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Press Release

AFT Announces New Guardrails for Artificial Intelligence in Nation's Classrooms

Report Is Part of Cache of Resources that Also Includes \$200,000 in Investments and 'AI Educator Brain' Online Lessons

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Contact:

James Hill
301-538-7955
jhill@aft.org

WASHINGTON—Today, the AFT launched a suite of comprehensive resources to help educators as they grapple with the rapidly expanding use of artificial intelligence in education. First, is a pioneering new

report setting forth AI classroom guardrails. Compiled by classroom practitioners, “[Commonsense Guardrails for Using Advanced Technology in Schools](#)” aims to protect students and educators from problematic aspects of the new technology while embracing its potential benefits.

Second, through its Innovation Fund, the 1.7 million-member union is investing over \$200,000 in 11 school districts across the country to fund solutions to incorporating, understanding and regulating AI, drawing inspiration from members on the ground.

And to ensure educators have sustained and expert support, the AFT also launched the [AI Educator Brain](#), an online resource available for free on the Share My Lesson website. A collaboration between the AFT’s Share My Lesson director Kelly Booz, New York City Public Schools teacher Sari Beth Rosenberg and EdBrAI—their AI “teammate”—the series is designed specifically to help teachers better understand and use AI in the classroom.

“AI, with all its problems and possibilities, is here to stay. To reap its benefits, we must confront its perils, including combating dangerous and convincing deepfakes and reality-distorting algorithms,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten. “If we are going to protect our children’s and educators’ safety and privacy while strengthening kids’ critical-thinking, problem-solving, communication and relationship skills, we have to empower educators to regulate and guide tomorrow’s technologies.

“These guardrails, grants and digital resources put classroom practitioners—the people who truly know how to teach and support student learning—at the center of managing and securing advanced technology. They insulate students from the dangers of misinformation by, for example, teaching them how to use AI research as a starting point for original source analysis and verifying evidence.”

Designed to be updated as the technology advances, the guidelines in the “Commonsense Guardrails” report were created and refined by the AFT’s AI task force to help educators maximize the educational potential of advanced technologies while mitigating, to the greatest degree possible, their potential for harm. Composed of seasoned educators, the task force prioritized six core values to ensure students and families feel informed and protected:

- Maximize safety and privacy;
- Promote human interaction and individuality;
- Empower educators to make educational decisions;
- Advance equity and fairness;
- Advance democracy; and
- Teach digital citizenship and balance.

INNOVATION FUND WINNERS

The 11 districts the AFT Innovation Fund is supporting have proposed a wide range of practices, including creating AI summits to understand and establish guidelines, providing hands-on training for educators, and establishing workshops, panels and community events.

The winning union locals are:

AFT St. Louis/Saint Louis Public Schools (Missouri)— will develop an Educational Summit for the St. Louis Public School stakeholders to establish parameters around AI, how it can and should be used, and what must be done as AI use expands in education and the work force.

Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (Ohio)—will provide critically needed training on AI and education technology; support teacher-led committees that will perform an AI/ed-tech policy assessment in the district; and support teacher-led committee work resulting in policy to be included in its collective bargaining agreement, to ensure teacher voice is central in the evolution of how AI and ed tech are deployed in the district.

Cranston Teachers Alliance (Rhode Island)—will create a joint project with the district and the teachers union to equip K-12 teachers with the knowledge and resources to leverage ed-tech tools, including AI. Through workshops, building-based coaching and collaborative activities, teachers will plan curriculum-aligned activities to increase student engagement and content understanding.

Helena Federation of Teachers (Montana)—will launch a Helena school district Innovative Educator Program that empowers teachers to discover and implement best practices with technology through a mentorship program. It will be a continuous two-year cycle of mentor-mentee pairing, which will grow the district's technology implementation.

Part-Time Faculty Association of Allan Hancock College (Santa Maria, Calif.)—will equip its community college faculty with technological skills and AI knowledge through workshops, hands-on training and partnering with the college administration.

Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association (Florida)—will collaborate with the school district, the Alliance of Black School Educators, Pinellas Technical College, Junior Achievement, the League of United Latin American Citizens and community partners to bring hands-on professional development on AI and digital citizenship to union educators. Union-led professional development sessions on “embracing AI” will leverage AI for tasks like text analysis and grading, while enhancing, rather than replacing, the human elements of education.

Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers (California)—will focus on increasing the digital responsibility and safety of its students, families and community. An educator committee will use activities and

events like a community fair and family forum to gather and share information to support improved online practices and procedures in their community, homes and schools.

Norfolk Aggie Federation of Teachers (Walpole, Mass.)—will give groups of teachers the space and support needed to experiment with AI and collaborate on the creation of schoolwide policies and resources to support each other and their students. As educators at an agricultural CTE high school, they believe it is important to give staff and students the support necessary to better understand how AI affects workers and industry.

North Suburban Teachers Union (Skokie, Ill.)—will host a collaborative and innovative symposium exploring the potential of AI to benefit English learner students and their families. This interdisciplinary event will feature workshops, panels and interactive sessions, fostering dialogue on leveraging AI tools for language acquisition, cultural collaboration and educational support for diverse learners.

Ojai Federation of Teachers (California)—will explore three different ways to mitigate the negative effects of social media on young people. These include providing cellphone holders for all classrooms; purchasing social media literacy curriculum to be implemented by teachers; and partnering with a local therapist who provides therapeutic hiking and camping adventures for kids and adults focused on personal wellness, connection and enjoyment of nature.

United Federation of Teachers (New York City)—will create an interdisciplinary team of educators who will use an AI program to support students with the long-term retention and transfer of essential content material and skills. Students will educate their peers on how to effectively and responsibly use AI within academic environments, via tutoring sessions and a workshop co-sponsored by one of their community-based organizations, Commonpoint Queens.

Available now on the AFT's free teacher resource, Share My Lesson, [AI Educator Brain](#) is a fun and informative series with the mission to "determine how AI can support teaching and learning, and when it might be best to stick with tried-and-true methods." Visitors to the site will find a host of resources, including the pros and cons of using AI to grade students' work, the AI's role in addressing complex issues like honest history, and the [July 15 webinar "Policies and Guardrails for Safe Classrooms."](#) The goal is to make AI accessible and tangible for educators and, ultimately, for the students who will grow, live and learn in an education landscape that will undoubtedly be affected by these advanced technologies.

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The AFT represents 1.8 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state and local government employees; nurses and healthcare workers; and early childhood educators.

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The AFT is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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