



FUTURE-PROOFING K-12 COMMUNICATIONS

School PR Strategies in the Age of AI



NSPRA members share their insights into
the state of AI in school communications



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As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly embedded in the tools and tasks of school communication, public relations professionals are often leading the charge—experimenting with new platforms, streamlining workflows, and exploring creative possibilities. But many are doing so without the benefit of clear policies, training, or ethical frameworks to guide their work.

This joint report from the **National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)** and ThoughtExchange shares insights from 200 NSPRA members across the country about how AI is currently being used in school PR—and what challenges still need to be addressed.

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE

91% of respondents are already using AI tools in their communications work.

69% report that their districts do not have a formal policy addressing employee AI use.

61% say they do not disclose their use of AI in official communications.

The data tells a compelling story: While school communicators are adopting AI at a rapid pace, many districts have yet to establish the structures, supports, or guardrails needed to ensure its ethical and strategic use.

At NSPRA, we believe that AI can be a powerful support for school communicators, but it cannot replace the strategy, relationships, and human voice that define effective school PR. As more districts explore these tools, we advocate for a thoughtful, inclusive approach grounded in **ethics, transparency, trust, and clarity**.

We hope this report sparks important conversations that center the needs of school PR professionals and strengthen the future of school communication.

Sincerely,

BARBARA M. HUNTER, APR, Executive Director, NSPRA



Artificial Intelligence (AI) increasingly influences how school districts communicate with their communities—through emails, social media posts, newsletters, press releases, and communication plans. Despite its growing presence, there is often limited clarity about AI usage, how it shapes messaging, and what effects it may have on clarity, trust, and engagement.

The April 2025 executive order, [Advancing Artificial Intelligence Education for American Youth](#), has accelerated AI adoption across the K-12 education system. It calls for integrating AI not only in classrooms but also in district operations, establishing a federal task force to explore how AI can streamline administrative tasks and enhance school functions.

As AI becomes more embedded in district workflows, the need for clear, districtwide policies to guide responsible use has become increasingly urgent.

While many school districts have taken steps to guide the use of AI in the classroom, most have not extended that same level of oversight to central office operations. This has left school communications professionals navigating AI adoption without consistent guidance on when, how, or why to use these tools in their work.

To better understand the current landscape, ThoughtExchange collaborated with the National School Public Relations Association ([NSPRA](#)) to explore how school communicators engage with AI, their concerns, and how districts support—or fail to support—thoughtful integration.

Together, we surveyed NSPRA members working in K-12 districts nationwide. Their insights reveal a clear gap between the widespread use of AI in school public relations and the lack of district policies and professional development to support that use.



Look for these tips and considerations throughout the report to help school communicators and district leaders continue to communicate thoughtfully, build trust, and work smarter as they navigate AI in the workplace.

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Survey and analysis methodology

This report's findings are based on a comprehensive survey of NSPRA members, garnering 200 responses (7% of total membership) and 168 completed surveys (84% completion rate). Data collection used the [ThoughtExchange platform](#), enabling the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative insights.

The survey included an Exchange that asked, "What AI strategies have you used—or seen used—effectively in school communications?" facilitating qualitative responses and allowing participants to rate one another's responses on a scale of 1-5.

Quantitative analysis employed ThoughtExchange's survey comparison analytics to identify key favorability scores. Furthermore, Advisor, the platform's generative AI analysis tool, was instrumental in processing and interpreting members' qualitative feedback, cross-analyzing with quantitative data, and providing detailed analysis and actionable recommendations.

AI Analysis timeline

Advisor facilitated the analysis of 618 qualitative responses (comment box, Exchange responses) and 2,127 quantitative responses (single and multiple select,

Likert scale). Analysis was conducted on qualitative and quantitative response groups as well as cross-analysis of all responses.

Advisor generated a total of 20 analysis reports, which were used to inform the sections of this report. The average time each analysis took was 13.46 seconds to summarize and theme all qualitative data collected, and 14.83 seconds to summarize and theme all quantitative data collected. Comparison charts cross-analyzing two quantitative survey questions were generated in <1 second each. The total time AI spent on data analysis of 2,745 survey question responses in the ThoughtExchange platform was <5 minutes.

