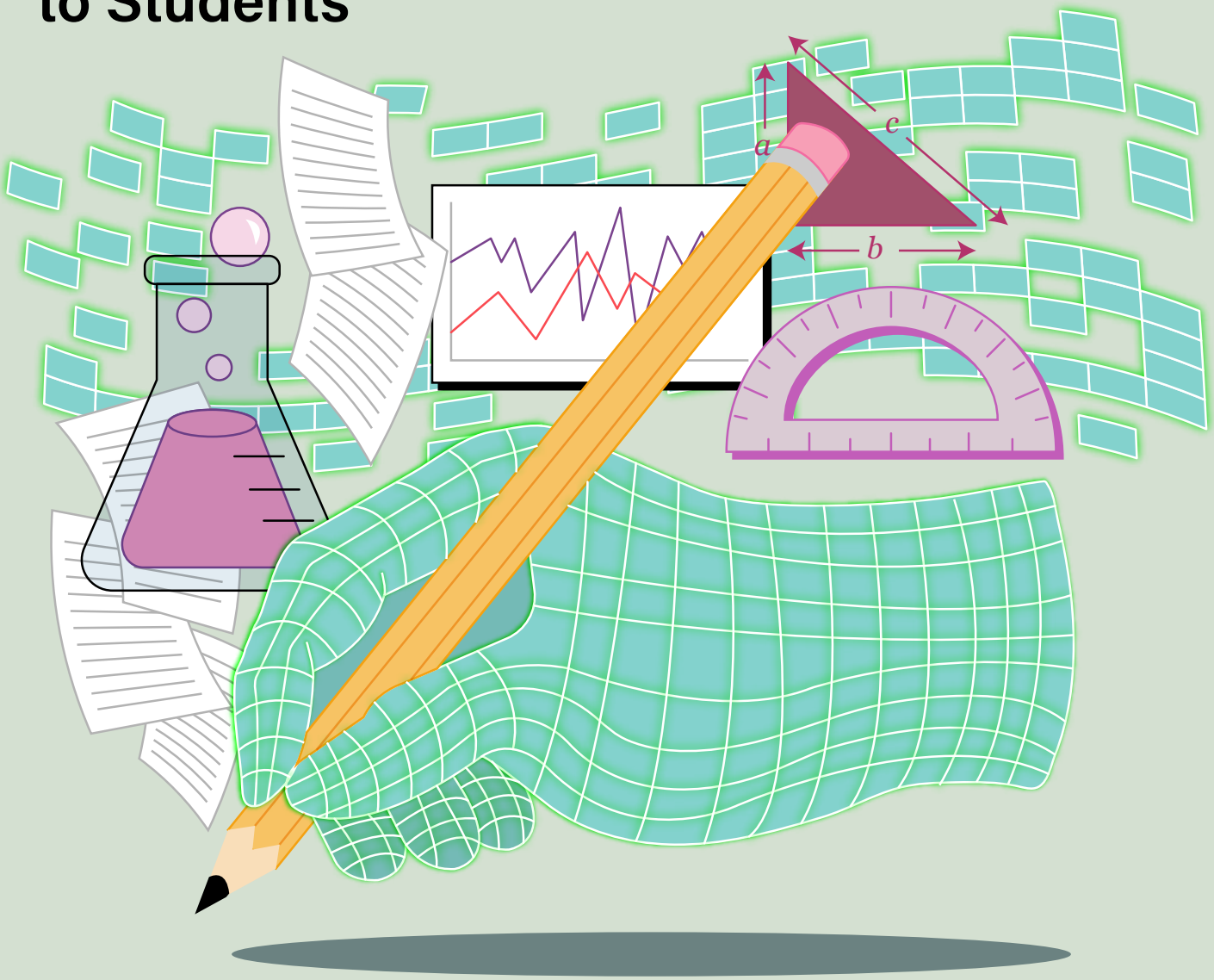
October 2025

Hand in Hand

Schools' Embrace of AI Connected to Increased Risks to Students



CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY & TECHNOLOGY

Elizabeth Laird
Maddy Dwyer
Hannah Quay-de la Vallee

The **Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT)** is the leading nonpartisan, nonprofit organization fighting to advance civil rights and civil liberties in the digital age. We shape technology policy, governance, and design with a focus on equity and democratic values. Established in 1994, CDT has been a trusted advocate for digital rights since the earliest days of the internet. The organization is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and has a Europe Office in Brussels, Belgium.

As governments expand their use of technology and data, it is critical that they do so in ways that affirm individual privacy, respect civil rights, foster inclusive participatory systems, promote transparent and accountable oversight, and advance just social structures within the broader community.

CDT's Equity in Civic Technology Project furthers these goals by providing balanced advocacy that promotes the responsible use of data and technology while protecting the privacy and civil rights of individuals. We engage with these issues from both technical and policyminded perspectives, creating solutions-oriented policy resources and actionable technical guidance.

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CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY & TECHNOLOGY

Contents

01 Introduction: Current Status of AI Use in Schools and Emerging Risks

Artificial intelligence (AI) has continued to alter the educational experiences of teachers, students, and parents during the 2024-25 school year. The frequency and variety of AI uses continues to grow; at the same time, the increased use of AI in educational settings is correlated with heightened risks to students. The following section details the **current status** of AI use in schools along with **four emerging risks** associated with this technology, all of which increase the more that a school uses AI:

- Data breaches or ransomware attacks;
- Tech-enabled sexual harassment and bullying;
- AI systems that do not work as intended; and
- Troubling interactions between students and technology.

Identifying the concrete risks that accompany the use of AI in schools enables educators, school administrators, policymakers, and communities to mount prevention and response efforts such that the positive uses of AI do not inadvertently harm students.

Current Status of AI Use in Schools

The vast majority of teachers, students, and parents report that they have used AI, with personal uses more common than work or school uses.

	Teacher	Student	Parent
Overall Use	85%[i]	86%	75%
School/Work	-	50%	37%
Personal	-	73%	67%

Table 1. Percentage (%) of respondents who have used AI for these reasons

Parents with higher incomes or who live in urban and suburban areas report higher rates of AI use for themselves and their children, which could be indicative of an AI divide.

	All	Rural	Suburban	Urban	<$50K	$50–$100K	$100K or more
*Parents who report **their child** has used AI*	70%	64%	71%	72%	58%	72%	81%
*Parents who report **they** have used AI*	75%	66%	76%	79%	62%	81%	82%

Table 2. Percentage (%) of parents who say they or their child has used AI

n = 243 parents from rural areas, 446 parents from suburban areas, 328 parents from urban areas
n = 335 parents with a household income of $50K or less, 385 parents with a household income of $50-$100K, 295 parents with a household income of $100K or more

i Teacher use of AI was determined by the % of teachers indicating they used AI in class during the 2024-25 school year in at least one of a series of ways, which are provided on p. 15 in *AI in the Classroom* and on p. 30 in *AI and IEPs.*

Understanding How AI is Used in Schools

Although a majority of teachers and students report having used AI themselves, they vary greatly in the number of ways in which they report AI is used in school.[ii]

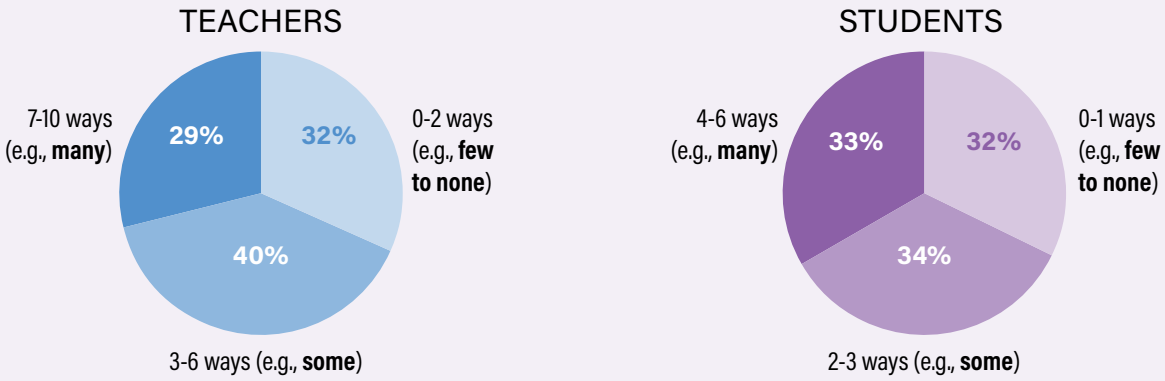


Figure 1. Percentage (%) of respondents who say they (or their school) have used AI in the respective number of ways

ii The surveyed list of ways that a teacher might use AI themselves, as well as whether students and parents think they are a good idea, is provided on p. 15 in *AI in the Classroom* and on p. 30 in *AI and IEPs*.

The frequency with which parents use AI is directly related to whether their child uses AI, whether their child's school has provided guidance on AI, and whether their child's school has asked for input on using AI.

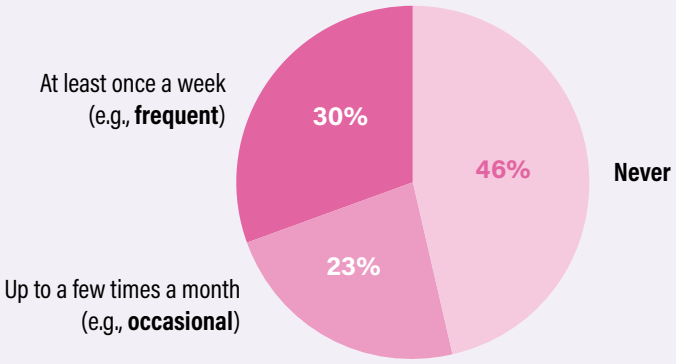


Figure 2. Percentage (%) of parents who have had back-and-forth conversations with AI at the respective frequency[iii]

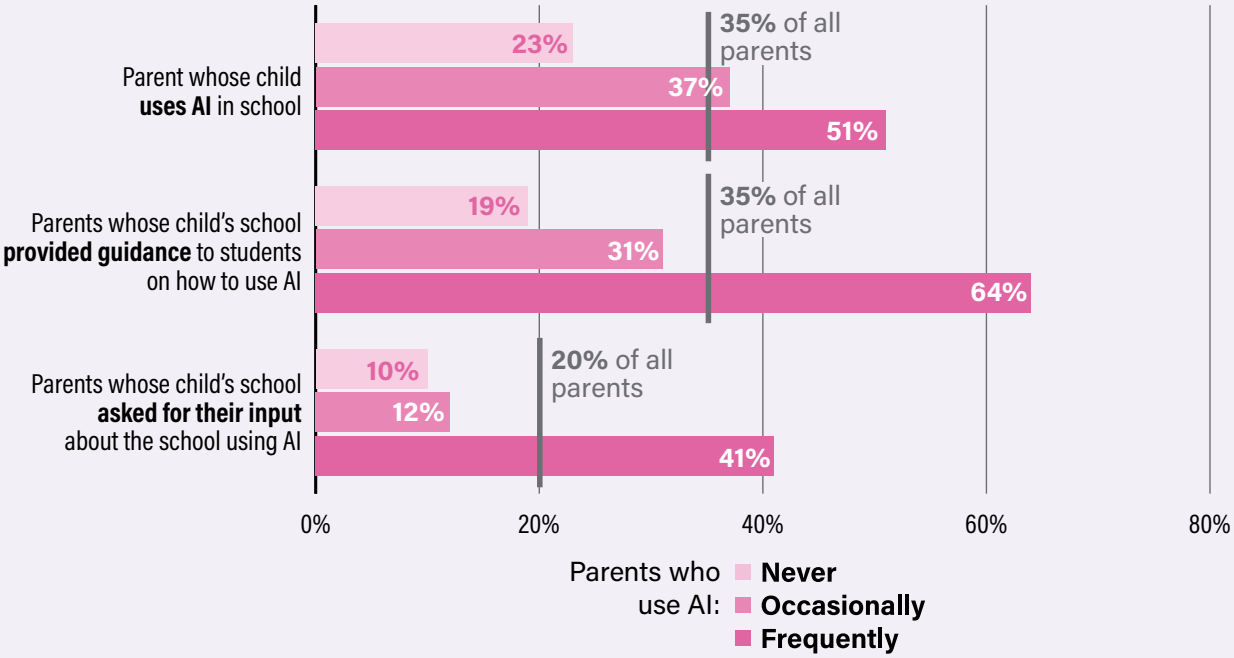


Figure 3. Percentage (%) of parents who report these experiences

n = 467 parents who never use AI to have back-and-forth conversations, 238 parents who occasionally use AI to have back-and-forth conversations, 312 parents who frequently use AI to have back-and-forth conversations

iii See definition for "AI for back-and-forth conversations" on p. 24.

Lower levels of AI use by teachers and parents correspond with higher levels of concern toward this technology.

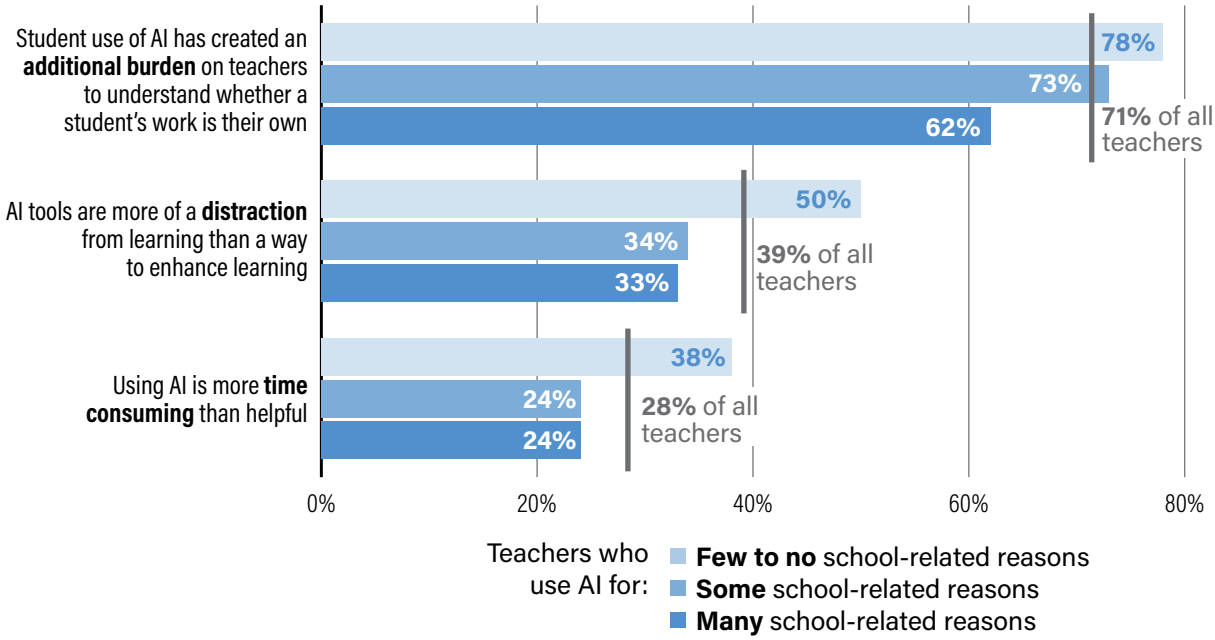


Figure 4. Percentage (%) of teachers who agree with the statement

n = 259 teachers who use AI for few to no school-related reasons, 321 teachers who use AI for some school-related reasons, 226 teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons

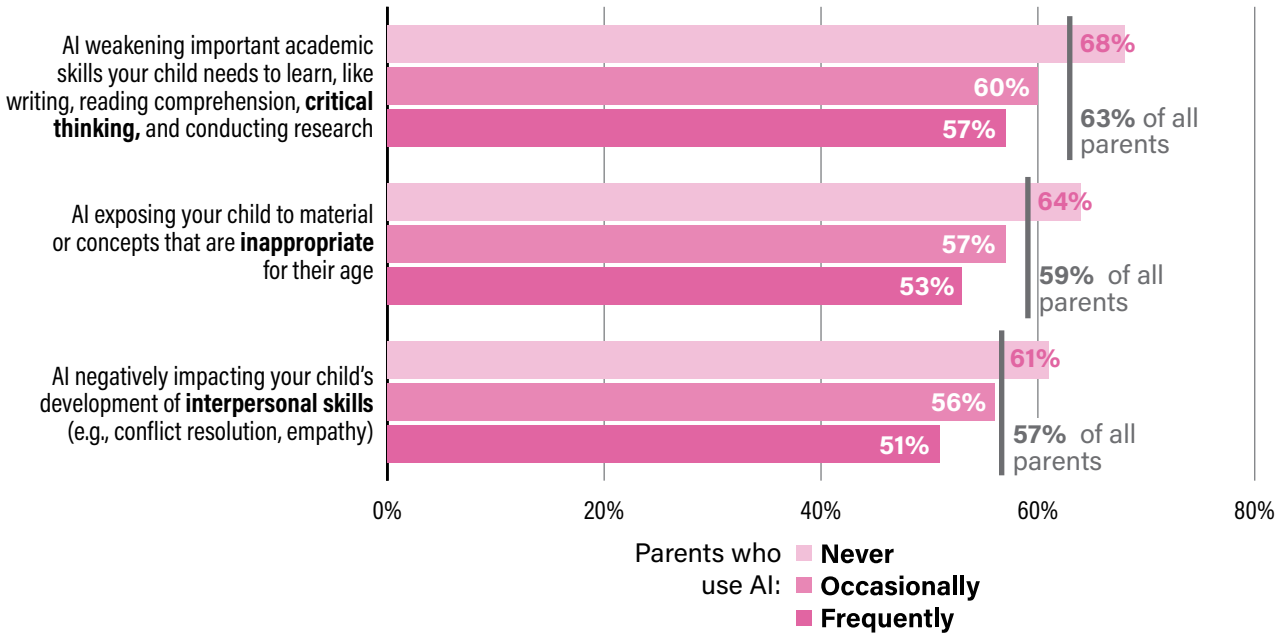


Figure 5. Percentage (%) of parents who say they worry about the outcome occurring if their child regularly has back-and-forth conversations with AI

n = 467 parents who never use AI, 238 parents who occasionally use AI, 312 parents who frequently use AI

However, students who report that their school uses AI for many reasons report higher levels of concern about this technology.

