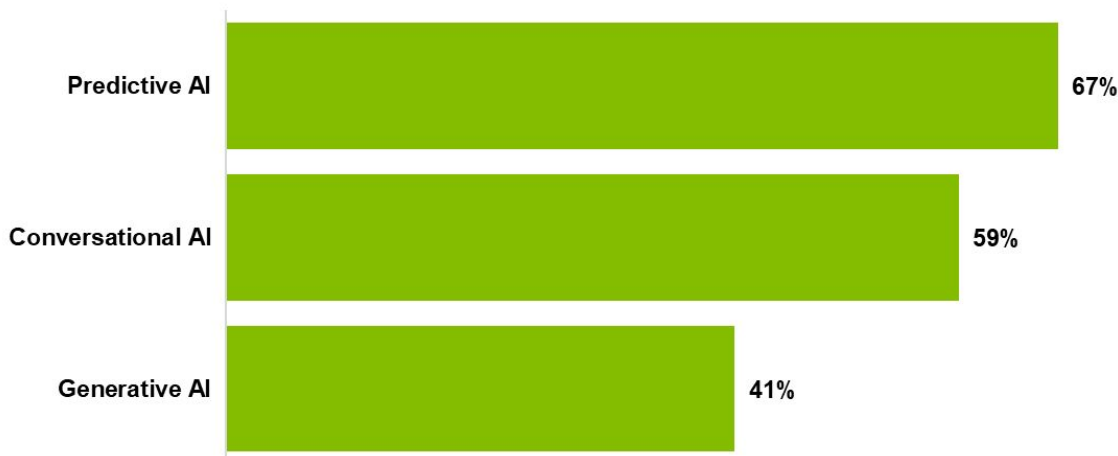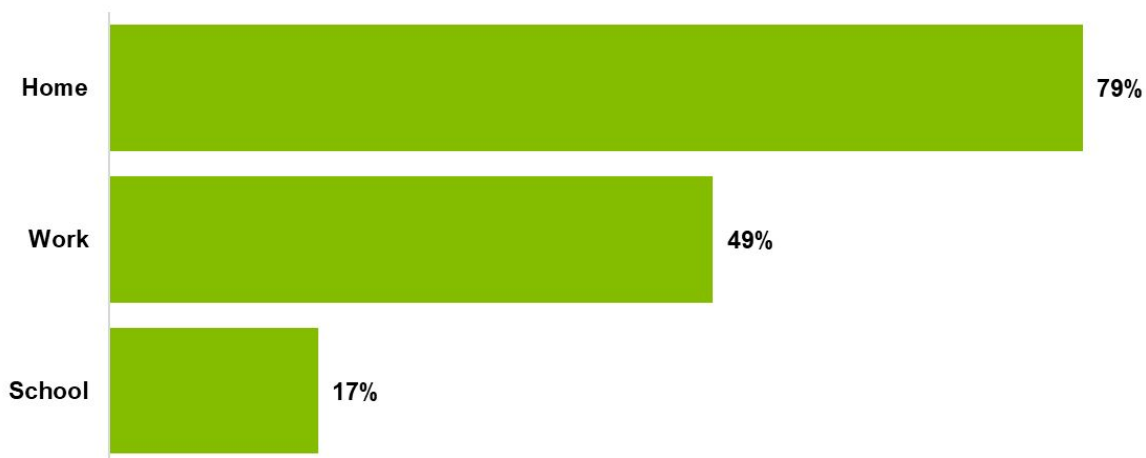
Community Engagement Summary

Experiences and Perceptions

"AI-powered tools can support diverse learning styles, assist students with disabilities, and bridge language barriers. However, challenges like data privacy, potential bias, and over-reliance on technology must be addressed. Ultimately, AI should complement teachers, not replace them, ensuring a balanced and human-centered approach to education."

"In general, anything that increases student dependence on technology in the general curriculum is a hard no for me."

"AI can't be ignored, it's here and it's blowing up. Familiarity leads to more understanding... So the concerns are very real, and we have to address them mindfully. AI is here to stay though, and ignoring it in the education system is doing our kids a disservice because they will likely learn how to use the tools themselves and then start using AI without full transparency of using AI because they feel confused, ashamed, or 'in trouble' if they get caught."

"Technology is the future and the kids are using it. It makes sense to cultivate it in their learning. It may make them more excited about learning."