AI USAGE DISCLOSURE: This report was created with assistance from ThoughtExchange's AI analysis tool, Advisor. The AI-generated content has been reviewed and edited by a human. For more information on the extent and nature of AI usage, please contact ThoughtExchange.com.



The state of AI in school communications

The majority of the NSPRA members surveyed represent seasoned professionals in school public relations, with 68% having five or more years of experience, and the majority working in pre-K/K-12 districts across 37 states.

TITLE BY YEARS IN JOB/EMPLOYER

JOB TITLE	PARTICIPANT %	YEARS IN JOB					EMPLOYER		
		1 YEAR	2-4 YEARS	5-10 YEARS	11-15 YEARS	15+ YEARS	BOCES, ETC	PRE-K/ K-12	K-8 DISTRICT
Chief Communications Officer	10%	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	40.0%	< 5*	90.0%	< 5*
Director of Communications/ Public Information/ Community Relations	55%	< 5*	22.4%	34.6%	15.0%	25.2%	< 5*	82.2%	< 5*
Public Information Officer	6%	< 5*	< 5*	41.7%	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	75%	< 5*
Communications Specialist	21%	< 5*	50.0%	20.0%	12.5%	< 5*	20.0%	57.5%	12.5%
Other	8%	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*

*Answers with less than 5 responses are hidden to protect anonymity.

AI TOOL ADOPTION AND USAGE

Participants showed a strong inclination towards innovation, with 89% identifying as early adopters or early majority users of AI tools. Almost all participants reported using AI tools in their work—with only 1% reporting not using any AI. Generative AI tools are the most popular, followed by assistive AI, conversational AI, and automation/workflow AI tools. A significant number of participants, 70%, use AI daily, while 27% reported weekly use.

Types of AI tools in use



ASSISTIVE AI

Tools that help reword sentences or improve accessibility



AUTOMATION/WORKFLOW AI

Tools that automate scheduling, email responses, or reminders



COMPUTER VISION

Tools that analyze images or video, like facial recognition



CONVERSATIONAL AI

Tools that power chat-bots or voice assistants



GENERATIVE AI

Tools that create text, images, or video from prompts



PREDICTIVE AI

Tools that forecast enrollment or engagement based on data trends

FREQUENCY VS. TYPES OF AI TOOLS USED

HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU USE AI FOR WORK?	ASSISTIVE AI	AUTOMATION/WORKFLOW AI	COMPUTER VISION	CONVERSATIONAL AI	GENERATIVE AI	PREDICTIVE AI	HAVEN'T USED AI	OTHER
Several Times Per Day	25.6%	12.8%	6.7%	15.6%	30.6%	7.8%	< 5*	< 5*
Daily	25.9%	15.4%	7.0%	15.9%	30.8%	4.0%	< 5*	< 5*
Weekly	33.9%	10.1%	< 5*	11.0%	38.5%	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*
Monthly	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	38.5%	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*
Almost Never	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*

*Answers with less than 5 responses are hidden to protect anonymity.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Director of Communications/Public Information/Community Relations** roles show the strongest AI tool usage in their work, with an average of 58.5% usage across all six types of AI tools and 72% using AI tools daily.
- Among the seven states most represented in the survey, participants in three states—**Illinois, Ohio, and Washington—have the highest scores** for district receptiveness to AI tools in school communications.
- AI tool usage is high even in districts with **no policies or guidelines** on AI usage.

POLICY, TRAINING, AND DISCLOSURE GAPS

Despite high adoption and usage, the survey reveals a significant lag in formal policies and district training. A striking 69% of participants said their districts have no formal AI policies, and 64% reported receiving no training on the ethical use of AI from their districts. Although AI tools are used widely, 61% of all participants indicated their districts do not disclose their use of AI in school communications.

The survey also highlighted a clear correlation between the existence of formal policies and better practices. Participants from districts with a formal board policy on AI, informal guidance, or guidance as part of another policy were significantly more likely to indicate that their districts provided ethics training, involved stakeholders in discussions around AI use, and disclosed their use of AI. By contrast, participants from districts with no policy or those still in policy discussions indicated a lack of guidelines, training, and disclosure—despite their own use of AI at work.



SMART STRATEGIES FROM

nspra

Lead by example—even if there's no AI policy (yet).