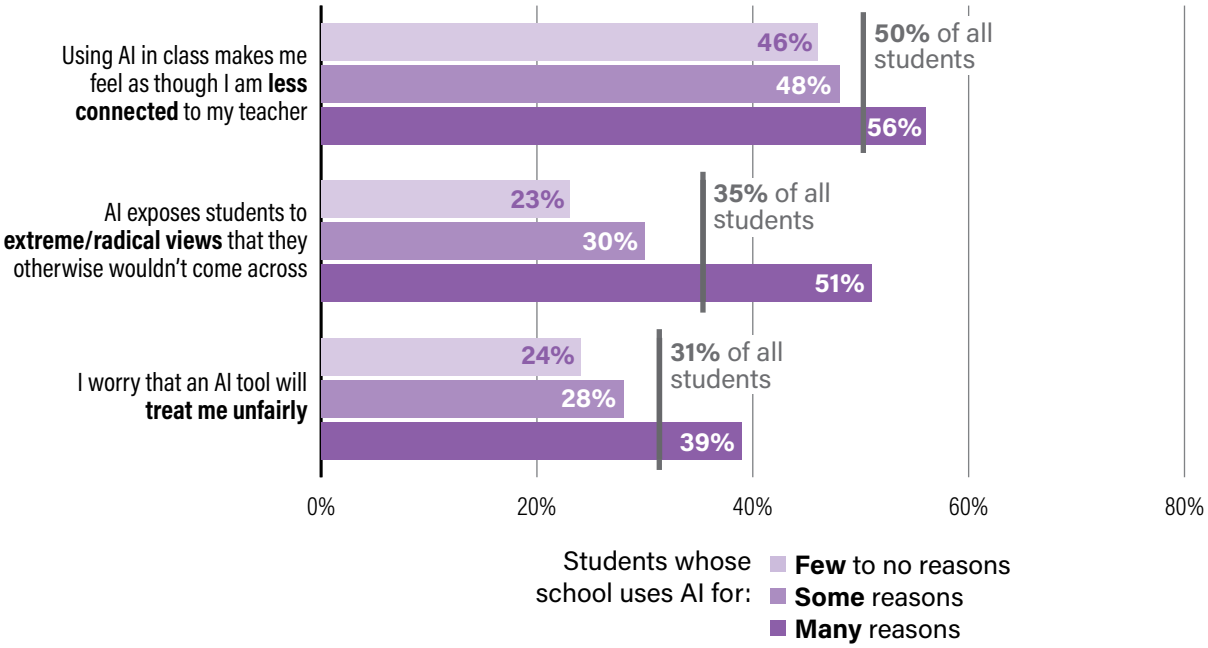


Figure 6. Percentage (%) of students who agree with the statement

n = 338 students who report few to no uses of AI in their classes, 355 students who report some uses of AI in their classes, 337 students who report many uses of AI in their classes

Emerging Risks

Teachers and students who report **many school-related uses** are also more likely to report exposure to risks like:

- Data breaches or ransomware attacks;
- Tech-enabled sexual harassment and bullying;
- AI systems that do not work as intended; and
- Troubling interactions between students and technology.

Teachers who use AI for many reasons are more likely to report that their school has experienced a large-scale data breach.

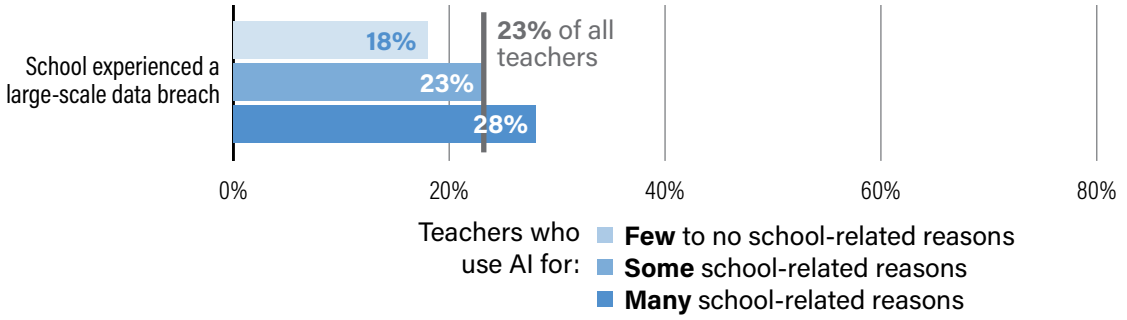


Figure 7. Percentage (%) of teachers who report this happened during the last school year (2024-25)

n = 259 teachers who use AI for few to no school-related reasons, 321 teachers who use AI for some school-related reasons, 226 teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons

The more that teachers and students report that their school uses AI, the more likely they are to report having heard of a deepfake and/or deepfake non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII) that depicts someone associated with their school in the last school year (2024-25).[iv]

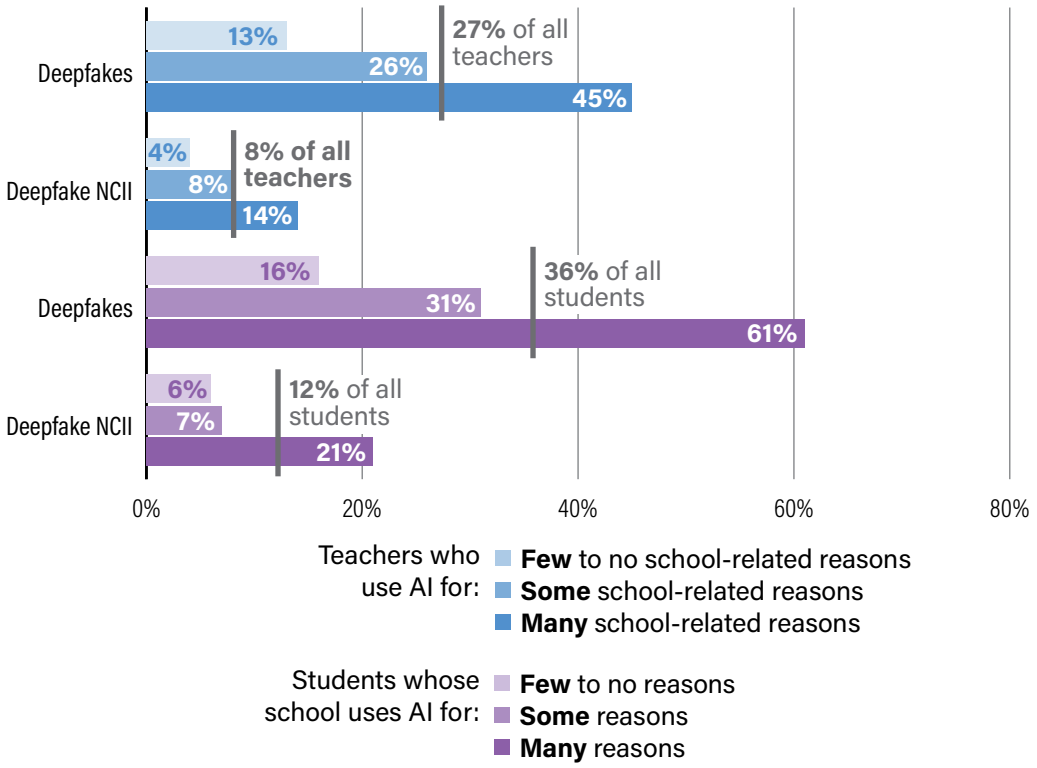


Figure 8. Percentage (%) of respondents who say they have heard of this happening in the last school year (2024-25)

n = 259 teachers who use AI for few to no school-related reasons, 321 teachers who use AI for some school-related reasons, 226 teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons
n = 338 students who report few to no uses of AI in their classes, 355 students who report some uses of AI in their classes, 337 students who report many uses of AI in their classes

iv See definitions for "deepfake" and "deepfake NCII" on p. 39.

Teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons are more likely to report negative consequences that harm students and undermine trust.

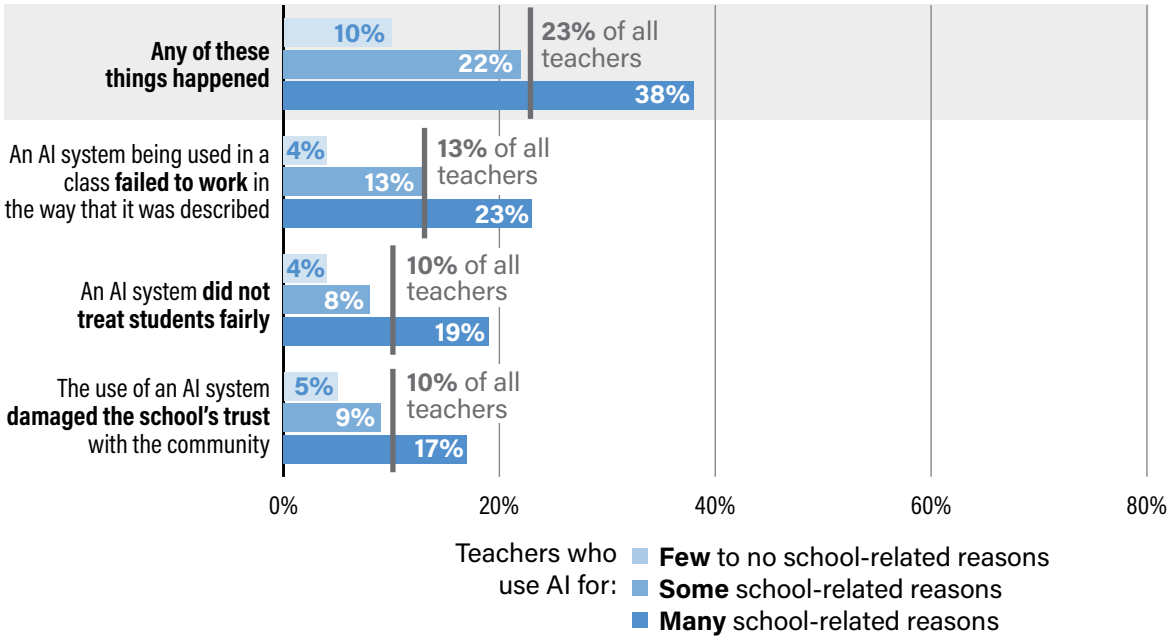


Figure 9. Percentage (%) of teachers who say this happened to them or at their school during the last school year (2024-25)

n = 259 teachers who use AI for few to no school-related reasons, 321 teachers who use AI for some school-related reasons, 226 teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons

Students whose school uses AI for many reasons are more likely to report that they or a friend of theirs has had a back-and-forth conversation with AI, like chatbots, in potentially troubling ways.

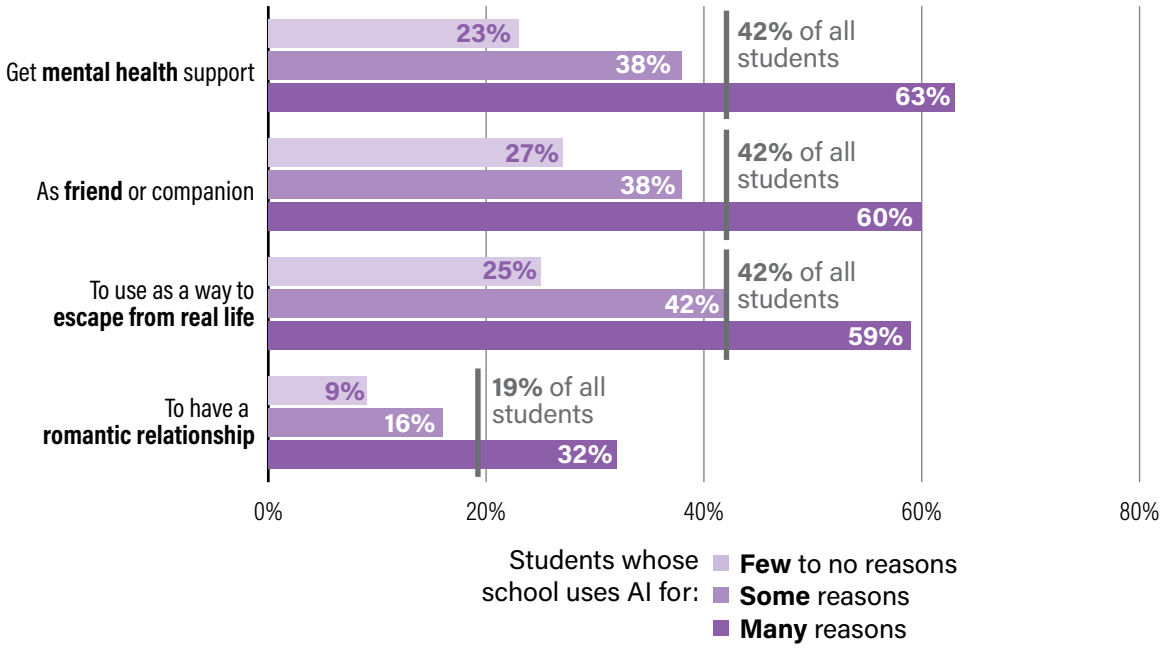


Figure 10. Percentage (%) of students who say they or a friend of theirs interacted with AI in this way in the past school year (2024-25)

n = 338 students who report few to no uses of AI in their classes, 355 students who report some uses of AI in their classes, 337 students who report many uses of AI in their classes

02

AI in the Classroom: Uses Expand Alongside Questions About What Constitutes Quality Teaching and Learning

The depth and breadth of AI use in the classroom has continued to expand at a breakneck pace. At the same time, the growing use of AI is also raising fundamental questions about academic integrity and the teaching profession. In fact, a pending lawsuit raises legal questions about disciplining students for alleged inappropriate AI use, and a complaint (along with a tuition refund request) asserts that a college professor did not provide a first-rate education due to their use of AI.[1] Education leaders can expect these questions to grow as the use of AI increases:

- How does the expanded use of AI affect **relationships** between students and teachers?
- How has AI impacted the **job of a teacher**?
- Does students' use of AI diminish their **critical thinking skills**?
- What is the impact of students potentially using AI in ways that are **not permitted**?

Eighty-five percent of teachers report that they used AI in the classroom during the past school year (2024-25) and that school policies are trending toward permitting AI use.

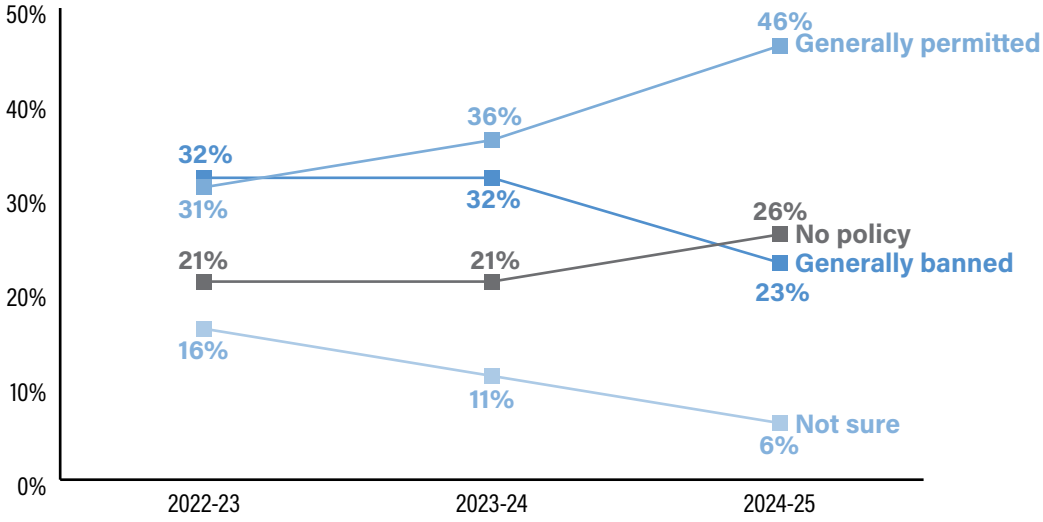


Figure 11. Percentage (%) of teachers who say the option best describes their school's policy on the use of AI in class

Whether students and parents think a given use of AI is a good idea varies greatly, along with whether teachers actually use AI in this way.

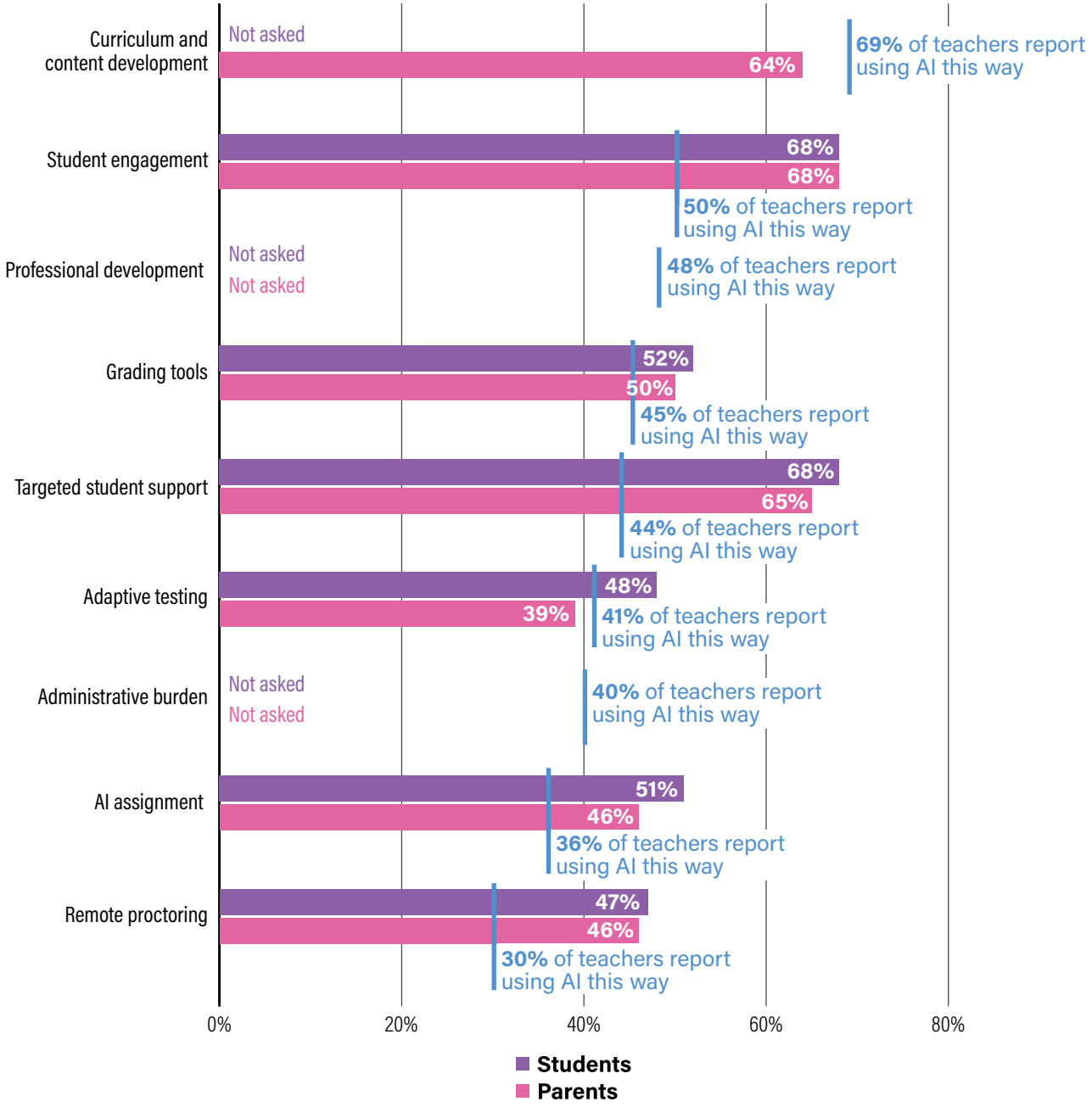


Figure 12. Percentage (%) of respondents who indicate it is a good idea for AI to be used in this way in class

Teachers may not always have a choice in whether they access AI tools.

