AI + K-12 Morning Brief - September 22, 2026

1. Maryland puts student AI safety into its statewide agenda

Maryland's AI principles say the state requires guidance on safe and ethical AI use in elementary and secondary schools, AI literacy, purchasing standards and teacher training. Proposed next steps include crisis protocols for chatbots and human escalation when a school AI tool detects student distress. Why it matters: The agenda links classroom adoption to procurement review, teacher oversight and student-safety procedures rather than treating AI as a stand-alone tool. Tone: constructive, with implementation questions. Source - https://governor.maryland.gov/official-actions/ai-principles

2. Khanmigo trial finds modest gains-and low student engagement

An NBER working paper reports a two-year cluster-randomized trial in 18 Tennessee middle schools. Assignment to Khan Academy with Khanmigo during remedial math sessions raised achievement by 1.3 national percentile ranks per term, while the researchers found that students used the tutor infrequently and that gains resembled those from Khan Academy practice without AI assistance. Why it matters: The results suggest that adding an AI tutor can produce modest gains, but access alone does not ensure meaningful use or an advantage over established digital practice. Tone: evidence-led and measured. Source - https://nber.org/papers/w35620

3. Common Sense rates Perplexity an "unacceptable" risk for children

Common Sense Media rated Perplexity High or Unacceptable Risk on all eight of its AI principles and said the product failed four of five severe-harm tests. Its 15-year-old test account was largely treated like an adult, and the assessment found no parental or school-administrator controls. Why it matters: Schools should conduct product-specific safety and academic-integrity reviews before treating a general-purpose AI search service as student-ready. Tone: cautionary. Source - https://institute.commonsensemedia.org/risk-assessments/perplexity

4. Marietta launches a districtwide MagicSchool pilot

Marietta City Schools launched a MagicSchool AI pilot available to educators and students across the district. District officials said data security influenced the selection, teachers have used the platform for tasks including grading and customized lesson planning, and the district will evaluate performance and feedback through the rest of the school year before considering a longer partnership. Why it matters: The pilot gives school leaders a concrete example of pairing AI access with staff development, a defined trial period and a review before longer-term adoption. Tone: practical and guarded. Source - https://wtap.com/2026/09/21/marietta-city-schools-launches-ai-pilot-program-focused-data-security-digital-literacy

5. Martin County adopts a district AI guidebook

The Martin County School Board unanimously approved a 19-page guidebook at its September 15 meeting outlining how artificial intelligence should and should not be used in classrooms. Why it matters: A districtwide guidebook can give teachers and students a shared starting point for classroom AI expectations, provided the rules are reviewed as tools and risks evolve. Tone: constructive. Source - https://tcpalm.com/story/news/education/martin-county-schools/2026/09/18/florida-school-board-adopts-ai-guidebook-martin-county-schools-education-teacher-student-classrooms/91791836007

6. Taylor teachers use AI to adapt lessons and address learning gaps

Taylor Community School Corporation teachers demonstrated how they use Colleague AI to prepare lessons, target learning gaps and differentiate instruction. The platform can draft materials from teacher-supplied curriculum and performance information, but teachers remain responsible for reviewing, correcting and deciding whether to use the output. Why it matters: The rollout shows a teacher-in-the-loop model in which AI accelerates preparation without transferring instructional judgment to the software. Tone: cautiously constructive. Source - https://www.kokomotribune.com/news/local_news/taylor-teachers-use-ai-to-tailor-lessons-address-student-needs/article_5f640b97-3708-42f0-af29-0023f7764811.html