

# Generative AI and its Place in Public Education

## Arron Carter, Board Director District 1

At the 2024 Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA) Annual Conference in Spokane, a session titled "Incorporating Generative AI: Three District Perspectives" highlighted how generative AI is being integrated into school districts. Speakers Sara Betnel, Natalie Wimberley, and Ruth Ladderud shared their experiences and strategies for using AI to enhance education. They discussed practical applications of generative AI in teaching and learning, including personalized instruction and creative projects, while addressing challenges such as ethical concerns, student over-reliance, and the need for teacher training. Best practices were shared to guide schools in adopting AI responsibly, ensuring its benefits are maximized while mitigating risks. The session emphasized the importance of thoughtful implementation and ongoing conversation about AI's role in education.

Now in full disclosure, the previous paragraph was written by a generative artificial intelligence (AI) bot. I used a free version of ChatGPT and put in the prompt “Summarize in paragraph form what was taught about generative AI in the 2024 WSSDA annual conference in Spokane.”. What I found was that the output was overly generalized. The AI bot basically summarized the session summary from the published schedule. In previous uses of generative AI, I have even found that some information presented was inaccurate. Now, I am no expert when it comes to generative AI and the capabilities it has. I am very interested though. Generative AI is accessible to almost everyone now, and more and more features and capabilities are coming the more people use AI bots.

Generative AI could have some benefits within a classroom setting. Adaptive learning software could allow tailored lessons, granting personalized learning to each student’s pace and style. There are AI-driven tools like text-to-speech and speech-to-text to assist and support students with disabilities. For English language learners, AI translation tools can break down language barriers to speed up learning. Becoming AI literate can also assist students in future career options and allow them to appropriately use generative AI in their careers. There are also downsides to using generative AI. There is a risk of plagiarism and academic misconduct as students may produce assignments without genuine effort or copy the work of others and claim it as their own. An over-reliance on AI may erode critical thinking skills, reducing problem-solving and analytical skills. Students may also lack critical perspectives as they learn to accept superficial solutions generated by AI. There is a potential for misinformation as students might accept AI outputs as fact without verifying information. Lastly, there are privacy and data security issues, as any information put into a generative AI bot can enter the public realm, and sensitive personal information or intellectual property can be shared by the AI system. I have only mentioned a few pros and cons to using generative AI. The list is much longer and more complicated than what I have summarized.

Once again, generative AI supported my writing the previous paragraph. This time, instead of having generative AI write the paragraph for me, I asked ChatGPT “What are the pros and cons to using AI in high school?”. I was able to look at the bullet points

generated, read through them, critically think about each of the points, and then write, in my own words, a summary of the pros and cons that I thought were most impactful. While some of the ideas presented were ones I had thought about previously, there were also ideas the AI bot presented that were benefits or concerns (like data privacy) that I had not thought about previously.

While I am divided on the use of generative AI in the school system and for general use, I see both the usefulness of it and the concerns. I have used generative AI to help break down complex concepts that I was learning about to be able to take it in more manageable ways. I also have concerns that the use of generative AI can begin to erode critical thinking and analytical skills, and that users will become more reliant on what generative AI produces without analyzing the outputs. What I do know is that we need more conversation around generative AI. The school board asked that a committee be formed to begin drafting guidelines on the use of AI in the Pullman School District. While these guidelines will be useful, it will be hard to draft policy around generative AI because it is changing so rapidly, and the use of it changes dramatically from one course subject to another. We will also need to support our teachers as generative AI becomes more common and help them understand the best uses of AI and how to set guidelines around the use of it in each of their individual classrooms.

The third use of AI is the editing capabilities. I took the above paragraph and put it into ChatGPT and asked it to be edited for a general community audience. While the above paragraph is my own writing, when I read what the generative AI edited, it was a more eloquent version of my own writing. The structure of the sentences was cleaner, and the words used were more expressive. Not being an expert in English grammar myself, I can see how using generative AI could improve my writing output (although I don’t really learn how to become better myself). Even writing this article in a word document AI has been useful. Misspelled words were quickly fixed, and the program even gave me word suggestions as I was typing.

Regardless of if one thinks the use of generative AI is right or wrong, it is a technology that is here and being used. I have wondered if we need to change the question from if it is right or wrong, to ‘how do we teach students to appropriately use AI in their lives’. When attending the 2024 WSSDA annual conference, a speaker framed it this way by saying “Teach to their future, not to your past”. That really resonated with me. We don’t often ask students to turn in handwritten essays (like I often did) and the calculator is commonplace (where I was told I would not have a calculator with me all the time). All I know is that we need to continue to have discussions around the proper use of AI so that as it develops, we will know how best to integrate it into the learning process of our students.