Community Engagement Summary

Input on Use of AI in CMS

Need for Policy and Guidance

A strong emphasis was placed on developing AI policies and comprehensive usage guidelines for staff and students to ensure effective, safe, and ethical use. The majority of survey respondents believe students should be allowed to use AI for checking work, explaining concepts, supporting research, and brainstorming ideas, but they also support clear guidelines to ensure responsible use. Some stakeholders emphasized that the knowledge and skills students are expected to master should determine which AI uses are allowable for assignments.

AI Literacy and Curriculum Integration

There is strong support for teaching students how AI works, addressing ethical considerations, building AI literacy, and understanding AI's role in careers. Some community members described AI as a transformational tool, similar to how calculators changed math education in ways that are now widely accepted. While the vast majority of families support teaching AI in schools, fewer than 10% believe AI should not be included in student learning. A student representative shared that many students already use AI to explain difficult concepts, provide study aids, and simulate conversations. Examples of common uses include SAT preparation, AI-generated flashcards, and research assistance.

Operational Efficiencies

The majority of respondents support AI use in districts for a variety of purposes, including exploring student interests, providing homework help, personalizing lessons, advising student scheduling, automating administrative tasks, and improving parent communication and customer service. Some stakeholders see administrative and operational uses as lower-risk, high-impact starting points. Teachers and principals value AI as a tool that saves time, automates tasks, and reduces workload, allowing them to focus more on direct student support.
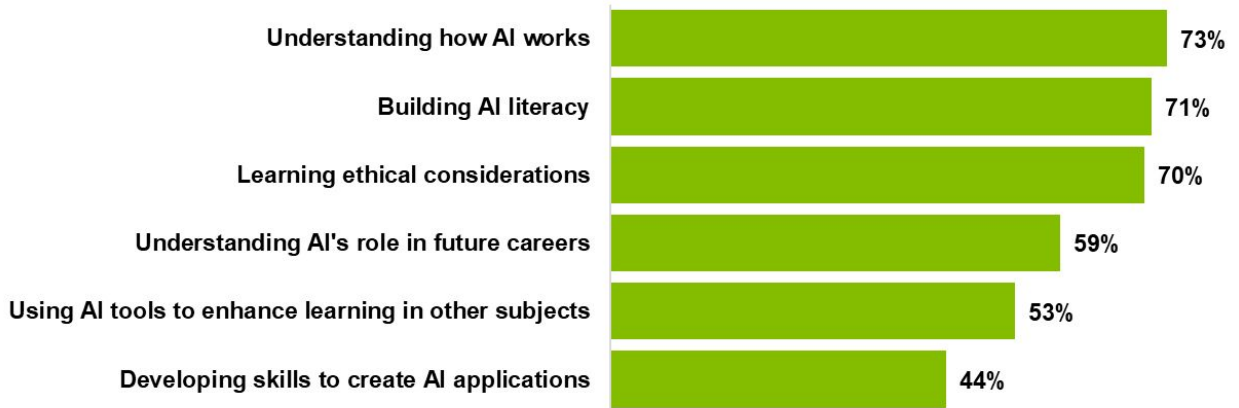
Enhance, Not Replace

Stakeholders broadly agree that AI should enhance learning, teaching, and operations, but not replace teachers, genuine learning, or human decision-making. 50% of survey respondents said students should not be able to use AI to *create content*.
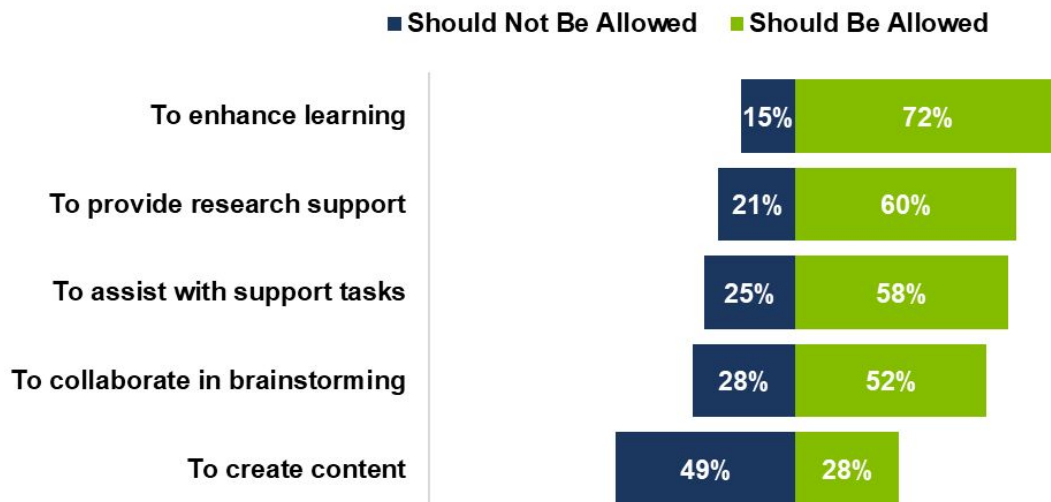
Community Engagement Summary