In the absence of clear guidance, school communicators often lead the way. Even if your district hasn't set rules yet, you can set standards for yourself. Decide where AI is helpful—and where it's off-limits. Ask district leaders about expectations, model ethical use, and be transparent with them when AI is part of your work, whether brainstorming, drafting, or editing.

How school communicators are benefiting from AI tools

The NSPRA members we surveyed show high usage of AI tools in school communications. We identified the following as the most common use cases in school PR work.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Identifying key themes and summarizing open-ended survey responses, streamlining data synthesis and strategy development.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Crafting content, writing captions, and scheduling for social media posts.

CONTENT CREATION

Generating content for newsletters, articles, and scripts, creating first drafts, and ensuring professional tone and grammar.

PROOFREADING & EDITING

Refining written content by checking for grammar, conciseness, and overall readability, ensuring error-free communications.

BRAINSTORMING & IDEATION

Brainstorming ideas, generating headlines, and overcoming creative blocks.

TRANSLATION

Translating content to reach non-English speaking populations, although some participants prefer human verification for accuracy.

ACCESSIBILITY

Ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act by generating alt text, transcribing non-accessible formats, and improving readability.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Outlining and developing communication strategies, drafting plans, providing initial frameworks, and refining content for clarity.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Drafting and disseminating critical communications, allowing swift responses to stakeholders.

Concerns about using AI in school communications

AI tools are becoming increasingly common in school district communications, shaping everything from social media posts and newsletters to press releases and strategic plans. While these tools offer exciting opportunities to improve efficiency and reach, they also introduce new risks that can impact core communication values such as authenticity, trust, and community engagement.

School communicators recognize both the promise and the pitfalls of AI. The following section outlines the top concerns voiced by school communications professionals about AI's role in public relations—along with the fundamental values at stake when these risks are not carefully managed.

CONCERN

Risk of losing authenticity

Several participants expressed concerns that AI-generated content may lack the personal touch and authenticity that comes naturally from human-generated content. Responses indicate worries about AI making communication feel generic and impersonal.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Authenticity in communications is crucial, especially in an educational setting where trust and credibility are paramount. When AI-generated messages sound impersonal or generic, they can damage the district's reputation and trustworthiness.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Ensuring that communications retain a personal and authentic touch can help maintain and build the trust between school administrators, staff, parents, and students. This ultimately fosters a more engaged and supportive community.

CONCERN

Ethical implications

Participants raised concerns about the ethical implications of using AI, including plagiarism, data security, and privacy.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Ethical considerations are vital to maintaining integrity within educational communications. Issues like plagiarism and data privacy breaches can lead to significant repercussions, including legal challenges, loss of stakeholder trust, and long-term damage to institutional reputation.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Upholding ethical standards ensures that the institution operates within legal frameworks and builds a trustworthy relationship with its community. Ensuring AI tools have robust cybersecurity measures is crucial to preventing data breaches that could expose sensitive student and staff information for misuse and exploitation.



SMART STRATEGIES FROM

nspra

Use AI to enhance—not replace—your voice.

AI can help you move faster, but it shouldn't come at the cost of clarity, authenticity, or accessibility. Keep messages rooted in your district's tone, values, and what your community needs to hear from you. Human judgment, local context, and a clear, inclusive voice still matter most.

CONCERN

AI making errors

Participants highlighted that AI can make mistakes, such as providing incorrect information, missing context nuances, or creating inaccurate summaries that need thorough reviewing and editing. Mistakes like these are known as “AI hallucinations.”

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Accuracy in school communications is essential to prevent misinformation, maintain credibility, and make effective decisions. Mistakes in communications can lead to confusion, misinterpretation, and potentially severe consequences for students and staff.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Ensuring accuracy in communications helps build trust and reliance on the information shared by schools. It reinforces the integrity and reliability of the institution's communications, thereby supporting effective educational management.

CONCERN

Overreliance on AI

A significant concern among participants is the overreliance on AI for crafting messages, which could deteriorate their own skills and creativity.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

It is important for school communicators to maintain their creativity and writing skills. Overreliance on AI might diminish personal capabilities, making individuals less competent over time—especially when they need to generate original content without AI assistance.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Maintaining and developing personal skills ensures that communicators can produce high-quality, creative, and effective content independently. This upholds the profession's standards and contributes to the long-term growth and adaptability of individuals within the communication department.

