THE SETHI LEDGER
AI + K-12 Brief | 2026-11-10

1. Stanford review finds K-12 AI evidence has grown but remains sparse

Stanford's November 2026 review identifies 52 strong causal papers in its K-12 AI evidence base, up from 20 in the March review, while emphasizing that findings are not broadly generalizable across U.S. K-12 settings. The review reports mixed results: AI appears more promising when supporting learning or targeted educator tasks than when replacing student thinking, but outcomes vary with use and implementation.

Why it matters: The review supports procurement and implementation decisions that specify intended uses and evaluate results locally, rather than assuming AI tools work uniformly. Evidence growth is not proof that any particular product or district use is effective.

Limits: The update covers studies published from October 2025 through June 2026; the authors say more K-12 research is needed to establish lasting benefits and for whom they occur.

Published unknown. Source: https://scale.stanford.edu/ai/evidence-base-review/evidence-base-ai-k12-november-review

2. Salinas elementary district plans to remove Facebook and Instagram accounts over student-photo concerns

Salinas City Elementary School District plans to delete its Facebook and Instagram accounts on November 20, citing student privacy and concerns about possible AI use of student photos. Meta had paused proposed terms changes on November 5, but the district said it would proceed; it says families can access photos and updates through its website and ParentSquare. Publication: November 9, 2026.

Why it matters: The district's response highlights that public communications channels can raise student-data questions even when they are not classroom platforms. Leaders should distinguish documented vendor terms from their own risk assessments when explaining decisions to families.

Limits: The article reports the district's interpretation of Meta's terms and its planned action; it does not independently establish how Meta uses the district's posted photos.

Published 2026-11-09. Source: https://www.ksbw.com/article/salinas-school-district-delete-social-media-accounts-ai/74380873

3. Martinsville board delays decision on proposed classroom AI policy

The Martinsville City School Board voted on November 9, 2026, to table discussion of two proposed AI-policy versions until the following month. One draft would set broad expectations; the other would specify permitted teacher uses, student expectations, and approved tools for official school purposes. Both address privacy and academic integrity, including limits on using AI detectors to determine cheating.

Why it matters: The proposals show that policy choices can include both tool approval and safeguards against overreliance on AI-detection systems. No policy was adopted at this meeting, so leaders should not treat either draft as current district policy.

Limits: The board's next-month reconsideration is expected, not confirmed as an adopted policy or scheduled vote.

Published 2026-11-09. Source: https://wset.com/news/local/martinsville-school-board-to-consider-optional-ai-policy-for-classroom-use-november-2026

4. Sen. Markey asks Google to let schools disable AI without losing Search

Published Nov. 9, 2026, Boston.com reports that Sen. Ed Markey asked Google CEO Sundar Pichai to allow schools to disable AI features without losing Google Search. Markey also requested information on school opt-outs and Google's research into chatbot mental-health effects on children under 13; the article does not give the letter's date or report a company response.

Why it matters: The dispute puts the terms of bundled school technology services on the governance agenda: leaders may need to assess whether desired core services depend on accepting AI features. Markey's requests are oversight actions, not findings about harm or proof that schools lack alternatives.

Limits: The source describes a senator's requests and allegations in a lawsuit; it does not establish Google's response or the lawsuit's claims.

Published 2026-11-09. Source: https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2026/11/09/markey-google-ai-school-search-policy/

5. Seattle district tightens classroom technology access

Update: Published Nov. 9, 2026, KUOW reports that Seattle Public Schools began a districtwide technology overhaul that day: Minecraft was removed across grades, YouTube blocked in elementary schools, and a route to Gemini through search results shut down. The district already blocked AI chatbots but continues to allow some tools, including Magic School, Canva and Adobe AI tools.

Why it matters: Seattle's changes illustrate a district choosing differentiated access controls rather than a blanket ban on every AI-related tool. Leaders considering similar restrictions should weigh instructional purposes, implementation details and the consistency of access across schools.

Limits: The rationale is presented through the superintendent's account; the story does not evaluate effects on learning or student outcomes.

Published 2026-11-09. Source: https://www.kuow.org/topics/soundside/2026-11-09/seattle-schools-superintendent-shuldiner-on-classroom-tech-policy-school-mergers

6. New federal grant payment justifications reach Title I and special education funds

Published Nov. 9, 2026, The 74 reports that a federal requirement taking effect Nov. 1 asks grantees, including districts, to submit written justifications with payment requests. The article says the requirement applies to major programs including Title I and special education funding, and that justifications may be limited to 255 characters; state agencies differ on the expected workload.

Why it matters: Districts that draw federal funds may need to review payment-request workflows and coordinate documentation with state agencies. The reporting raises a possible administrative and cash-flow risk, but does not establish that districts' payments have been delayed under this rule.

Limits: Potential delays and added workload are concerns raised by sources; the article reports no measured district-level impact from the new requirement.

Published 2026-11-09. Source: https://www.the74million.org/article/education-dept-s-overhaul-of-grant-rules-sparks-concern-about-instability/

7. Federal agency opens investigations into two New Mexico districts' student-information policies

Published Nov. 9, 2026, Source New Mexico reports that the U.S. Department of Education announced investigations into Albuquerque and Santa Fe Public Schools over allegations concerning student gender-identity policies and federal privacy laws. Albuquerque Public Schools said its policies adhere to FERPA; Santa Fe Public Schools said it had not been notified of an investigation and described its policies on official records.

Why it matters: The investigations make student-information handling and parent communication a live compliance issue for districts. Leaders should distinguish the federal allegations from established violations and seek legal review of applicable obligations and local practices.

Limits: The investigations are pending; the article reports allegations, and Santa Fe said it had not received official notice.

Published 2026-11-09. Source: https://sourcenm.com/2026/11/09/feds-launch-investigations-into-albuquerque-santa-fe-schools-gender-identity-policies/

8. Stanford review finds limited and mixed evidence on AI's effects in education

Published Nov. 10, 2026, Education Week reports on an updated Stanford AI Hub review of 52 randomized and quasi-experimental studies of generative AI in K-12 and higher education. Learning-support uses generally showed better gains than using AI to complete work, but neither approach produced consistent positive outcomes; only 10 studies involved U.S. K-12 students or educators.

Why it matters: The review supports evaluating specific instructional uses rather than treating AI as uniformly beneficial or harmful. Its small U.S. K-12 evidence base argues for cautious, measurable pilots instead of assuming findings transfer across tools, ages or settings.

Limits: The research is early and the review includes higher-education studies; its findings are not broadly generalizable to U.S. K-12 schools.

Published unknown. Source: https://www.edweek.org/technology/is-ai-good-or-bad-for-learning-the-answer-isnt-so-simple/2026/11