Input on Use of AI in CMS

Topics Students Should Learn

Topic	Percentage
Understanding how AI works	73%
Building AI literacy	71%
Learning ethical considerations	70%
Understanding AI's role in future careers	59%
Using AI tools to enhance learning in other subjects	53%
Developing skills to create AI applications	44%

Allowable or Unallowable?

■ Should Not Be Allowed   ■ Should Be Allowed

Use	Should Not Be Allowed	Should Be Allowed
To enhance learning	15%	72%
To provide research support	21%	60%
To assist with support tasks	25%	58%
To collaborate in brainstorming	28%	52%
To create content	49%	28%

Community Engagement Summary

Input on Use of AI in CMS

Concerns About AI

Equity of access to AI tools and resources
Transparency about how AI is used
Bias and fairness in AI algorithms
Overreliance on technology
Impact on human connection or interpersonal…
Data privacy and protection
Accuracy of information provided by AI
Academic dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Little or none ■ Some ■ A lot
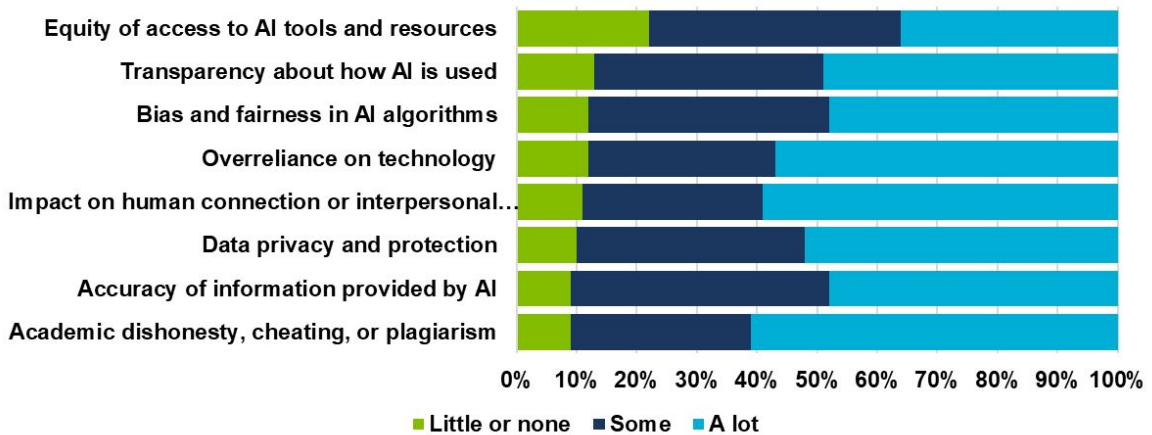
AI Uses CMS Should Explore