CONCERN

Data privacy

Many participants expressed concerns about how data shared with AI tools is stored and used, particularly sensitive and personally identifiable information (PII).

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Data privacy is a major concern in schools where regulatory requirements mandate strict protocols for handling student information. Improper handling of sensitive data can lead to legal issues and loss of trust from parents and the community.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Ensuring robust data privacy measures builds trust and reassures parents and the community that their information is secure. This also helps in compliance with legal standards, thus avoiding potential lawsuits and reputational damage.



SMART STRATEGIES FROM

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Set clear editing and approval steps.

Define who reviews AI-generated drafts and make AI use part of your content approval process. A quick check will help prevent unvetted messages from going public.

Spotlight on data privacy concerns

In the K-12 education sphere, districts handle a lot of sensitive data. Student PII data, in particular, requires districts to ensure that any tools they use are compliant with legislation that protects minors' data, including the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, the **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**, and the **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)**.

With a majority of their districts operating without AI usage policies, participants expressed several data privacy concerns related to the use of AI in school communications.

A primary concern regarding AI tool usage is the potential exposure of sensitive student data. Participants are particularly wary of using AI with student names to mitigate privacy breaches. This ties into concerns about the accuracy and reliability of AI, as there's a strong emphasis on human oversight to verify any AI-generated

information. The fear is that inaccurate AI output, particularly when dealing with personal or sensitive data, could have serious implications for the district. Participants dealing with less tech-savvy administrators also face worries that integrating AI tools might lead to data misuse or exposure to external threats.

Given these concerns and the lack of district AI policies that guide its usage by employees, school communications professionals feel responsible for ensuring data safety themselves. Participants report often reviewing AI-generated content meticulously to ensure that no sensitive information is unintentionally exposed and that all data is accurate and secure. This reflects an underlying need for better district-level AI data privacy practices and reassurances regarding the safety and reliability of AI tools in handling sensitive information.

Leadership attitudes toward employee use of AI tools

As tools like ChatGPT grow in popularity in the United States, K-12 education has grappled with what they mean for schools. While some district administrators have opened their arms to AI, others have created roadblocks, even banning its usage completely. Below, we examine two groups of participants: one whose leadership has been receptive to AI tools and another whose leadership has resisted adopting AI in their schools.

AI POLICY STATUS VS. DISTRICT RECEPTIVITY

DISTRICT RECEPTIVITY	AI POLICY STATUS				
	YES - A FORMAL BOARD POLICY	YES - INFORMAL PRACTICES	YES - INCLUDED AS PART OF ANOTHER POLICY	CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION	NO POLICIES THAT I KNOW OF
1 - Very resistant	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*
2	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*
3	< 5*	< 5*	< 5*	45.0%	42.5%
4	< 5*	23.2%	8.9%	26.8%	33.9%
5 - Very receptive	14.1%	15.5%	7.0%	21.1%	42.3%

*Answers with less than 5 responses are hidden to protect anonymity.



RECEPTIVE DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

“Our school district has been very proactive when it comes to AI, even hiring an integration specialist to work with our students and staff members and stay in front of potential problems that could arise. Additionally, we are willing to test new AI-related products ahead of other districts.” **–SURVEY RESPONDENT**

Participants who indicated their district leadership was receptive and supportive of integrating AI into school communications shared the following observations:

Support from the superintendent and leadership teams

- The superintendent often leads by example, actively using AI tools and encouraging others to do the same. One participant mentioned that their Superintendent attended AI forums with middle school principals and presented at meetings to model AI usage for certain tasks.
- Leadership teams, including directors and assistant superintendents, have spearheaded initiatives to integrate AI, such as creating roles focused explicitly on instructional innovation and forming AI task forces.

Collaboration with the technology department

As several participants mentioned, technology departments play a vital role, cheering on AI integration. These departments often lead training sessions and provide technical support for AI tools.

Professional development and training

District leaders ensure staff receive training on the effective use of AI tools, often funding subscriptions to AI software and organizing professional development sessions. Some districts have specialists dedicated to AI integration, offering continuous support.