*The opinions expressed in Board Reports are those of individual school board members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the board as a whole or of Pullman Public Schools.*



### Child Find 2024-2025

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

This screening is an opportunity to identify, locate, and evaluate children who might have a disability and to address potential concerns. This is available to children (birth through 5 years of age) residing, or living in a temporary situation, within Pullman School District's boundaries.

**UPCOMING SCREENING DATES:**

- ✓ Friday, March 7
- ✓ Friday, April 4
- ✓ Friday, May 2



All children ages 5-21 who are suspected of possibly having a disability who reside in, or are living in a temporary situation, within PSD's boundaries are entitled to child find activities. This includes all children enrolled in PSD schools, children who are being home schooled, and children enrolled in a private school located in the district (even if they reside in another district).

For more information or to **schedule an appointment**, please contact Pullman School District's Instructional Programs Office at (509) 332-3144.

OUR MISSION IS TO ENSURE LEARNING WHILE CHALLENGING AND SUPPORTING EACH STUDENT TO ACHIEVE FULL POTENTIAL



To enroll in kindergarten, your student must be 5 years old by August 31, 2025



## ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:**

- ✓ Ages & Stages Questionnaire (kindergarten only)
- ✓ Proof of student's age (birth certificate, passport, adoption records, etc.)
- ✓ Medically verified immunization records that are current for student's age (Certificate of Immunization Status)

# ENROLL FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR TODAY!

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER AT [WWW.PULLMANCHOOLS.ORG/ENROLLMENT](http://WWW.PULLMANCHOOLS.ORG/ENROLLMENT)



# Disrupting Poverty

*Kelsey Winningham, Jefferson Elementary Principal*

Each year as educators, we work diligently to continue our learning. This takes shape in a multitude of ways. We continue our learning through various conferences, job-embedded professional development with our colleagues, or a book study. We strive for our students to be life-long learners and we find it essential to put the same practices into place. During the 2023-2024 school year, the Jefferson Elementary guiding coalition (a team comprised of our teacher leaders) embarked on a book study. Over the course of the year, the team read “Disrupting Poverty: Five Powerful Classroom Practices” and “Turning High Poverty Schools into High Performing Schools.” Both books are authored by Kathleen Budge and William Parrett.

Jefferson Elementary school serves 346 students. Of the 346 students, 55% are families living in poverty. Because of our current reality, we felt it was necessary to find powerful practices that will help change the trajectory of those experiencing poverty. During the 2023-24 school year, the Building Guiding Coalition read both books and consulted with Ms. Budge and Mr. Parrett. During this time, the team challenged their thinking, learned new practices to implement in their classrooms, and collaborated on the importance of the strategies laid out in the book. After completing the book study, the team felt it was important for the entire staff to embark on the “Disrupting Poverty” book study to grow the repertoire of strategies to use in the classroom. During the 2024-2025 school year, the entire Jefferson Elementary staff has been reading together and having valuable discussions during staff meetings. There are values and belief systems that make up a school. Within those schools, “Disrupting Poverty” has shown us that there are five hallmarks to embody a high-poverty, high-performing school. They are, “caring relationships, high expectations and support, commitment to equity, professional accountability for learning, and the courage and will to take action.” As we have read through the book, we have found different strategies to help all our students succeed.

To support all students, we first had to challenge our labels, stereotypes, and deficit perspectives. We learned that, “by applying the diagnosis of ‘poor,’ teachers often further wound the patient, rather than providing for a meaningful remedy. Labeling our students “poor” can provide an excuse for holding low expectations, lead to “blaming” them for their living circumstances, and contribute to a self-defeating prophecy for ourselves in terms of our ability to teach them” (p. 23). At Jefferson, we are a “Kids at Hope” school. This means that we hold kids to high standards, that we don’t lower the bar, but we raise it. We time travel with kids so they can see their future; further, we set goals with them to help them see their dreams are within reach. We choose to believe in EVERY kid, NO exceptions. We believe that every kid that enters our school is capable of success. The book further highlights the belief that we already hold and gives us strategies to help our kids achieve the dreams that they have set forth.