■ Should Not Explore   ■ Should Explore

	Should Not Explore	Should Explore
Automating Administrative Tasks	15%	66%
Course Advising	17%	62%
Personalized Lessons	18%	62%
Exploring Student Interests	18%	62%
Homework Help	25%	57%
Parent Communication	25%	53%
Customer Service Support	28%	50%
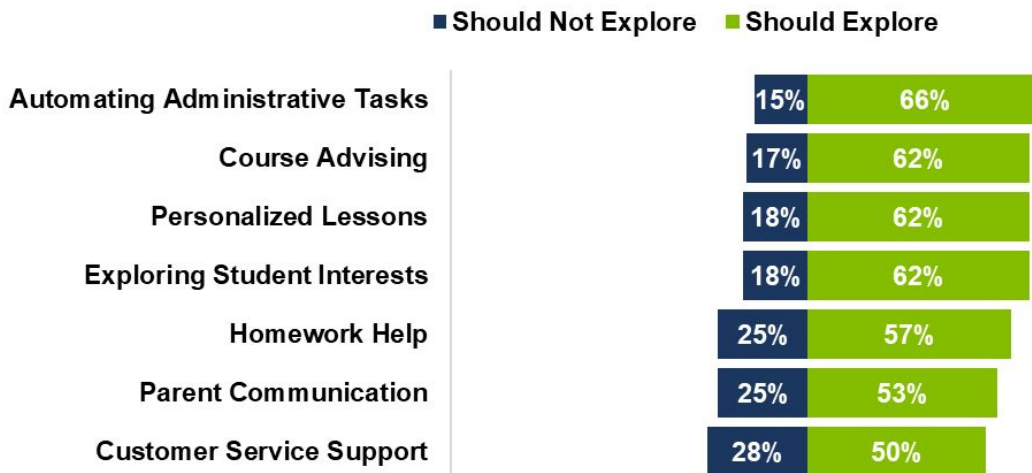
Community Engagement Summary

Input on Use of AI in CMS

"It could improve the way students and teachers learn and gain feedback, in moderation of course, as well as be an aid to students who may have learning/speech disabilities or non-English speaking students."

"Students need to understand how to use AI, when to trust it, when not to trust it, and the risks and benefits of it. They need to learn how to use it to help them accomplish more."

"AI is creating a moment in time that will shift human productivity and capability moving forward. This new market will create winners and losers, and provides an immense opportunity for those who know how to use the technology. Giving CMS students knowledge and access to supervised AI will unlock keys to generational wealth that give students opportunities that they have never had access to before. Students who are AI proficient will be able to come out ahead of their peers across the globe and prepare them for a successful life after CMS."

"I don't think students should use AI. There are so many valuable things students need to learn without a computer or AI. I believe AI hinders development of higher level thinking skills and emotional intelligence."

Community Engagement Summary

Professional Learning and Engagement

Professional Learning and Training

Leaders emphasized the need for adequate training to help staff understand AI's capabilities, limitations, and ethical implications for effective use in both academic and operational settings. While educators are most familiar with AI for personal use, they have significantly less exposure to its professional applications. There is strong interest in professional learning, with 66% of staff reporting they are very or somewhat interested in AI training. More than half expressed a preference for in-person workshops and virtual sessions, while Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were less desired. Given the varying levels of AI readiness and literacy among staff, ongoing communication and structured professional learning opportunities will be essential to ensure effective AI implementation.
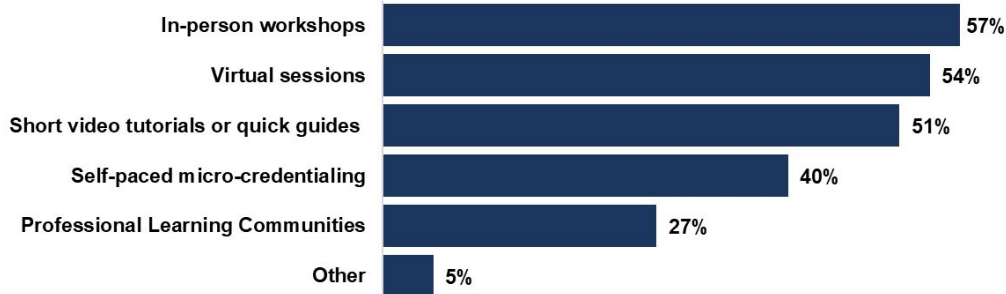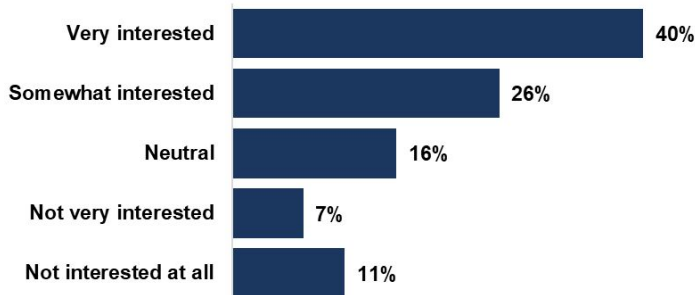
Ongoing Community Engagement