Policy development and implementation

Several districts have established or are in the process of creating formal AI policies. Leadership’s involvement includes forming committees to review AI tools and developing guidelines to prioritize ethical use and data security.

EXAMPLE THOUGHTS

“Our superintendent leads the way. She and I attended some early AI forums arranged by our county Ed office.”

“Our technology department has been a big cheerleader for integrating AI into our work.”

“We receive training on how best to use AI to improve our workflow, and the district pays for the use of AI tools.”



RESISTANT DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

“Lack of buy-in from teachers. They don’t understand how much it can positively impact their work. They see it as a tool for students to cheat, mostly.” –SURVEY RESPONDENT

Participants whose district leadership is resistant and whose districts have no policies around AI usage identified several reasons why:

Lack of understanding and fear of AI misuse

Many teachers and administrators do not fully grasp the potential benefits of AI, leading to a lack of buy-in. Participants mentioned that educators often see AI as a tool for students to cheat rather than a resource that could streamline their work.

Concerns about data privacy and security

There is significant concern about exposing sensitive information and data security. Administrators who are less familiar with technology worry that AI could misuse or expose data, leading to a cautious approach to its integration.

Lack of training and time for discussion

Resistance is also due to insufficient training on AI tools and a lack of comprehensive discussions within districts. Administrators and educators are hesitant to integrate AI technologies that they are not adequately trained to use or do not fully understand.

General hesitancy to change

Some districts generally hesitate to adopt new technologies, preferring to move cautiously and only after thorough consideration and policy development.

This slow approach to change exacerbates the resistance to AI integration.

EXAMPLE THOUGHTS

“There is a lot of concern from some administrators who are not as tech-savvy that we may be exposing data or information that could be misused.”

“The previous notion that student use of AI is cheating—AI has to overcome some negative thinking around it.”

“My district tends to be very slow to change.”



SMART STRATEGIES FROM

nspra

Use disclaimers to build trust.

A simple disclaimer on newsletters, websites, or social posts shows you’re using AI responsibly and helps maintain credibility. For example:

“To increase efficiency, our communications team occasionally uses AI tools for tasks like proofreading or translation. All content is reviewed by a staff member before being shared.”

Roadblocks to AI policy adoption

Participants from districts without AI policies highlighted several key concerns and challenges that seemed to be holding up the process. These insights reveal underlying systemic issues that must be addressed to integrate AI effectively into the district's operations.

ROADBLOCK

Lack of understanding of AI

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Without a thorough understanding of AI, staff may struggle to see its benefits and effectively use it. This gap in comprehension can hinder the district's ability to innovate and improve efficiency.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Creating educational programs and workshops can elevate the staff's expertise in AI, fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation. Enhanced understanding can lead to better implementation, maximizing AI's benefits.

ROADBLOCK

Slow policy development cycle

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

AI technology evolves rapidly, and slow policy development can result in regulations that are outdated and irrelevant by the time they are implemented. This lag can cause inefficiencies and potential misuse of AI.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Accelerating the policy development process ensures that AI usage is properly regulated, minimizing risks while maximizing potential advantages. Timely policies can provide a framework for the responsible and innovative use of AI, enhancing overall productivity.

ROADBLOCK

Reliance on external guidance

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Dependence on external entities such as state bodies or regional shared services groups for guidance means that the district may not act until directives are issued. This can lead to delays and a reactive rather than proactive stance regarding AI policy formation.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Developing internal capabilities to create and implement policies independently empowers districts to be more agile and responsive to technological changes. It can foster a proactive approach, ensuring that AI usage is well-regulated and beneficial.



Teach stakeholders what AI can and can't do.

Make efforts to build AI literacy across your district. Board members, administrators, and families may not understand how AI is being used. Share FAQs, hold briefings, or add context during meetings to explain how your district maintains professionalism, privacy, and human oversight.

ROADBLOCK

Disconnected policies

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Current policies tend to focus on student usage of AI, neglecting the needs and potential risks associated with employees using AI. This discrepancy can lead to a lack of direction and support for staff integrating AI into their workflow.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Expanding the policy focus to include employees ensures comprehensive coverage of AI usage, which can improve operational effectiveness and safeguard against potential misuse. A balanced approach supports both students and staff, fostering a more integrated and efficient system.