Twenty-four percent of teachers report that AI was automatically added to an education tool they were already using.

The more ways that a teacher uses AI in the classroom, the more likely they are to agree with potential benefits of its use.

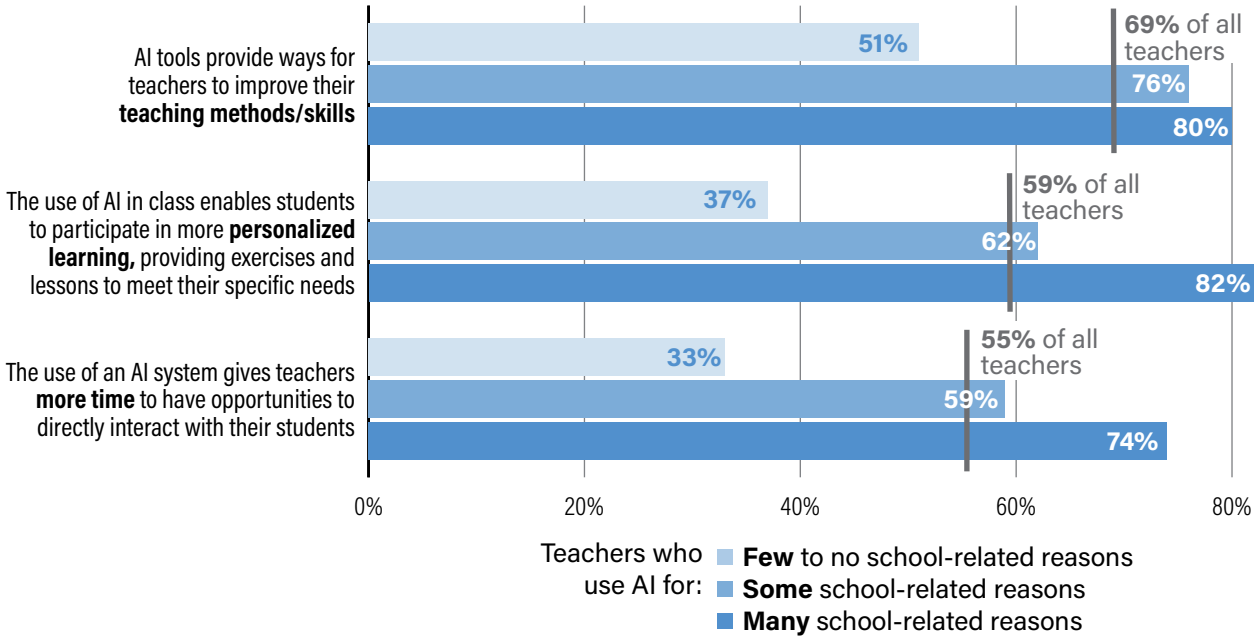


Figure 13. Percentage (%) of teachers who agree with the statement

n = 259 teachers who use AI for few to no school-related reasons, 321 teachers who use AI for some school-related reasons, 226 teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons

However, teachers are not on the same page as parents regarding opting out of AI and overall concerns, laying the groundwork for potential backlash against this technology.

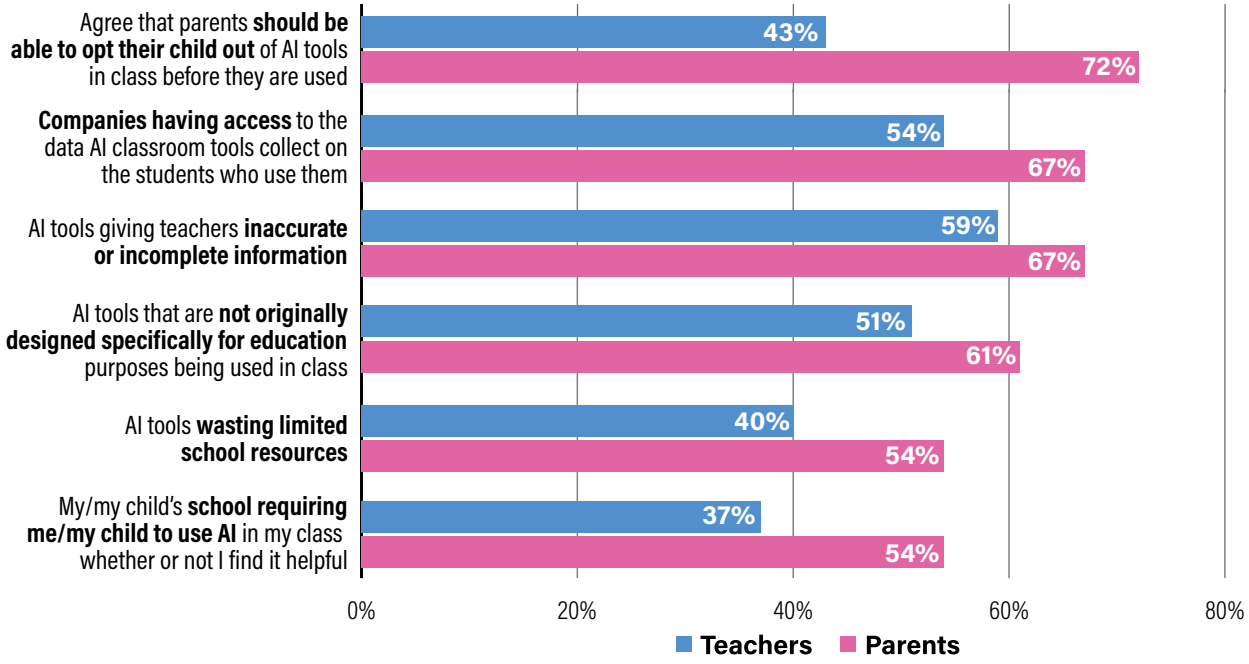


Figure 14. Percentage (%) of respondents who agree with the statement or worry about the statement occurring

Increased use of AI in the classroom is also bringing forth emerging questions, some of which are at the core of providing quality teaching and learning:

- How does the expanded use of AI affect **relationships** between students and teachers?[2]
- How has AI impacted the **job of a teacher**?[3]
- Does students' use of AI diminish their **critical thinking skills**?[4]
- What is the impact of students potentially using AI in ways that are **not permitted**?[5]

How does the expanded use of AI affect relationships between students and teachers?

Students whose school uses AI for many reasons are more likely to agree that AI creates distance from their teachers.

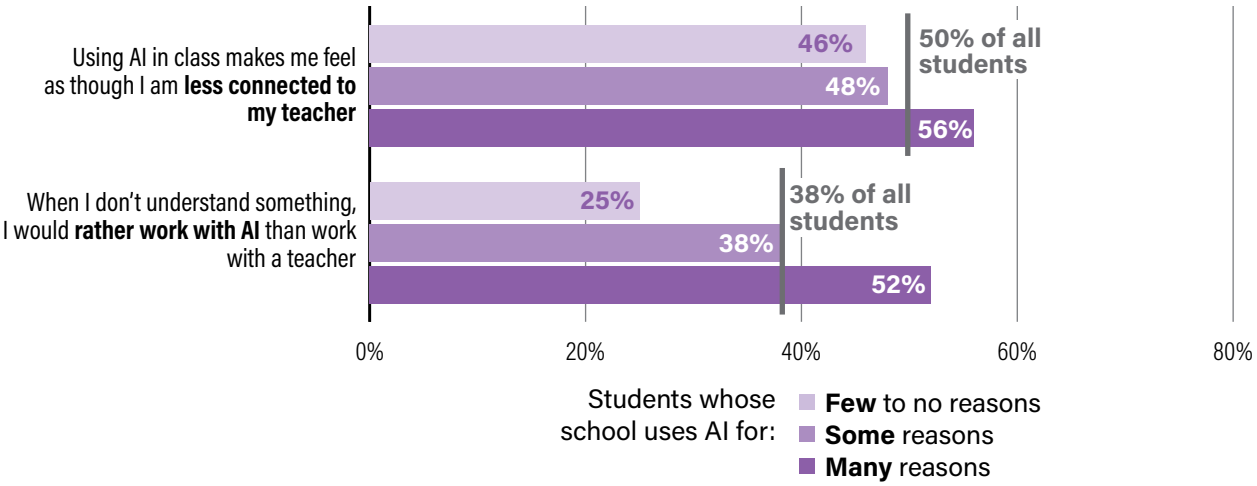


Figure 15. Percentage (%) of students who agree with the statement

n = 338 students who report few to no uses of AI in their classes, 355 students who report some uses of AI in their classes, 337 students who report many uses of AI in their classes

How has AI impacted the job of a teacher?

More than two-thirds of teachers say that student use of AI has created new challenges.

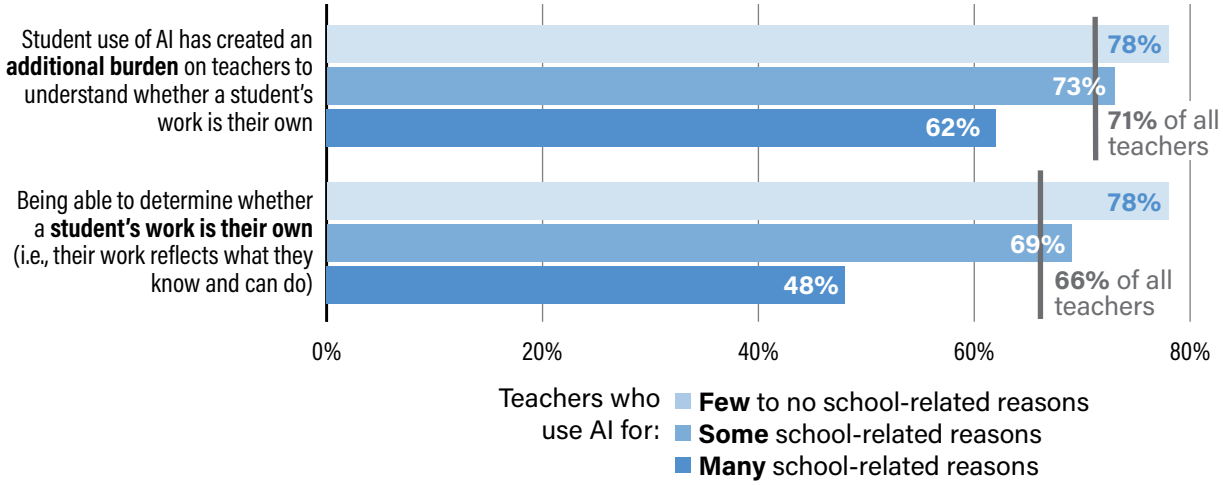


Figure 16. Percentage (%) of teachers who agree/worry with/about the statement

n = 259 teachers who use AI for few to no school-related reasons, 321 teachers who use AI for some school-related reasons, 226 teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons

Half of parents and students question whether teachers who use AI are doing their job.

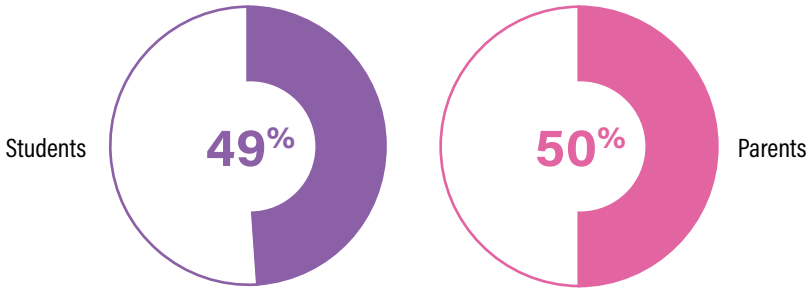


Figure 17. Percentage (%) of respondents who agree that a teacher who uses AI in class is not really doing their job as a teacher

Does students' use of AI diminish their critical thinking skills?

Amidst emerging reports that AI can harm critical thinking skills, teachers, students, and parents worry that using AI weakens key skillsets.

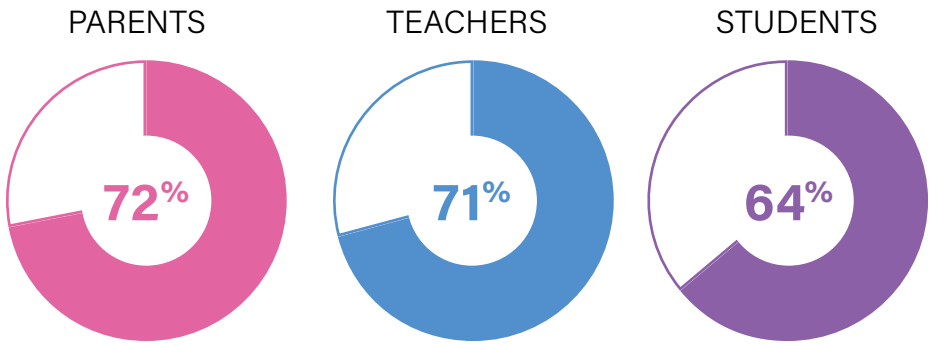


Figure 18. Percentage (%) of respondents who agree/worry with/about AI weakening important academic skills students need to learn, like writing, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and conducting research

What is the impact of students potentially using AI in ways that are not permitted?

AI content detection tools play a growing role in addressing issues of academic integrity.

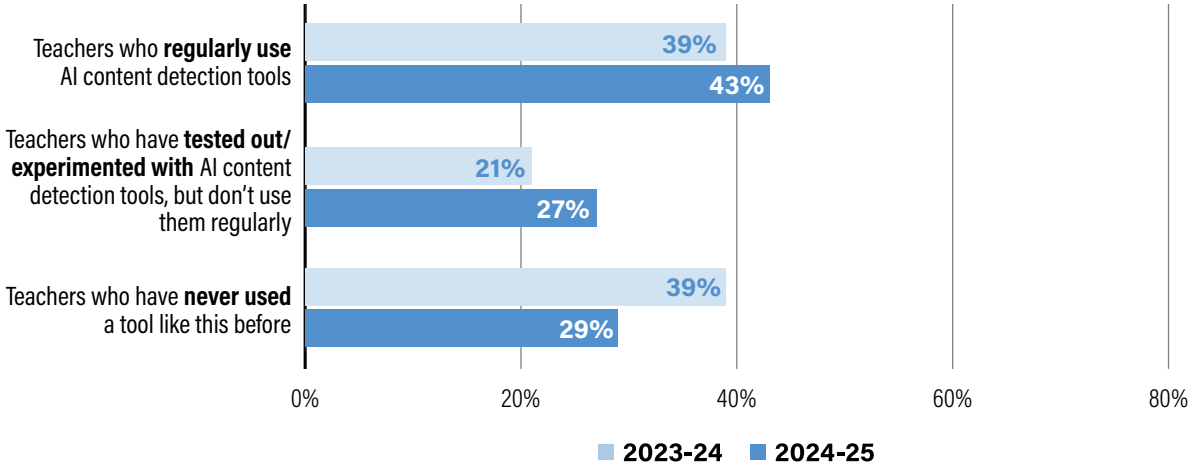


Figure 19. Percentage (%) of teachers who say they use an AI content detection tool to determine whether students' work is AI-generated at this frequency

At the same time, teachers are not reporting significant increases in negative consequences to students due to using AI in ways that are not permitted.