The following strategies are ways to help us hold ourselves professionally accountable to ensure that student learning is occurring. We focus on what we can control and what is within our sphere of influence. We are open to critique and willing to learn. Again, we come back to that idea of being life-long learners ourselves. We find accountability partners so that we have colleagues who can challenge our thinking and give necessary feedback. One of the most important cornerstones is letting our students know that we won’t give up on them. We help them find the skills to foster ownership and self-regulation; we give them the tools they need to work through the hard parts and we walk right alongside them. We consider ourselves to be on the same team as our students. There is no “you and me.” It is “US.” We win together and we lose together. Lastly, we take risks. It is essential that we challenge the norm. Students are looking to us to help them navigate the challenges of life. We have to be creative and think outside the box to do so.

Jefferson Elementary deeply believes in the hard work of disrupting poverty. It is our goal to help students break free from the cycle of poverty. One of our favorite quotes is, “questioning our assumptions enables us to adopt a resilience perspective, rather than the predominantly held deficit view of students living in poverty. It also focuses on the assets that students who live in poverty bring to the table, which ‘might be the most essential ingredient in the effective relationship recipe....’ (p. 134).” We are in the relationship business. It is what we do and who we are. The work we’ve begun is far from over. Even though our book study is nearing the end, the real work is just beginning.

Sources Consulted:

Budge, Kathleen M., and William Parrett. *Disrupting Poverty: Five Powerful Classroom Practices*. ASCD, 2018.

**PHS Boosters Club** would like to send out a sincere **THANK YOU** to the SEL Event Center, all of our sponsors, donors, attendees, and volunteers that made the **Caddy Shack at Barkers Club House Dinner and Auction Fundraiser** such a success!

The generosity of the community raised over **\$40,000!** This money will enable us to continue giving back to the Pullman High School students in the form of grants to their activities, clubs, and athletics.

We would especially like to thank our **"BIG DOG" Sponsors:**

**\$1000 Blue Level BIG DOG:**  
Mike & Dede Boone  
Mitch & MaryJo Chandler  
Norm Druffel & Sons  
Gesa Credit Union  
Pullman Lions Club  
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**\$250 White Level BIG DOG:**  
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IMSB Law

**Gifts In Kind BIG DOG:**  
Neill's Coffee & Ice Cream  
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South Fork Public House  
Pullman Radio  
j&h Printing

A special thanks goes out to Erin Willy and PHS ASB teams, and Andrew Mielke and the PHS Band and Choir students. We also couldn't have done it without the support of the following individuals: Laura Bartley, JoReen Brinkman, Miranda Chandler, Marcus Crossler, April Danninger, Kurt Druffel, Evan Ellis, Morann Johnson, Pat Johnson, Danielle Kallaheer, TyAnne Roberts, and Amy Rogers!

**And finally a BIG THANK YOU to our Co-Chairs for putting the whole thing together:**  
**Chris Chandler, Jim Harbour, and Sarah Druffel --- Go Hounds!**

**SAVE THE DATE**

Hosted by PSD Board of Directors

# COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION

**WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!**

**March 19 | 5:30pm-6:30pm**  
Lincoln Middle School  
315 SE Crestview St, Pullman, WA

Join the Pullman School District Board of Directors for an open dialogue at our upcoming Community Listening Session! Topics are still being finalized, so please visit our website for updates and additional details.

The listening session will end at 6:30 PM and will be followed by a board work session that will be open to the public for observation only.

We value your input and look forward to hearing from you!

If you have questions about the upcoming Community Listening Session, please reach out to our District Office by email at [info@psd267.org](mailto:info@psd267.org) or by phone at (509) 332-3581.

The Pullman School District Board of Directors and the Pullman School District shall provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities programs without regard to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation (including gender expression or identity), marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, participation in the Boy Scouts of America or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The district will provide equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Civil Rights Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent, (509) 332-3144, [compliancecoord@psd267.org](mailto:compliancecoord@psd267.org), and Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent (509) 332-3144, [compliancecoord@psd267.org](mailto:compliancecoord@psd267.org). 240 SE Dexter Street, Pullman, WA 99163. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations in the application process by contacting the Personnel Coordinator at (509) 332-3584. Title IX inquiries may also be directed toward the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR): <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>. Information about the nondiscrimination and sex- based discrimination policies and grievance procedures, and how to report a concern or complaint: [https://www.pullmanschools.org/families/hib-and-discrimination/discrimination\\_sexual\\_harassment](https://www.pullmanschools.org/families/hib-and-discrimination/discrimination_sexual_harassment).

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