The high interest in the topic of AI demonstrated throughout the community engagement process was often coupled with explicit interest in remaining informed and/or involved in the district's planning and implementation related to AI. Regarding informational updates, emails and ParentSquare messages were by far the most preferred methods of communication.
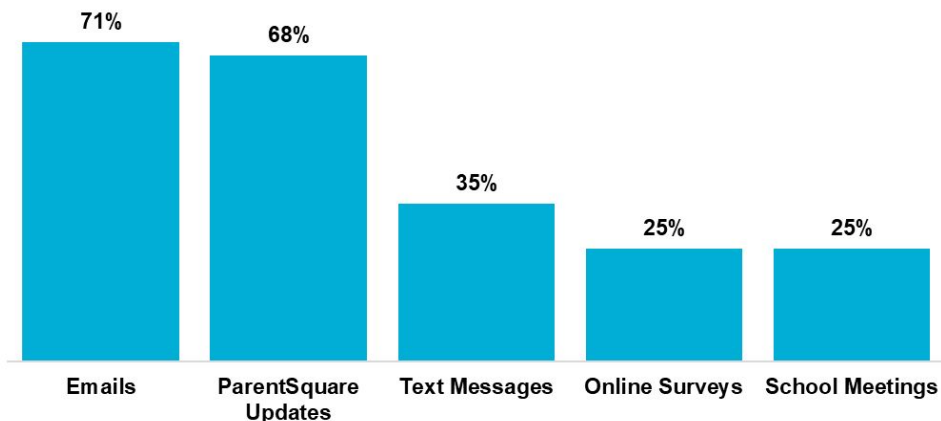
Community Engagement Summary

Professional Learning and Engagement

Staff Interest in AI Professional Learning

Very interested	40%
Somewhat interested	26%
Neutral	16%
Not very interested	7%
Not interested at all	11%

In-person workshops	57%
Virtual sessions	54%
Short video tutorials or quick guides	51%
Self-paced micro-credentialing	40%
Professional Learning Communities	27%
Other	5%

Preferred Ways to Stay Informed

Emails	ParentSquare Updates	Text Messages	Online Surveys	School Meetings
71%	68%	35%	25%	25%

Community Engagement Summary

Professional Learning and Engagement

"Y'all need to put more resources and focus on what this can do for students and staff. This seems a good signal of the district's interest and efforts, but I encourage you to magnify the focus and implement major support (you don't need to replace what's working, and can just augment it) by the end of this school year!"

"There is a knowledge gap in teacher vs. student of AI. With a population of teachers who did not learn about AI, professional development is needed."

"Would love to be informed regarding policies going forward – especially so that we can help our children to navigate what they should or shouldn't use AI for when it comes to schoolwork."

"Keeping the parents informed on AI usage and what models are being used in the school system are of utmost importance."

"Before any AI policies are introduced, teachers need to be able to provide input on how they will impact their interactions with students. If we are to use it as an instructional tool IN the classroom, we need to progress slowly with lots of support along the way."

Next Steps

April 2025: Progress Update and Themes from Community Input

CMS will share themes and data gathered from stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and interviews on Artificial Intelligence in education. This report – which summarizes input around experiences and perceptions of AI, how AI should be used in CMS, and professional learning and engagement – will be posted at **http://www.cmsk12.org/ai**. CMS will also send a progress update to all families and employees on this project to develop a vision and guiding principles for the use of Artificial Intelligence in the district.

May 2025: Data Privacy Summit

In May 2025, CMS district leaders will participate in the second annual CMS Data Privacy Summit. This event marks a milestone in the AI vision-setting project. During this half-day event, leaders will review insights gathered from stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and interviews to build shared understanding, foster collaboration, and inform their review of drafts of the district's AI Vision and Guiding Principles.

June 2025: Summer Leadership Conference

In June 2025, CMS will present the final AI Vision and Guiding Principles to all district and school leaders at the annual Summer Leadership Conference. The SLC is an annual professional development event that brings together school and district administrators, along with community leaders, to focus on leadership and innovation.

July 2025: Public Release of AI Vision and Guiding Principles

Following the Summer Leadership Conference, CMS will publicly release the new AI Vision and Guiding Principles to all students, families, employees, and community members. The Guiding Principles will connect to each of the district's four pillars of excellence – Academics, People, Operations, and Engagement. Together, the AI Vision and Guiding Principles will drive future next steps related to AI implementation.