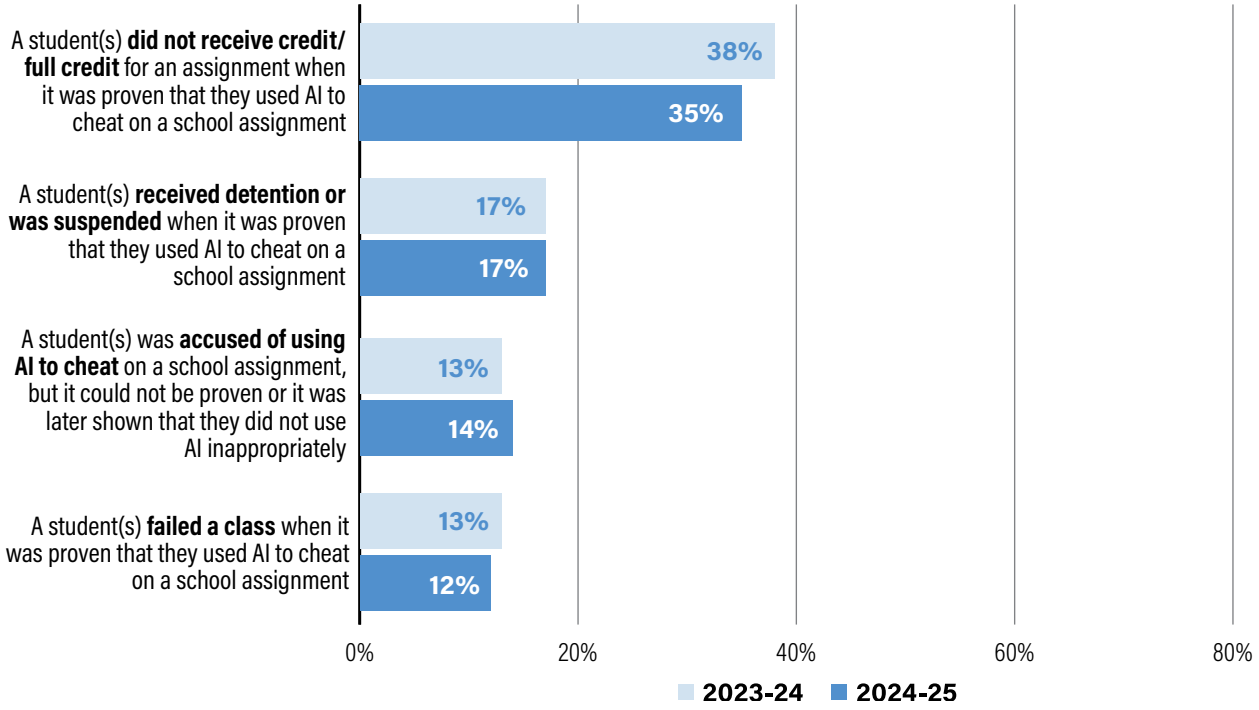


Figure 20. Percentage (%) of teachers who say a student(s) at their school experienced negative consequences for using or being accused of using AI on a school assignment

03

Chatbots and Students: Interactions with AI Affect Real-Life Relationships

As AI use grows more pervasive in schools, more stories about youth having troubling interactions with AI tools, typically through back-and-forth conversations with chatbots, are emerging.[6] Understanding the potential connection between the use of AI in the classroom and how it relates to non-academic uses, including whether they are occurring through school-provided applications, is important for education leaders, so they can provide information and guidance to school stakeholders about how to minimize risks to students.[7]

DEFINITION FROM SURVEY

AI for back-and-forth conversations: This refers to the use of interactive AI systems, most often chatbots, that allow users to type in information and receive responses from the system. These may be stand-alone tools, or they may have been included as part of another tool students already use. These include tools that could be used at school or used anywhere.

The majority of students report that they or a friend have had a back-and-forth conversation with AI and for a wide range of purposes, both academic and non-academic.

		Students
Academic	*To **learn more** about topics outside of what was taught in class*	66%
	*For **tutoring** or feedback on specific subjects*	64%
	*To receive **help with a homework assignment,** even though the teacher did not allow it on the assignment*	53%
	*For **college or career advice***	49%
Non-Academic	*To get **advice on relationships** you have with others, like friends, family, and/or romantic partners*	43%
	*To get **mental health support** (e.g., like what someone might get through a guidance counselor or other mental health professional)*	42%
	*As a **friend/companion***	42%
	*To use as a way to **escape from real life** (e.g., pretending to be in a fantasy or virtual world)*	42%
	*To get help regarding a **medical issue**/telehealth*	37%
	*To have a **romantic relationship***	19%

Table 3. Percentage (%) of students who say they or a friend of theirs interacted with AI in this way in the past school year (2024-25)

When students have back-and-forth conversations with AI systems for personal reasons (i.e., not for schoolwork), nearly **one-third (31 percent)** say that they do so using adevice, tool, or software provided by their school.

Students also vary in how often they have back-and-forth conversations with AI, with over half (56 percent) using it at least once a week.

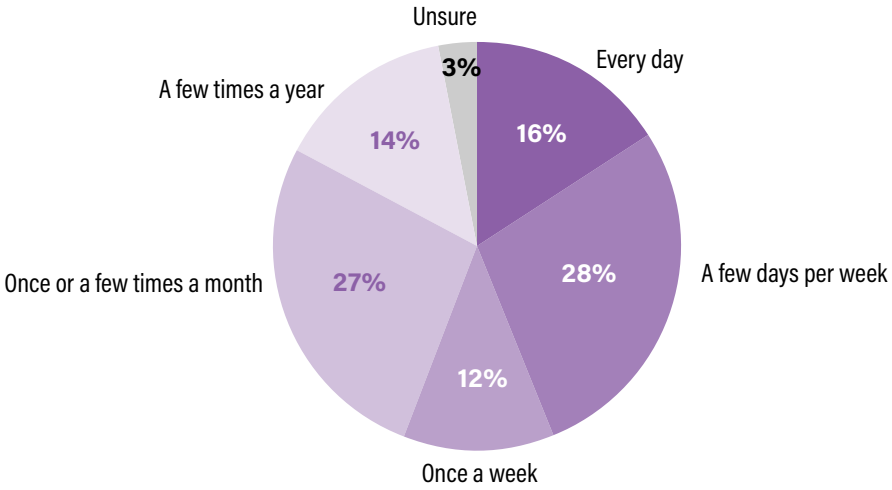


Figure 21. Percentage (%) of students who say they have had back-and-forth conversations with AI at this frequency

n = 676 students who have had back-and-forth conversations with AI

Teachers and parents report a range of worries about how the regular use of AI to have back-and-forth conversations might impact students, and they largely agree about which outcomes worry them the most.

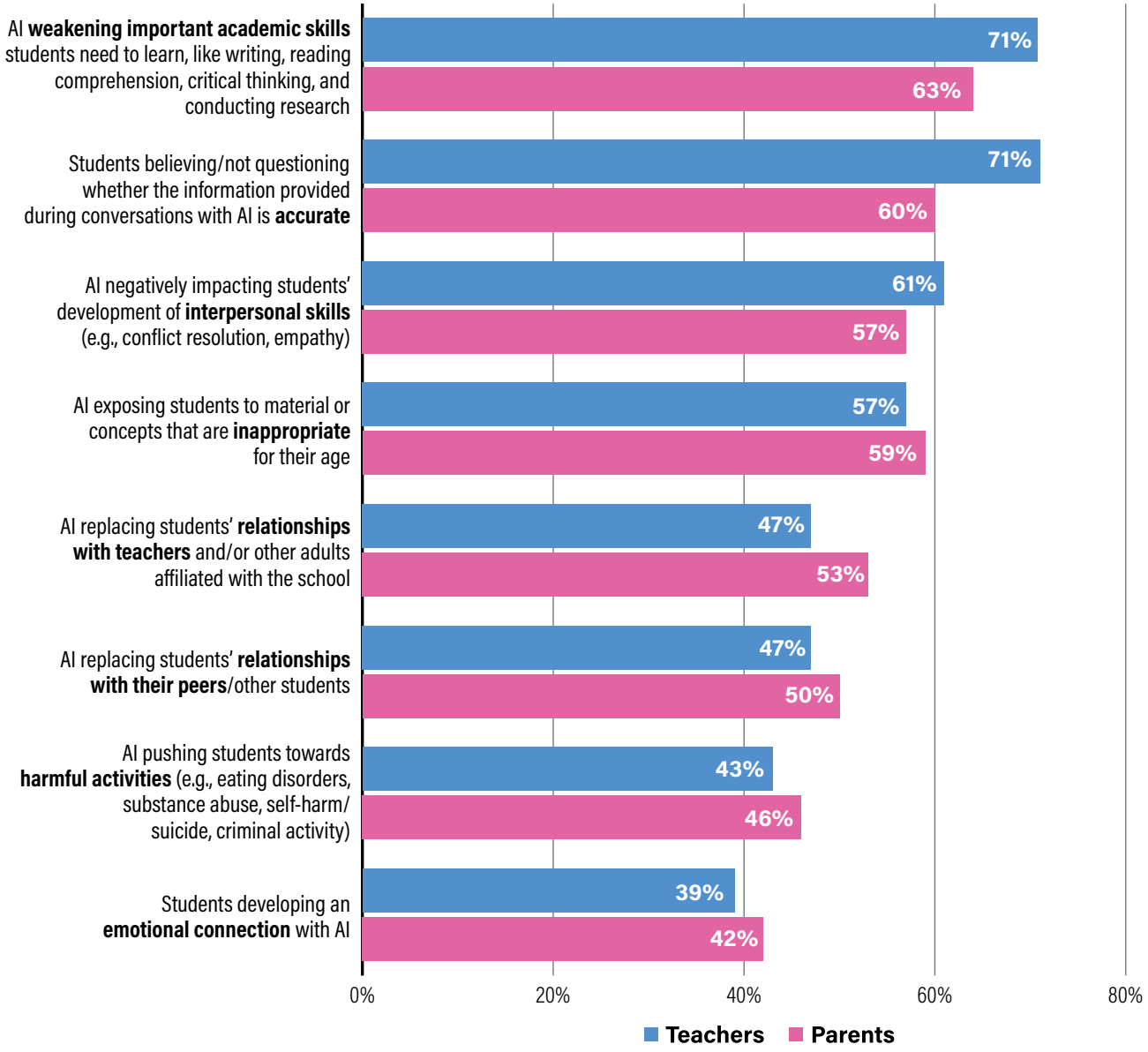


Figure 22. Percentage (%) of teachers and parents who worry about the outcome occurring if students regularly use AI for back-and-forth conversations

Students whose school uses AI for many reasons are more likely to report a negative relationship between AI and their studies.

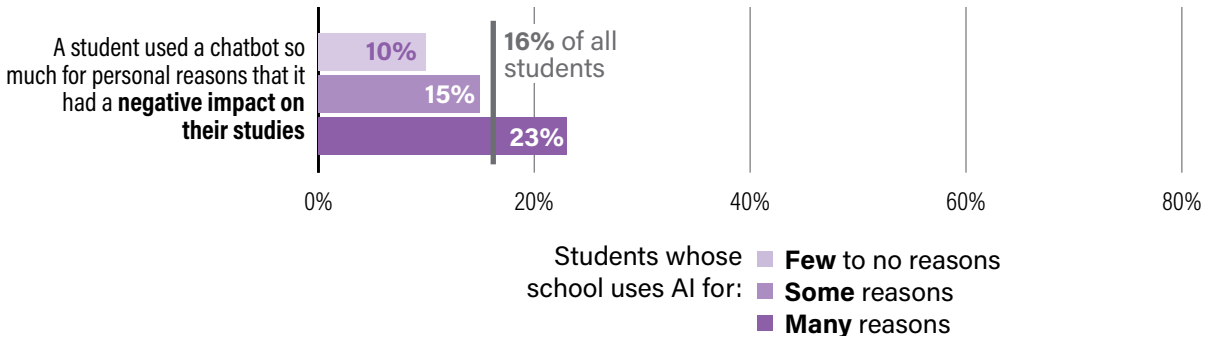


Figure 23. Percentage (%) of students who say they or someone they know experienced this during the last school year (2024-25)

n = 338 students who report few to no uses of AI in their classes, 355 students who report some uses of AI in their classes, 337 students who report many uses of AI in their classes

Students' use of AI to have back-and-forth conversations presents new challenges to parents' relationships with their children.

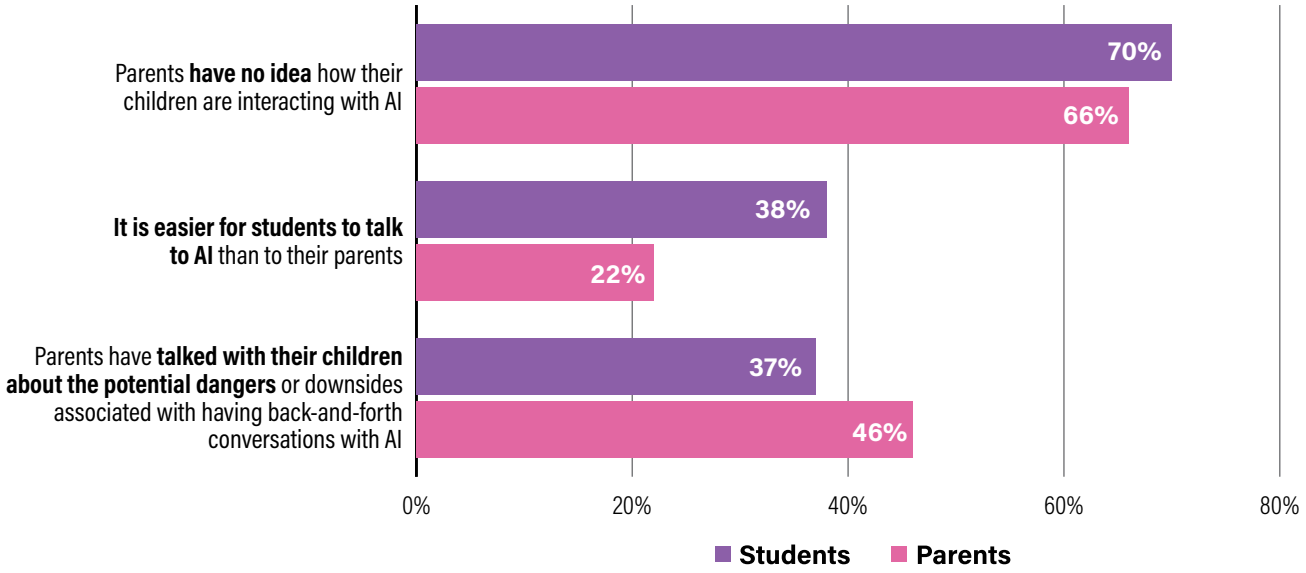


Figure 24. Percentage (%) of respondents who agree with the statement

Students who have had a back-and-forth conversation with AI report higher levels of concerns regarding the use of this technology.

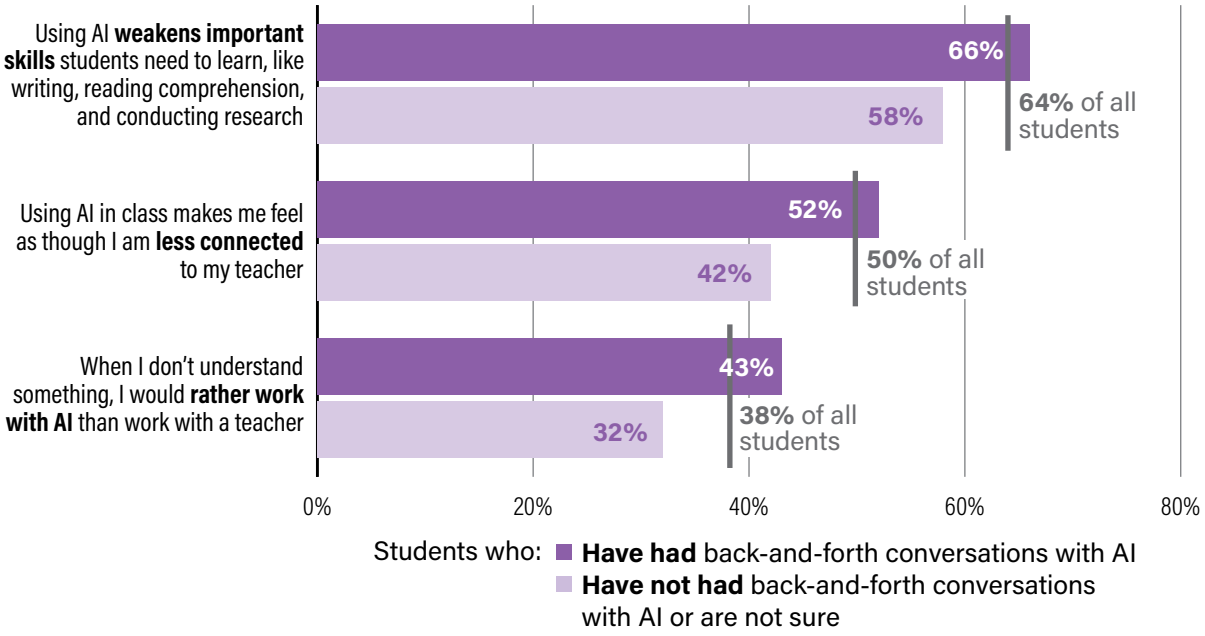


Figure 25. Percentage (%) of students who agree with the statement

n = 676 students who have had back-and-forth conversations with AI, 209 students who have not had back-and-forth conversations with AI or are not sure

04 AI and IEPs: Use by Teachers Grows Amidst Increased Concerns Among Students with Disabilities

AI tools, including generative AI tools, can be used in several arenas in schools. One area of particular interest to the disability community is the use of these tools in the creation of IEPs and/or 504 plans. Though the use of AI for this purpose may have potential benefits, it also presents risks, including how this practice could potentially run afoul of federal disability and privacy laws.

More than half of licensed special education teachers report that they use AI to help them with IEPs and/or 504 plans, and the majority of students and parents agree that this is a good idea.