ROADBLOCK

Urgency-driven policy formation

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Policy formation driven by immediate issues rather than strategic planning can overlook significant areas such as AI, which might not seem urgent but are crucial for future growth and innovation. This short-term focus can result in missed opportunities and risks.

VALUE ASSOCIATED

Emphasizing proactive planning and strategic foresight in policy formation can ensure that critical technological advancements like AI are not ignored. This approach can create a more stable and forward-thinking environment, ready to leverage new tools for long-term benefits.



Align across departments.

Consider forming a cross-functional team—communications, IT, instruction, HR, and legal—to shape AI guidance. Getting all perspectives at the table early ensures your policy is realistic, responsible, and rooted in shared goals.

[More Resources](#)



Next steps for district leaders without an AI policy

As mentioned earlier, 69% of all participants indicated that their districts do not have a policy for employee AI usage. Specifically, 29% reported that their districts are currently discussing these policies, and 40% said no discussions were taking place.

Adopting AI tools is inevitable for most school districts. This survey found that AI tools are already widely used

among the school communications professionals who participated, despite the lack of official district-level policies or guidelines. Drawn from a combination of participant feedback and ThoughtExchange's [Playbook for Responsible Use of AI in Education](#), the following recommendations may help leadership see a path forward in ensuring AI use is ethical and responsible:

RECOMMENDATION

Enhance AI education and awareness

Participants feel there's a significant lack of understanding about the full potential of AI. This knowledge gap can impede AI's effective integration and utilization in their work.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Conduct workshops and training sessions to educate staff on the capabilities, benefits, and ethical considerations of AI.
- ✓ Develop and distribute comprehensive resources, such as guides and online courses, that explore various aspects of AI technology.
- ✓ Establish a mentorship program where tech-savvy employees can support and share their knowledge with colleagues less familiar or comfortable with AI.

RECOMMENDATION

Accelerate policy development cycle

School districts' slower pace of policy development is incompatible with the rapid evolution of AI technologies, leading to potentially outdated and ineffective regulations.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Establish an internal committee to create, oversee, and review AI policies that align with the district's specific needs and capabilities.
- ✓ Invest in professional development for staff involved in policy-making to build their expertise and confidence in drafting AI-related policies.
- ✓ Leverage technology platforms to facilitate collaborative policy drafting, allowing for quicker iterations and feedback.

RECOMMENDATION

Expand AI policy scope to include employees

Existing policies focus mainly on student usage of AI, neglecting the necessary guidelines for employees, which can lead to confusion and inconsistent practices.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Conduct a comprehensive review of existing AI policies, and identify areas where employee usage needs to be addressed.
- ✓ Create specific guidelines for employee use of AI, outlining permissible uses, ethical considerations, and best practices.
- ✓ Engage wider staff in the policy-making process to ensure that the new regulations adequately represent their needs and concerns.

RECOMMENDATION

Shift from urgency-driven to proactive policy formation

The tendency in some districts to form policies in response to immediate issues rather than long-term strategic planning can result in important areas like AI being overlooked.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ Implement strategic planning sessions to forecast future technological trends and identify areas needing proactive policies.
- ✓ Create a long-term vision and roadmap for AI integration within the district, setting clear milestones and goals.
- ✓ Allocate resources to regularly assess and prioritize emerging technologies, ensuring timely and forward-thinking policy formation.

A critical juncture for K-12 school communications

While school communications professionals are rapidly adopting the use of AI tools, there's a significant gap in district-level policies and training. This leaves many navigating AI use in uncharted waters, often bearing the responsibility for data privacy and ethical considerations themselves.

This NSPRA member survey report highlights that a lack of formal district AI policies, ethical training, and clear disclosure guidelines exposes districts to risks concerning authenticity, ethical implications, and data privacy. To truly "future-proof" K-12 communications, districts need

to prioritize AI education, accelerate policy development, build internal policy-making capacity, expand AI policies to include employees, and implement a proactive approach to AI adoption and responsible use.

Ultimately, empowering school communicators with comprehensive AI policies and training isn't just about managing risk; it's about unlocking AI's transformative potential to build stronger, more engaged school communities. By addressing these critical areas, districts can ensure that school PR strategies are innovative, ethical, secure, and truly effective for everyone.



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