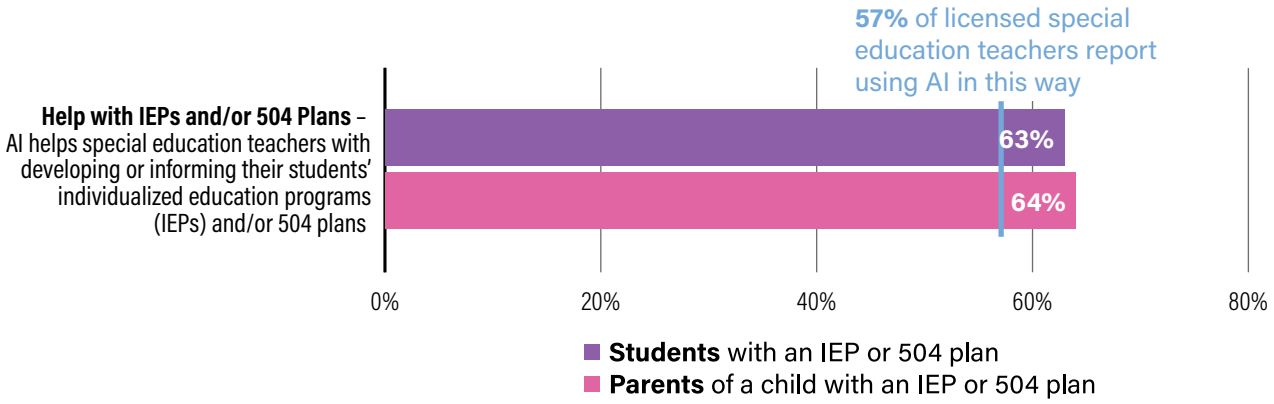


Figure 26. Percentage (%) of respondents who say they think it is a good idea

n = 275 licensed special education teachers
n = 394 students with an IEP or 504 plan
n = 336 parents of a child with an IEP or 504 plan

Privacy concerns among students with a disability and their parents are heightened:

Sixty percent of students with an IEP or 504 plan are concerned about student privacy, compared to 42 percent of students without an IEP or 504 plan.

n = 394 students with an IEP or 504 plan
n = 632 students without an IEP or 504 plan

Seventy-three percent of parents whose child has an IEP or 504 plan are concerned about student privacy, compared to 67 percent of parents whose child does not have an IEP or 504 plan.

n = 336 parents of a child with an IEP or 504 plan
n = 675 parents of a child without an IEP or 504 plan

The use of AI by licensed special education teachers in creating IEP and 504 plans, including using it to fully write these plans, has risen significantly.[v]

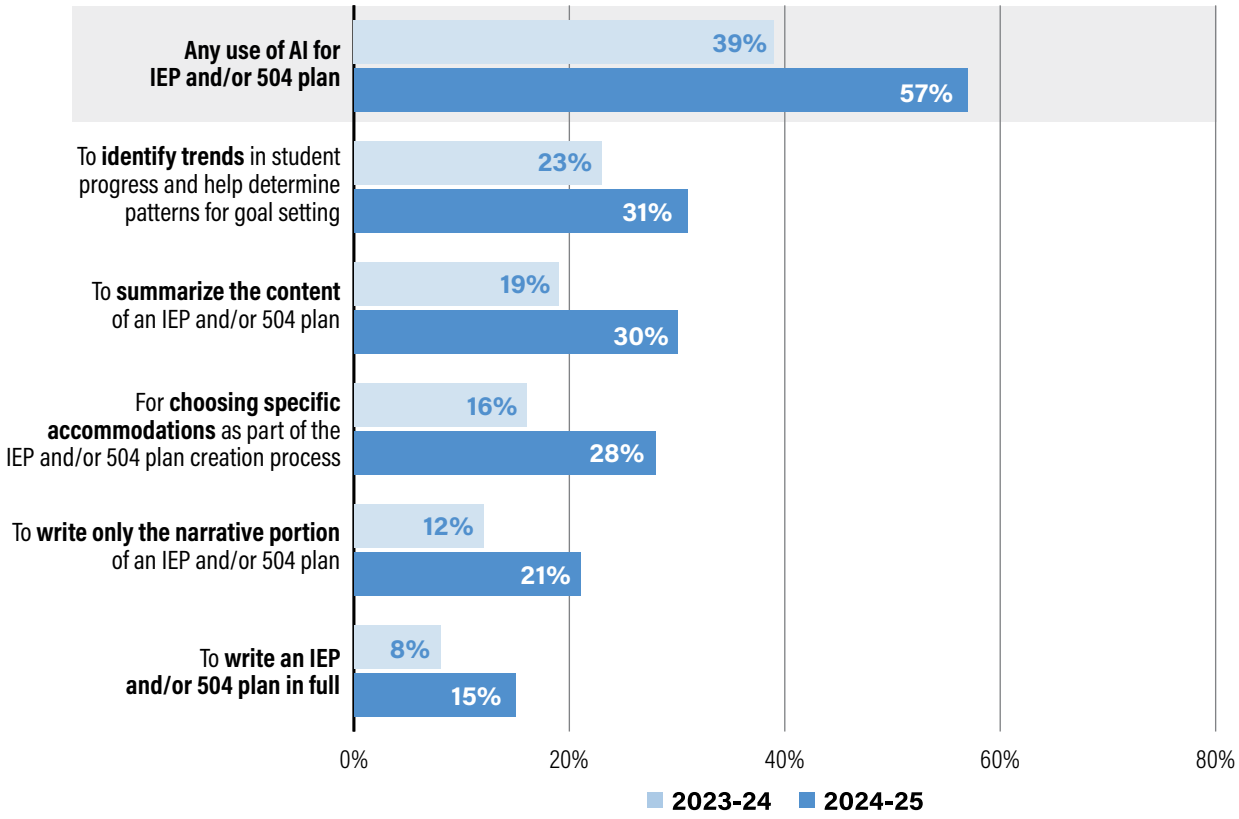


Figure 27. Percentage (%) of licensed special education teachers who are using AI in this way

n (2023-24) = 378 licensed special education teachers
n (2024-25) = 275 licensed special education teachers

v Year-over-year question wording differs slightly. The 2024 survey asked if teachers "used ChatGPT or another generative AI platform in any of the following ways," with "to help develop or inform IEPs for students" as an answer category. This year's survey asked, "Here are ways in which AI can be used in class. Please indicate if each was used in your class during the last school year," with "AI helps special education teachers with developing or informing their students IEPs and/or 504 plans" as an option. Also, note the 2025 survey split-sampled "IEPs and/or 504 plans" with "IEPs." Results were similar across the split samples, so the percentages were combined for analysis.

Students with an IEP or 504 plan are more likely than their peers to report having back-and-forth conversations with AI and do so more frequently.

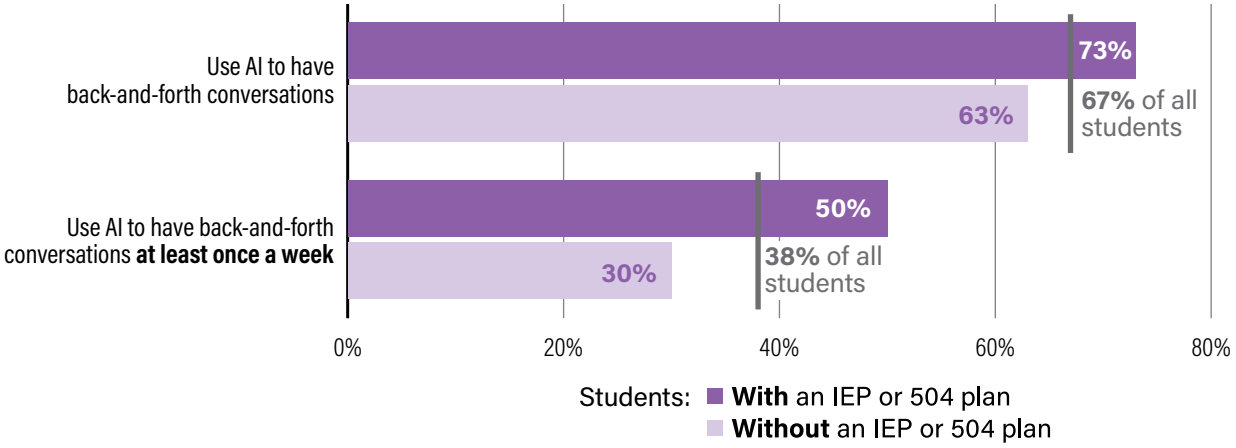


Figure 28. Percentage (%) of students who say they have had back-and-forth conversations with AI and at this frequency

n = 394 students with an IEP or 504 plan, 632 students without an IEP or 504 plan

Despite their increased use of AI, students with an IEP or 504 plan are also more likely to agree with a number of concerns about AI usage in schools.

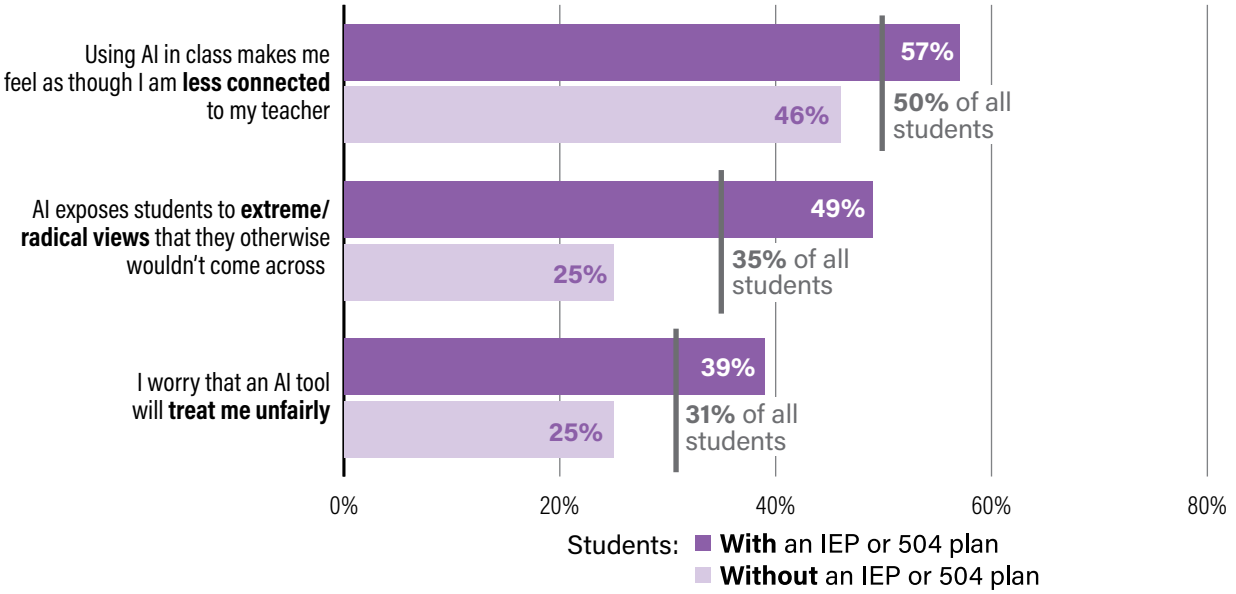


Figure 29. Percentage (%) of students who agree with the statement

n = 394 students with an IEP or 504 plan, 632 students without an IEP or 504 plan

05

AI Literacy: Training and Guidance Perceived as Helpful But Have Not Kept Pace with AI Adoption or Known Risks

Efforts to develop AI literacy (the ability to understand, assess, and use AI systems effectively and responsibly) in schools have gained significant momentum, supercharged by policy directives and an influx of funding.[8] However, the education sector has not waited for this training and guidance to use AI – **85 percent** of teachers report they have used AI in at least one way in their classroom in the past school year (2024-25), and **86 percent** of students say they have used AI for either school or personal use. Moreover, parents, students, and teachers have different priorities when it comes to what AI guidance and training should cover. These disconnects risk leaving teachers, students, and parents unaware of the harms that stem from AI use, and ill-prepared to handle failures of the technology.[9]

Almost half of teachers and students report that they have received some training or information about AI from someone at their school, and most found it helpful.

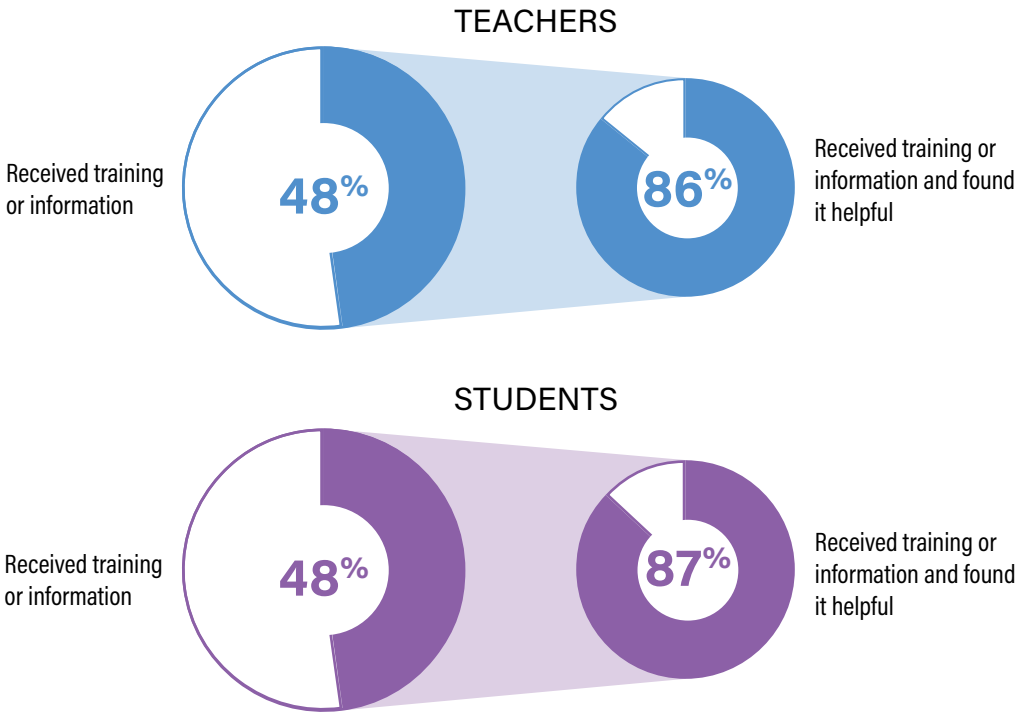


Figure 30. Percentage (%) of teachers who have participated in any training or professional development provided by their school or school district that covers school policies and procedures guiding teacher use of AI in class and found it helpful; percentage (%) of students who say someone at their school provided information to students on how to use AI for schoolwork or for personal use and found it helpful

n = 385 teachers who participated in training on AI provided by their school or school district
n = 366 students who received information about AI for schoolwork from someone at their school

Few students and teachers are receiving training or information on risks like what to do if a user encounters issues with an AI system or if a student's use of AI is detrimental to their well-being.

		Teachers	Students
AI Basics	*Guidance on how to **use AI tools effectively** (e.g., crafting instructions or queries users put into AI systems like chatbots, determining when a tool is appropriate for a given use)*	29%	16%
	*Explaining **what AI is** and how it works*	25%	12%
	*Guidance on how to monitor and **check AI systems** (e.g., reviewing grades assigned by AI)*	17%	Not asked
School Policy	*The **school's policy** on students using AI on assignments (i.e., when it is OK to use AI on assignments and when it is not)*	Not asked	22%
	*How a student would be **punished** if they used AI on assignments when it is not allowed*	Not asked	17%
	*How to **detect** if a student submits AI-generated work instead of student work*	18%	Not asked
	*How to **respond** if you suspect a student has used AI in ways that are not allowed (e.g., plagiarism)*	15%	Not asked
AI Risks	*General **risks** associated with use of AI (e.g., bias in AI outputs, accuracy of AI outputs)*	22%	17%
	*Guidance on what to do when you **encounter issues** with AI tools (e.g., the tool seems to be outputting incorrect or biased results)*	14%	14%
	*How to respond if you suspect a student's AI use is **detrimental to their well-being** (e.g., hurting self-esteem, encouraging risky behavior)*	11%	Not asked

Table 4. Percentage (%) of respondents who say that this topic was covered in training or information on using AI

Teachers are not aligned with students and parents on what information they want about using AI.

Teachers: Top three topics identified as important to include in training	Students: Top three topics identified as important to include in information shared with them by their school	Parents: Top three topics identified as important to be shared with them by their child's school
AI Basics: Guidance on **how to use AI tools** effectively (e.g., crafting instructions or queries users put into AI systems like chatbots, determining when a tool is appropriate for a given use)	**AI Risks:** Guidance on what to do when you **encounter issues** with AI tools (e.g., the tool seems to be outputting incorrect or biased results)	**AI Risks:** How the school will **protect students' privacy** when using AI tools ← 17%
School Policy: How to **detect** if a student submits AI-generated work instead of student work	**School Policy:** The **school's policy** on students using AI on assignments (i.e., when it is OK to use AI on assignments and when it is not)	**School Policy:** The **school's policy** on students using AI on assignments (i.e., when it is OK to use AI on assignments and when it is not) ← 21%
School Policy: How to **respond** if you suspect a student has used AI in ways that are not allowed (e.g., plagiarism)	**AI Risks:** **General risks** associated with use of AI (e.g., bias in AI outputs, accuracy of AI outputs)	**AI Risks:** **General risks** associated with use of AI (e.g., bias in AI outputs, accuracy of AI outputs) ← 15%

Table 5. The top three topics that teachers, students, and parents identified as important to be included in training/information shared with them by the school about AI

Few parents report that they **have received information on the top three topics** they identified as important to be shared with them by their child's school about students using AI.

Teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons are more likely to have experienced negative consequences that harm students and undermine trust.

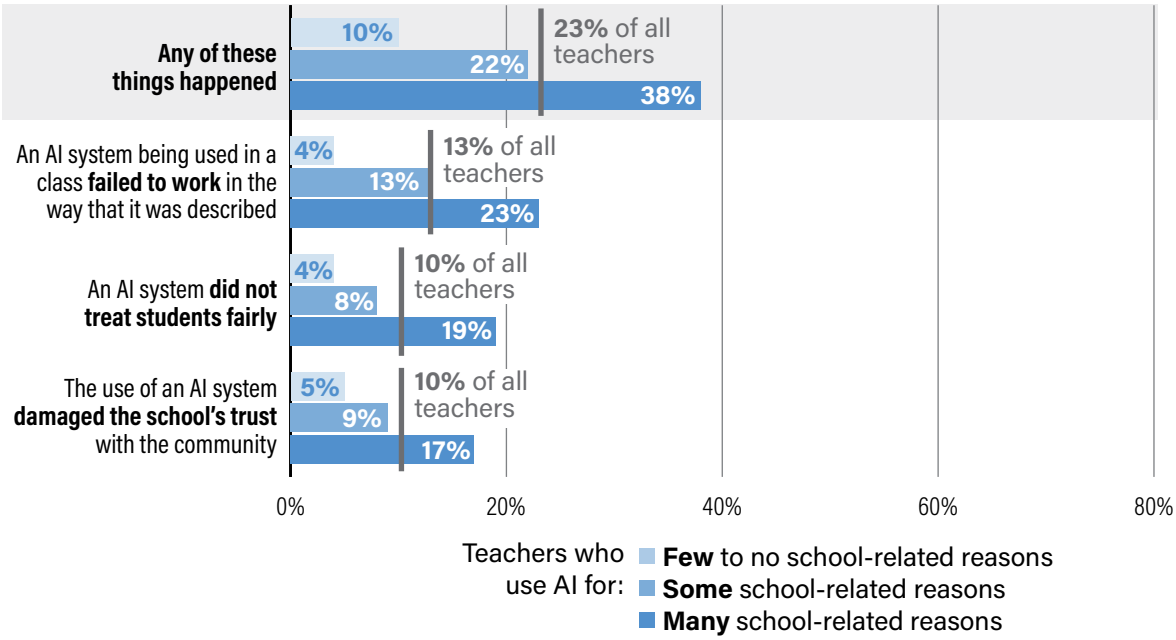


Figure 31. Percentage (%) of teachers who say this happened to them or at their school during the last school year (2024-25)

n = 259 teachers who use AI in few to no ways in their class, 321 teachers who use AI in some ways in their class, 226 teachers who use AI in many ways in their class

06

Deepfakes and NCII: Technology Expands Pre-Existing Sexual Harassment and Bullying Threats

Throughout the last school year (2024-25), the sharing of deepfakes and NCII remained issues in K-12 schools. Schools continue to lag behind in providing guidance and resources, especially given the rapidly evolving capabilities of AI driven technologies that make creating deepfake NCII easily accessible to students.

DEFINITIONS FROM SURVEY

Deepfake: Deepfakes are videos, photos, or audio recordings that seem real but have been digitally manipulated – or faked – to make it seem as though a person has said or done something they have not actually done. Deepfakes are created with AI and are incredibly realistic, making it difficult for humans to distinguish between real-life and fake content.

Non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII): In this report, NCII refers to both authentic NCII and deepfake NCII.

Authentic non-consensual intimate imagery (Authentic NCII): Sometimes referred to as "revenge porn" (a term that has been retired in the image-based sexual abuse context as insufficient to describe the true abusive nature of the content), authentic NCII involves someone sharing real-life sexually explicit or intimate videos, photos, or audio recordings without the consent of the person who is depicted.

Deepfake non-consensual intimate imagery (Deepfake NCII): Sometimes referred to as "deepfake revenge porn" or "synthetic NCII," deepfake NCII are videos, photos, or audio recordings that seem real but have been digitally manipulated – or faked – to show someone in a sexually explicit or intimate manner that they have not actually done. Deepfake NCII is shared without the consent of the person who is depicted and is incredibly realistic.

Deepfakes and NCII remain prominent issues in schools, with increasing awareness among parents.

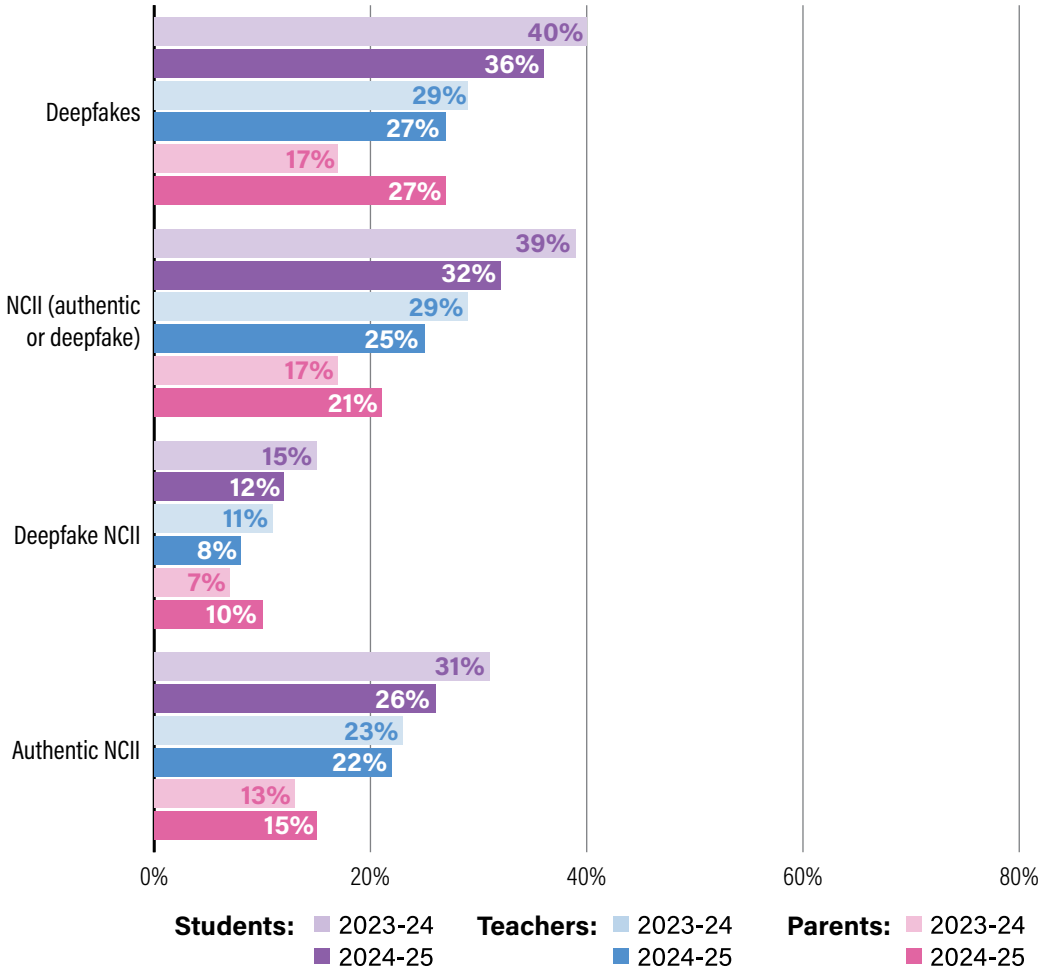


Figure 32. Percentage (%) of students, teachers, and parents who have heard of deepfakes, NCII, deepfake NCII, or authentic NCII being shared that depicts someone associated with their/their child's school

However, less than a quarter of teachers report their school or school district has shared policies and procedures about how to address deepfake NCII.

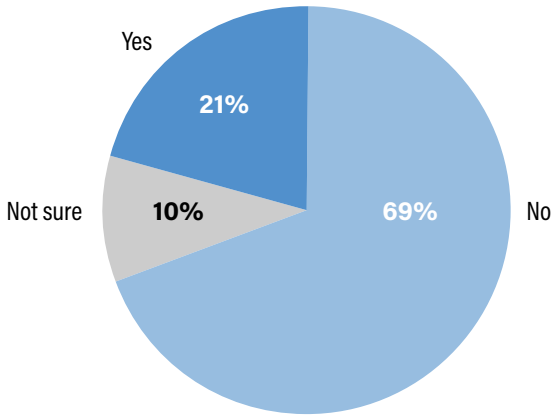


Figure 33. Percentage (%) of teachers who say their school or school district shared policies and procedures with teachers about how to address deepfake NCII that is shared

And teachers report a lack of information and guidance on how to handle and respond to deepfake NCII incidents.

School has provided guidance on...	Teachers
*How the school or school district's **discipline policy applies** to students who share "deepfake NCII" that depicts another student*	10%
***Who to tell** within the school or school district if a student receives or views "deepfake NCII" that depicts another student*	10%
*How to **protect the privacy** of a student who was depicted in "deepfake NCII"*	9%
*How to **communicate** with the students' families who were involved in an incident that involves sharing "deepfake NCII"*	9%

Table 6. Percentage (%) of teachers who say this topic has been discussed or covered as part of their teacher training about school or school district policies and procedures about deepfake NCII

While still low overall, the percentage of teachers who say their school has provided resources to victims of deepfake NCII is growing.

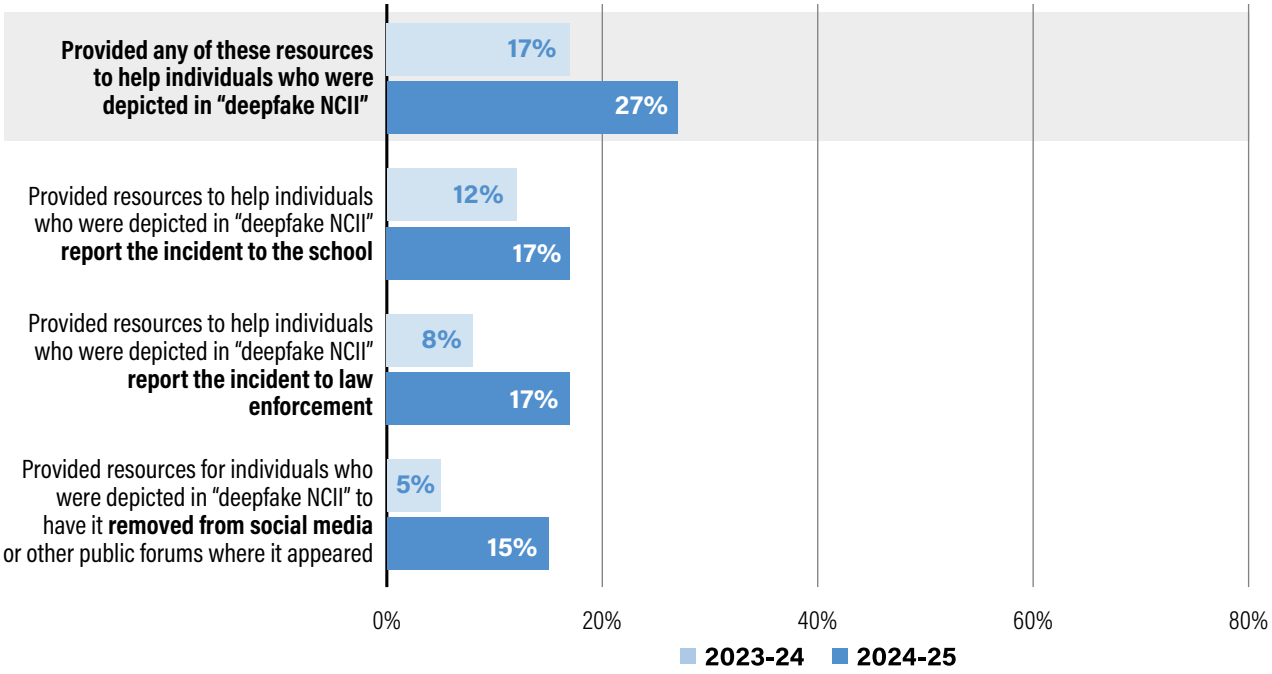


Figure 34. Percentage (%) of teachers who say their school responded to address deepfake NCII in their school in this way

Similarly, though students receive overall low levels of information from their school about deepfake NCII, 40 percent of students say they have received at least some discussion or guidance on the topic.

	Students
Provided* any *discussion or guidance about "deepfake NCII" to students	40%
*Made it clear how a student would be **punished** by the school if they shared "deepfake NCII"*	15%
*Shared that "deepfake NCII" can be punished severely, including **civil and criminal penalties**, such as going to jail or having to pay a fine*	12%
*Shared how "deepfake NCII" is **harmful** to the person pictured or heard*	12%
*Explained to students **what "deepfake NCII" is***	11%
*Told students **who to tell** at the school if they see or hear about "deepfake NCII"*	11%

Table 7. Percentage (%) of students who say this topic has been discussed or covered by their school as part of the guidance they gave to students about deepfake NCII

Teachers continue to report that severe consequences are imposed on students who are caught sharing authentic and/or deepfake NCII.

	Deepfake NCII	**Authentic** NCII
Counseling	39%	27%
Short-term suspension (1-2 days)	32%	18%
Long-term suspension (3 or more days)	32%	36%
Reported to law enforcement	24%	35%
Restorative justice practices (An alternative to punitive-based measures that focuses on restoring relationships)	18%	18%
Community service	15%	8%
Expulsion	15%	13%
Detention	12%	17%
No consequences/punishments were given	0%	3%
Don't know/Not sure	6%	18%
Severe consequences (net) - Long-term suspension, Expulsion, Reported to law enforcement	59%	60%

Table 8. Percentage (%) of teachers who have heard of deepfake or authentic NCII being shared by a student that depicts an individual associated with their school and say the student(s) received each consequence

n = 37 teachers who have heard of deepfake NCII being shared by a student that depicts an individual associated with their school and say the student(s) received the consequence for sharing deepfake NCII (number of respondents is less than 50, so use caution when interpreting)
n = 119 teachers who have heard of authentic NCII being shared by a student that depicts an individual associated with their school and say the student(s) received the consequence for sharing authentic NCII

Students and parents express that a mix of severe punishments and educational or restorative avenues would be most effective in deterring students from sharing deepfake NCII.

	Students	Parents
Criminal penalties (e.g., community service, jail, having a crime on their permanent record)	80%	76%
Expulsion/getting expelled	77%	73%
The school telling parents that their child shared "deepfake NCII"	75%	78%
Meeting with a guidance counselor/mandatory counseling	65%	76%
Schoolwide discussions of the harms of "deepfake NCII" to those who share it	65%	76%
Schoolwide discussions of the harms of "deepfake NCII" to victims	65%	76%
Speaker event or series of events with experts and victims	63%	76%
Long-term suspension (3 or more days)	63%	69%
Detention	46%	55%
Short-term suspension (1-2 days)	45%	56%

Table 9. Percentage (%) of students and parents who say the consequence would be effective at preventing students from sharing deepfake NCII

07 Student Activity Monitoring: Technology Remains Ubiquitous and Harms to Students Persist

This year brought new first-hand reports and lawsuits about the harms and long-lasting effects of schools' use of student activity monitoring software.[10] At the same time, student activity monitoring remains nearly ubiquitous throughout K-12 schools, and common harms like students getting in trouble, being contacted by law enforcement, and being outed (e.g., when a student's gender identity or sexual orientation is shared without their consent or approval) remain significant issues, although their prevalence has not increased since the 2023-24 school year.

DEFINITION FROM SURVEY

Student activity monitoring: Student activity monitoring is the use of technology to track students' online activity, such as when a student logs into the system, the contents of students' screens or emails, and/or student internet searches. Student activity monitoring may also enable real-time visibility into what students are looking at on their computers and can occur within a learning management system or through a separate software program.

Teachers and students report that student activity monitoring at their school is nearly ubiquitous, but many parents are not aware.

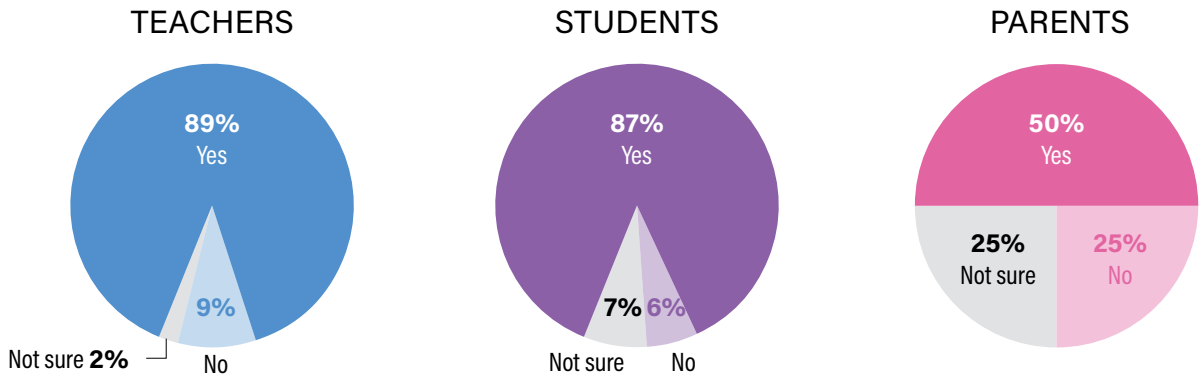


Figure 35. Percentage (%) of respondents who say their/their child's school conducts student activity monitoring

Teachers whose school conducts student activity monitoring report that the monitoring is occurring on students' personal devices and outside of school hours.

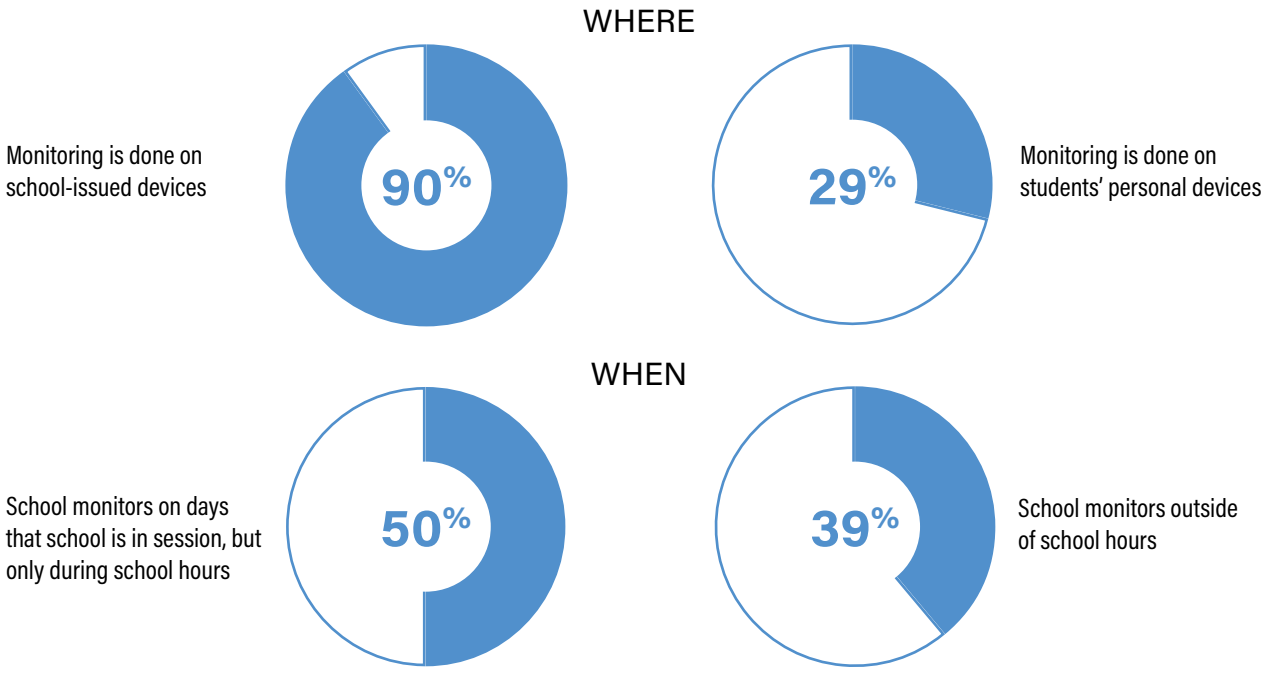


Figure 36. Percentage (%) of teachers whose school conducts student activity monitoring and say that their school does this

n = 716 teachers who indicate their school conducts student activity monitoring

Comfort among both parents and students continues to lag behind the use of the technology.

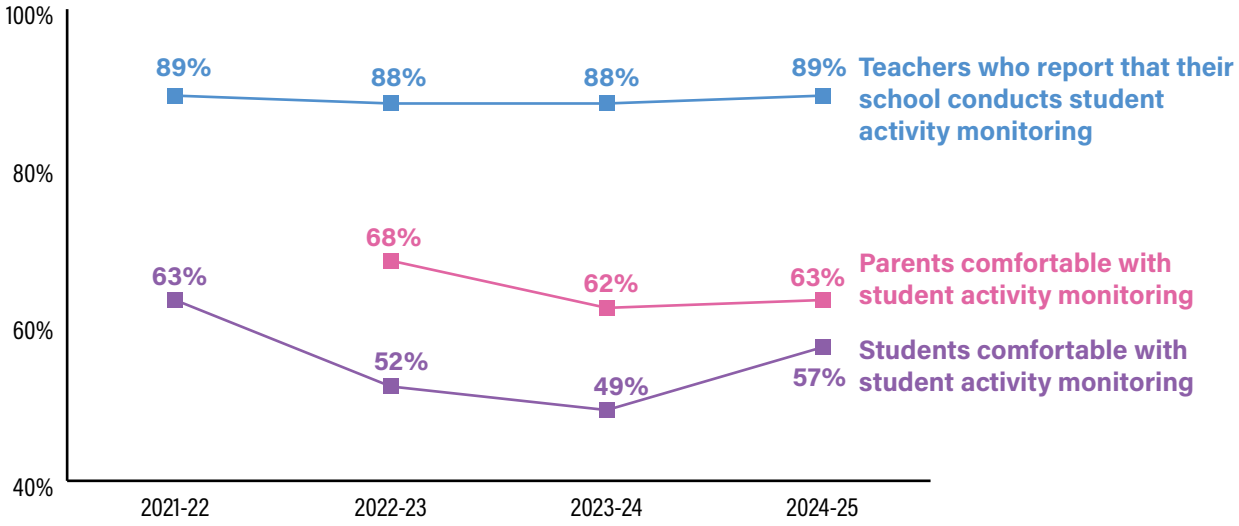


Figure 37. Percentage (%) of teachers who say their school conducts student activity monitoring; percentage (%) of students and parents who say they are comfortable with their/their child's school doing this

Consequences to students stemming from student activity monitoring remain common but have largely stabilized or slightly decreased.

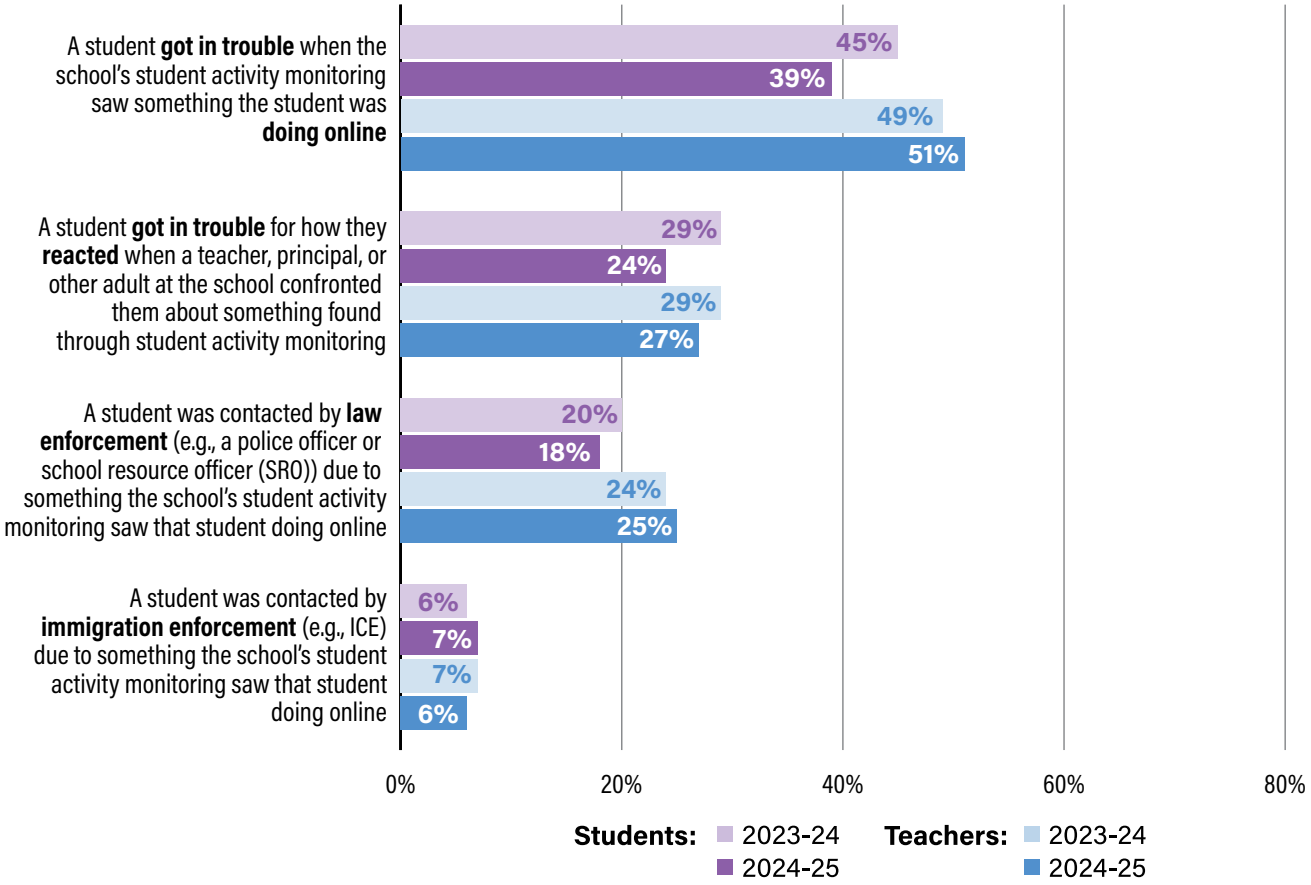


Figure 38. Percentage (%) of students and teachers who say their school conducts student activity monitoring and report the following has happened to them/a student(s) at their school

n (2023-24) = 1,129 students whose school conducts student activity monitoring, 883 teachers whose school conducts student activity monitoring
n (2024-25) = 888 students whose school conducts student activity monitoring, 716 teachers whose school conducts student activity monitoring

Students whose school monitors on personal devices are more likely to report that they or someone they know experienced consequences stemming from the monitoring, except for getting in trouble for something the student was doing online.

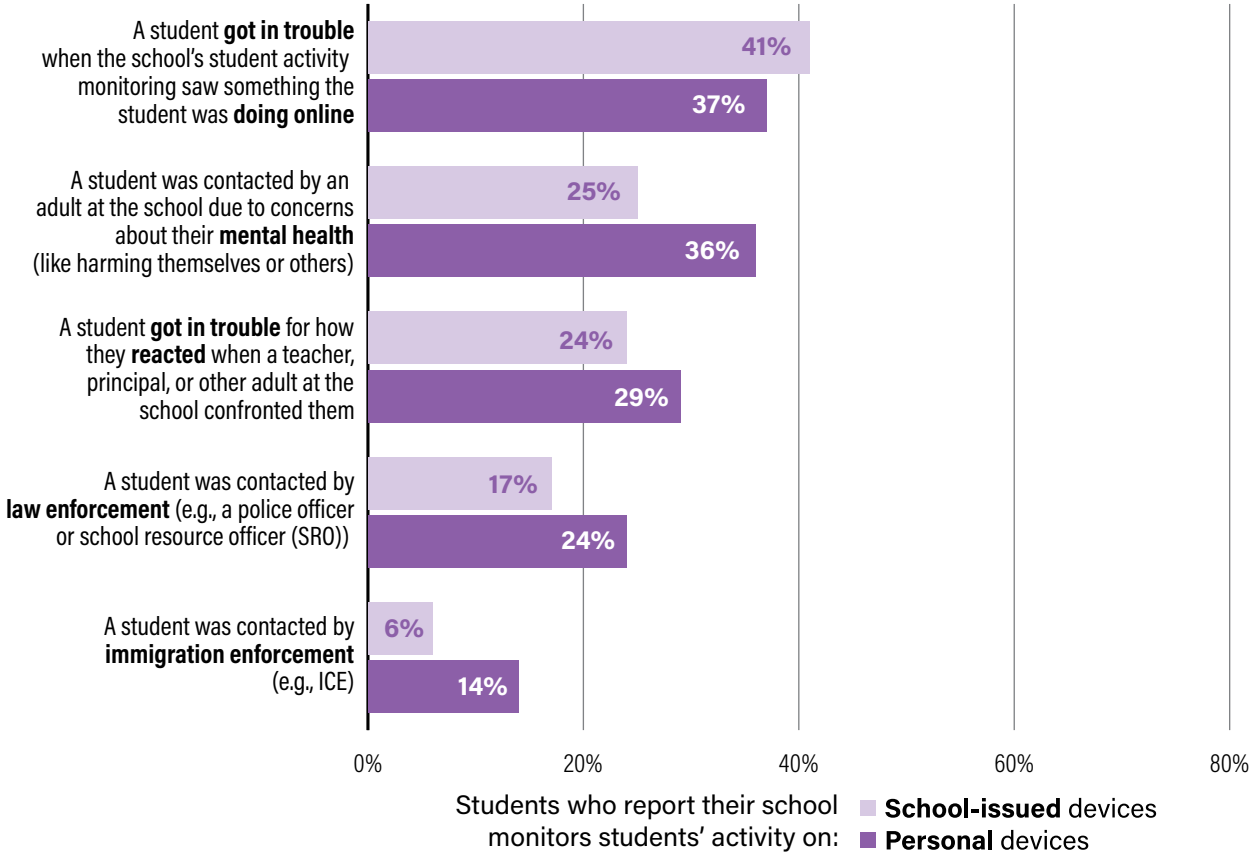


Figure 39. Percentage (%) of students who say their school conducts student activity monitoring on school-issued or personal devices and report the following has happened to them/a student(s) at their school during the last school year (2024-25)

n = 774 students whose school conducts student activity monitoring on school-issued devices, 276 students whose school conducts student activity monitoring on students' personal devices (schools may monitor on both personal and school devices, so these two groups are not mutually exclusive)

08 Student Privacy: AI Use Related to Existing Concerns and Threats

Using new systems that involve the collection and storage of personally identifiable information about students introduces increased privacy and security risks, and AI is no exception. Coinciding with the growing adoption of edtech tools, particularly AI-driven ones, school stakeholders remain concerned about student privacy and report increasing instances of data breaches and ransomware attacks, which is more pronounced among those whose school uses AI for many reasons.

Parents and students remain more concerned than teachers about student data privacy and security.

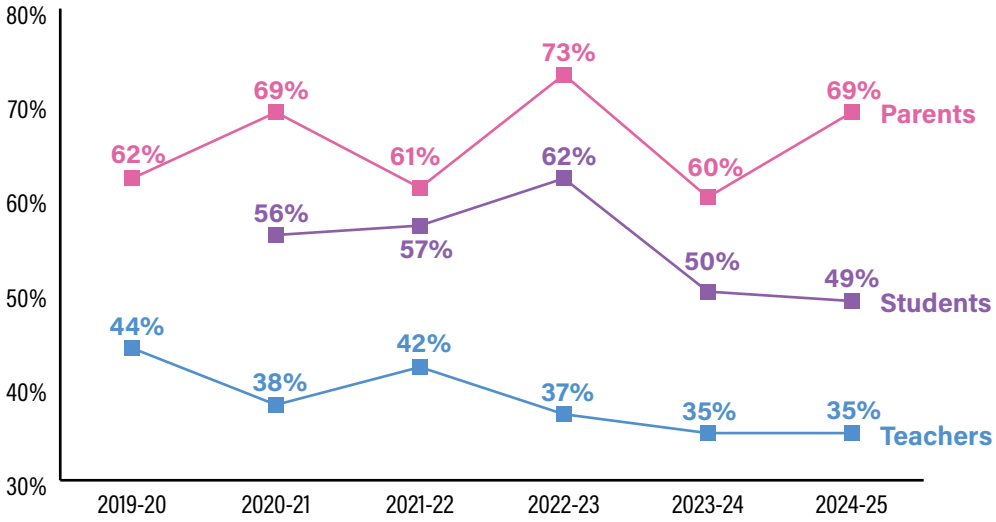


Figure 40. Percentage (%) of respondents who are concerned/worried about the privacy and security of student data and information that may be collected and stored by their/their child's school

Stakeholders whose school uses AI for many or some reasons are more likely to worry/be concerned about the privacy and security of student data and information.

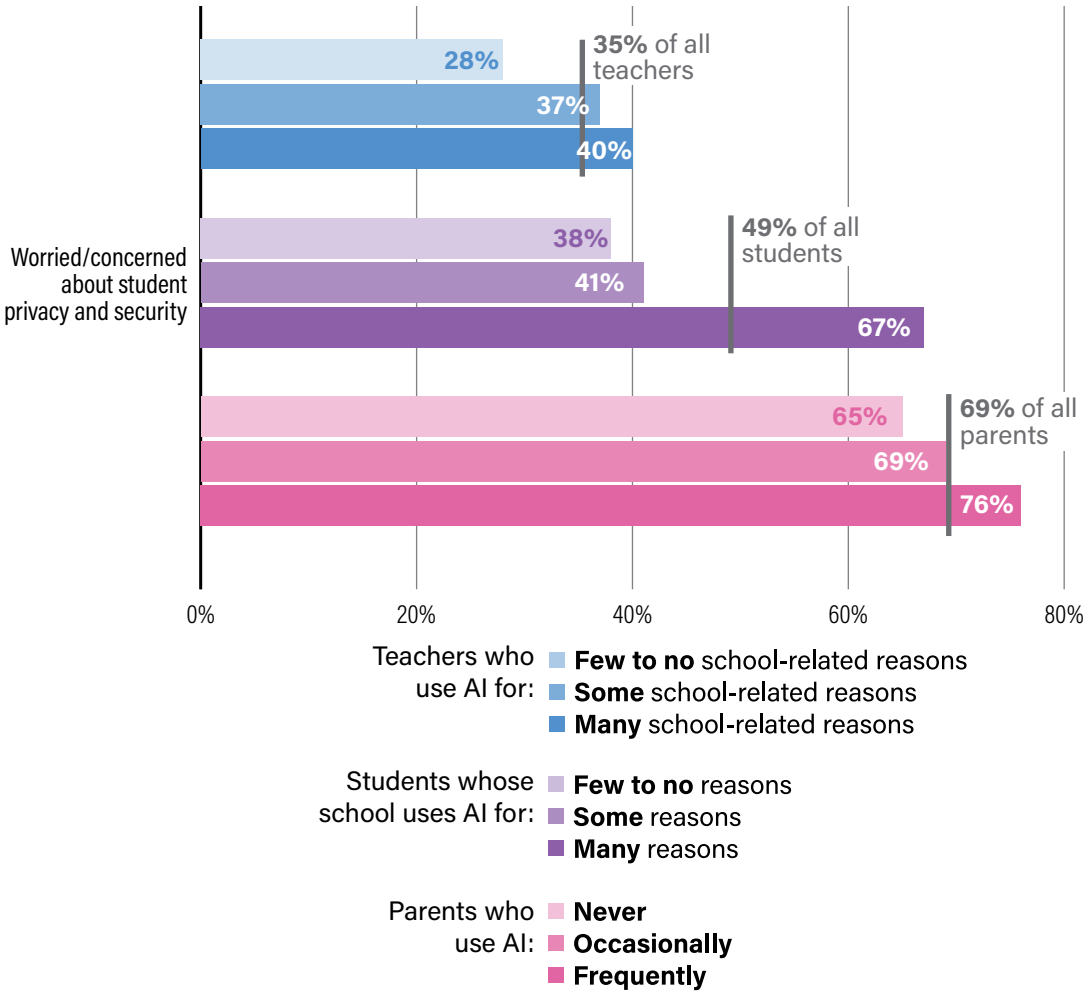


Figure 41. Percentage (%) of respondents who worry/are concerned about the privacy and security of student data and information that may be collected and stored by their school

n = 259 teachers who use AI for few to no school-related reasons, 321 teachers who use AI for some school-related reasons, 226 teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons
n = 338 students who report few to no uses of AI in their classes, 355 students who report some uses of AI in their classes, 337 students who report many uses of AI in their classes
n = 467 parents who never use AI, 238 parents who occasionally use AI, 312 parents who frequently use AI

As in past school years, approximately 7 in 10 teachers report that they have received training on student data privacy policies and procedures.

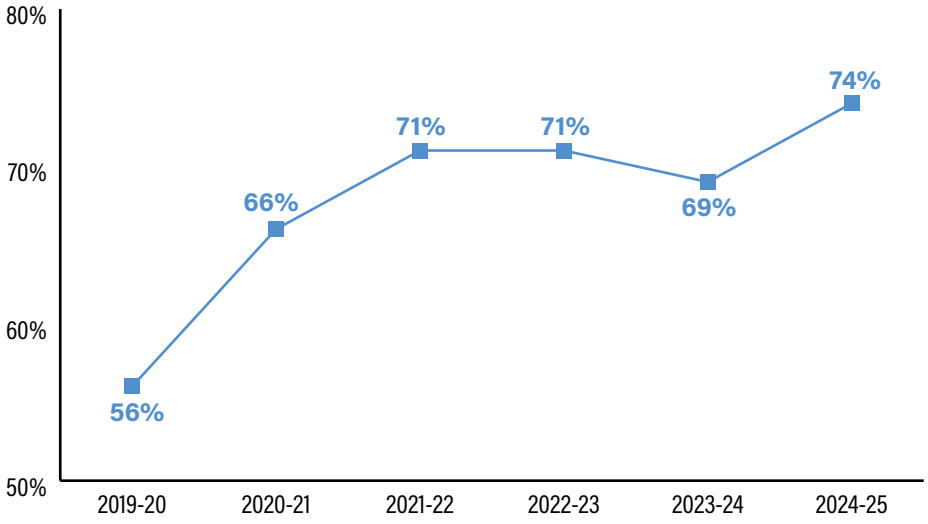


Figure 42. Percentage (%) of teachers who have received training from their school or school district on student data privacy policies and procedures

Teachers and parents report that data breaches continue to affect a significant number of schools.

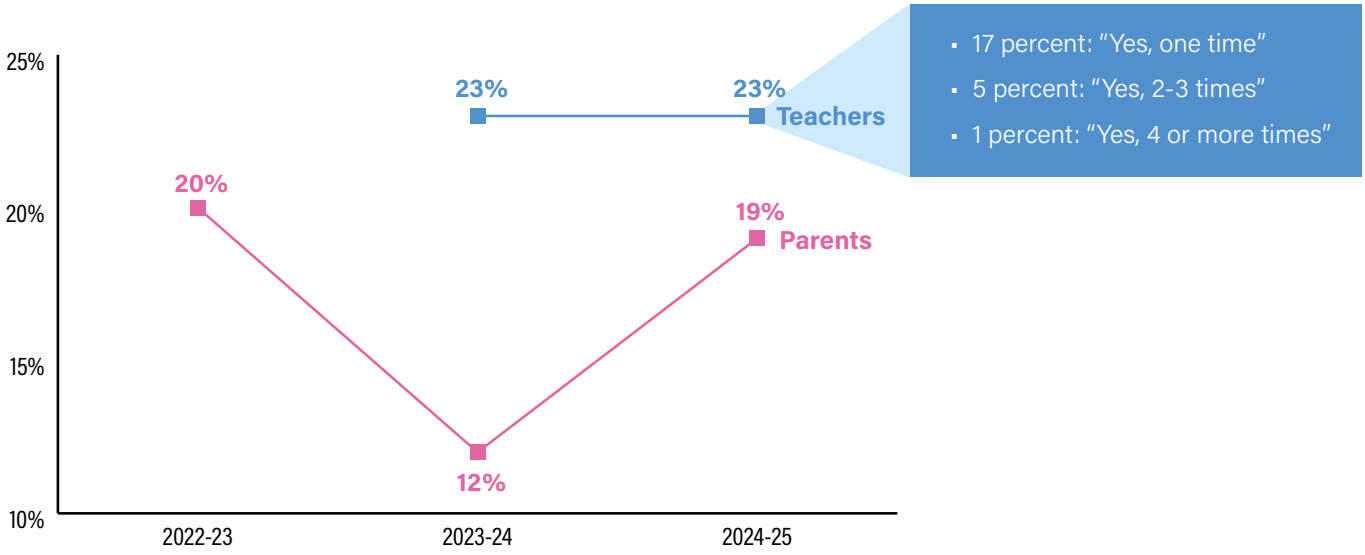


Figure 43. Percentage (%) of respondents who say their school experienced a large-scale data breach of student data or were notified by their child's school about a data breach or ransomware attack

Teachers are more likely to report that their school has experienced a large-scale data breach the more ways they use AI.

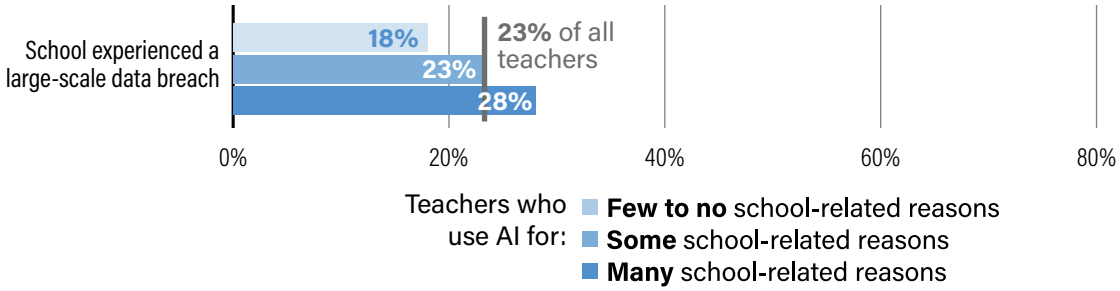


Figure 44. Percentage (%) of teachers who report their school experienced a large-scale data breach of student data during the last school year (2024-25)

n = 259 teachers who use AI for few to no school-related reasons, 321 teachers who use AI for some school-related reasons, 226 teachers who use AI for many school-related reasons

Longstanding and emerging uses of data and technology for student safety and non-academic purposes continue to grow in schools — and in most cases the majority of parents remain concerned about these uses.

	Teachers reporting their school uses data or technology in this way	Parents concerned about their child's school potentially using data or technology in this way
*School **uses student data to predict whether individual students are at risk of dropping out,** whether they are ready/not ready for college, etc.*	61%	56%
*School has **banned students from having/using cell phones** during the school day*	59%	52%
*School uses a **weapons detection system** to detect students, teachers, staff, and/or visitors who are attempting to enter the school/school grounds with a weapon*	36%	43%
*School **tracks students' physical location** through their phones, school-provided devices like laptops, or digital hall passes when they leave the classroom*	34%	67%
*School uses **cameras with facial recognition technology** to check who has entered a school building, identify irregular movements, etc.*	33%	48%
*School **uses AI to collect student biometric information** (e.g., fingerprints, face scans) to confirm their identity*	22%	69%
*School or school district analyzes student data to **predict which individual students** would be more likely to **commit a crime** or commit an act of violence*	20%	68%
*School or school district **shares student data** such as grades, attendance, and discipline information **with immigration enforcement***	17%	66%

Table 10. Percentage (%) of teachers who say their school or school district used data or technology in this way in the last school year (2024-25); percentage (%) of parents who are concerned about their child's school using data or technology in this way

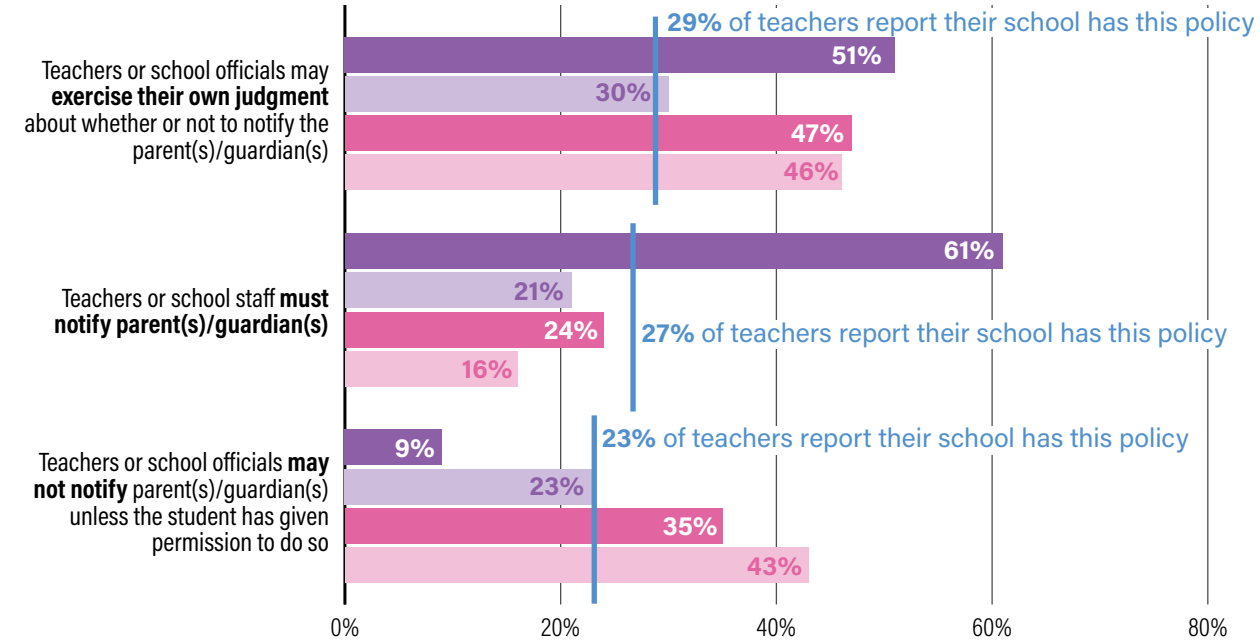
09

Gender Expansive Students and Privacy: Schools Vary in Policies and Protections

K-12 campuses across the country are experiencing mounting pressure from both the new Administration and parent advocates to address issues surrounding the inclusion and participation of gender expansive students, including their privacy.[11] Schools are alert to the issue, but their approaches to parental notification policies when a student requests to go by a different name or pronoun vary.

Most teachers report their school has notification policies when they get a request from students to go by a different name or pronoun at school, and LGBTQ+ students and their parents express more negative opinions about whether notification policies would be beneficial.

POLICIES ABOUT NOTIFYING THE FAMILY IF THEIR CHILD REQUESTS TO USE A DIFFERENT NAME OR PRONOUNS



POLICIES ABOUT NOTIFYING THE COMMUNITY THAT A STUDENT IN THE CLASS IS USING A DIFFERENT NAME OR PRONOUNS

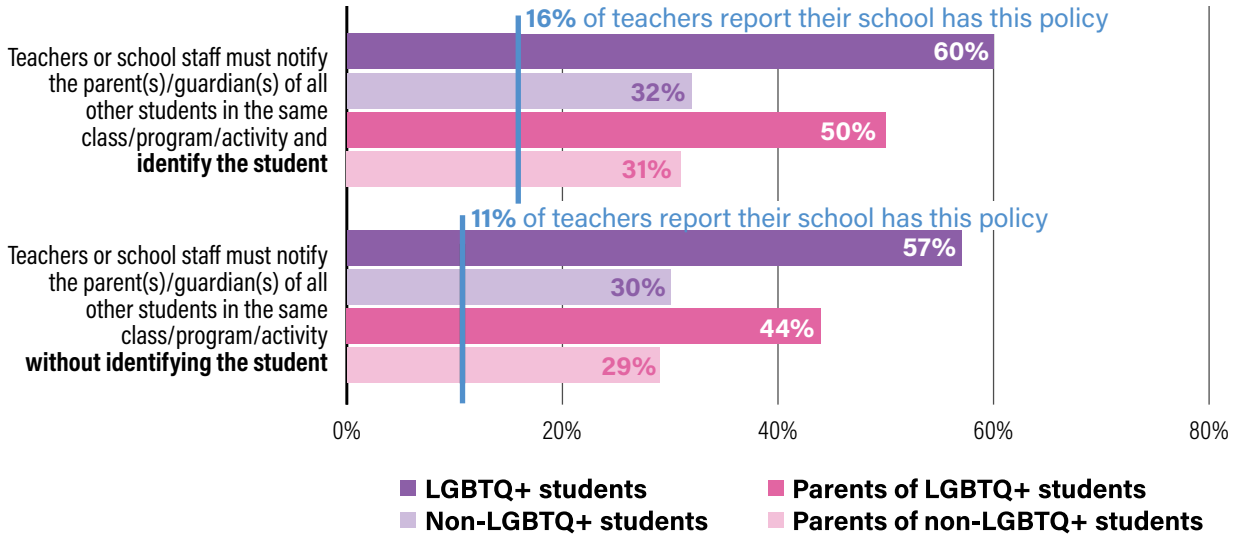


Figure 45. Percentage (%) of respondents who say this policy would be a bad policy for their school/their child's school to adopt

n = 236 students who identify as LGBTQ+, 62 parents whose child identifies as LGBTQ+ (note this is a small sample size)
n = 794 students who do not identify as LGBTQ+, 956 parents whose child does not identify as LGBTQ+

Few teachers report their schools collecting student gender categories beyond male or female.

	Teachers who report their school collects this gender category about students
Non-binary	29%
Transgender	21%
Intersex	7%

Table 11. Percentage (%) of teachers who say their school collects this gender category as part of official student records as of last school year (2024-25)

10 Immigrant Students: Privacy and Safety At Risk

The new Administration has rescinded a previous policy that protected sensitive locations from immigration enforcement, including school campuses.[12] At the same time, *Plyler v. Doe*[13] holds that undocumented, school-aged children are entitled to the same free public education as other students regardless of their immigration status. Historically, federal enforcement of this Supreme Court decision requires that schools do not take any actions that could discourage enrollment, which includes asking or requiring documentation about students or their family's immigration status during the enrollment process.[14]

However, there are funding and assessment reasons for which schools collect limited data to identify whether a student should be classified as an immigrant per the U.S. Department of Education's definition.[15] Understanding the data schools collect about immigrant students, and how they are applying best practices in data governance, is critical for local and state education agencies to fulfill their legal obligations to comply with *Plyler v. Doe* along with federal and state student privacy laws.

Half of all teachers say their school collects information about students' immigration status, including some that could violate *Plyler v. Doe*.

	Teachers
School collects what country the student came from	35%
School collects when the student arrived in the U.S.	26%
School collects whether the student is an immigrant (e.g., has a visa, is a refugee)	26%
School collects whether the student is undocumented	23%

Table 12. Percentage (%) of teachers who say their school collects this piece of information about a student's immigration status as part of official student records

In line with the 2023-24 school year, 17 percent of teachers report that student information was shared with immigration enforcement.

	2023-24	2024-25
Student information such as grades, attendance, and discipline information was shared with immigration enforcement (e.g., ICE)	17%	17%

Table 13. Percentage (%) of teachers who say their school or school district used data or technology in this way

Four in ten teachers say that their school provided training on data privacy-related school policies and procedures and immigration enforcement.

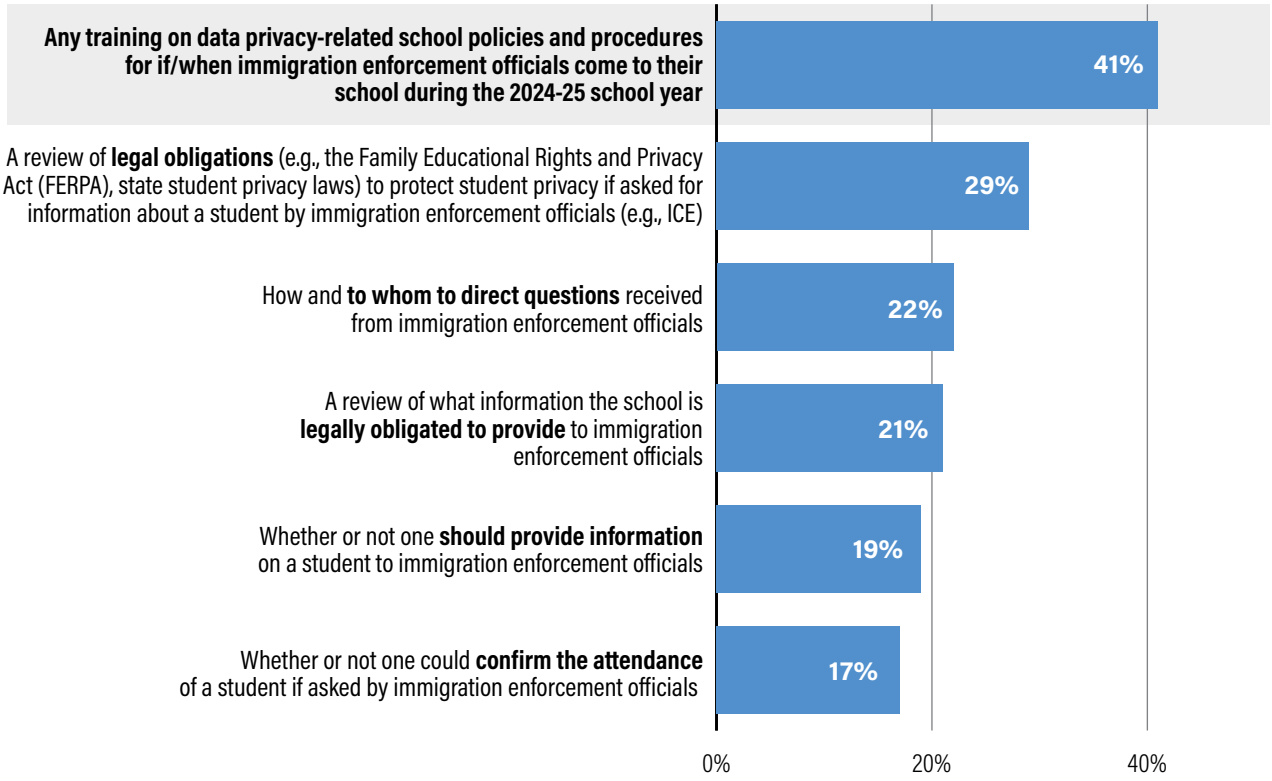


Figure 46. Percentage (%) of teachers who say this topic was discussed or covered as part of the training on their school's data privacy-related policies and procedures for if/when immigration enforcement officials (e.g., ICE) come to their school

Increased immigration enforcement efforts across the country are also coinciding with school staff reporting members of the school community to immigration enforcement officials (e.g., ICE) on their own accord.

	Teachers
Any independent reporting by a staff member, without being asked for this information	13%
*A staff member **reported a student** to immigration enforcement*	9%
*A staff member **reported a student's parent(s)/guardian(s)** to immigration enforcement*	9%
*A staff member **reported a teacher or other school employee** to immigration enforcement*	7%

Table 14. Percentage (%) of teachers who report that this happened at their school in the last school year (2024-25)

Key Terms Used in this Report

- **Edtech:** This report uses the term edtech broadly to mean all data and technology that is used in the classroom and with which students interact, regardless of whether it was designed with the education sector in mind. For example, generative AI applications that are broadly designed for consumers but used by students and teachers fall within this report's definition of edtech.
- **LGBTQ+ students:** Students who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer are a part of the LGBTQ+ community. In settings offering support for youth, Q can also stand for questioning. LGBTQ+ is also used, with the + added in recognition of all nonstraight, non-cisgender identities.[16]
- **Licensed special education teachers:** Licensed special education teachers are certified to work with and meet the needs of students with varying disabilities.
- **Students with an IEP or 504 plan:** Students with a disability that necessitates specially designed instruction receive an individualized education program (IEP) that is documented and reviewed annually. Students who have a disability and who require accommodations to participate in school to the same extent as their nondisabled peers receive a 504 plan. Students with disabilities typically have either an IEP or a 504 plan but not both, although it is possible.
- **Parent:** This report uses the term *parents* broadly to encompass all primary caregivers, including but not limited to biological parents, step-parents, foster parents, grandparents, legal guardians, or other blood relatives.

Additional Resources

This year's surveys comprise CDT's eighth poll among teachers, seventh poll among parents, and fifth poll among students. From 2020 to 2025, these surveys have measured and tracked changes in perceptions, experiences, training, engagement, and concerns about student data privacy, student activity monitoring, content filtering and blocking software, generative AI, AI in teaching and learning, AI literacy, NCII, deepfakes, and more. The following page contains a compilation of CDT's foundational survey research upon which this report builds: Original Research on EdTech, Student Privacy, and Civil Rights.

Methodology

Online surveys of nationally representative samples of 1,030 9th- to 12th-grade students, 806 6th- to 12th-grade teachers, and 1,018 6th- to 12th-grade parents were fielded between June and August 2025. Quotas were set to ensure that the data collected among students, parents, and teachers was representative of their respective audiences nationwide, and the data was weighted as needed to align nationally with key demographics. Sample sizes among all audiences were sufficient for analyses within key subgroups, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Any subgroup sample sizes that differ from the total sample size are denoted throughout this report.

Endnotes

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