



HADDON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

Broadcast

Dear Haddon Township School District Community,

I trust this email finds you well and enjoying a beautiful week of weather. Please see updates from around the district below and have a great day.

Artificial Intelligence

Last week, I had an opportunity to listen to a group of community volunteers, each with a unique background and years of experience working with artificial intelligence and complex computer programs. One individual has earned a Ph.D. in computer science, and each has achieved distinguished career success. I was joined by Marie Dezi, Vice President of our Board of Education, as we discussed AI as it relates to student safety and the potential to impact learning positively. Although there is much more work to be done in this area, it is my pleasure to distribute some initial lessons learned from our first meeting:

- Artificial intelligence may be "new" to education, but **it is not new**. Some of the technology has been around for more than 20 years.
- AI is not something we should be "afraid of." However, it should be utilized with **caution**.
- Pretending that AI doesn't exist **is not** the right path forward. We should consider using it across the curriculum to improve critical thinking.
- Teachers should consider **setting parameters** for students about which tasks can include full AI use, modified use, and no use.
- Parents should be **cautious when posting images of their children** online. Likewise, we must teach students the importance of consent before posting images of others.
- The product online is free, **we are the product**. The user's data is being collected and utilized.
- Chat GPT can be utilized to create a solid first draft, not a final product. There may be some value in starting the lesson from there because **writing is not a product; it's a process**.
- TikTok can collect data about users and send it to other countries. **Parents who permit their children to utilize TikTok should do so with caution**.
- Part of the conversation about AI should have nothing to do with technology. **We must "double down" social arrangements and prioritize human connection, movement, creativity, and character. It is in these arenas that we will develop responsible users and diverse, unique learners.**

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our AI session and hope everyone finds some value in the information above.

Elementary/RMS Personal Devices

In the last few weeks, I worked with members of our school administration and consulted with some surrounding districts and members of our school security team regarding our procedures for personal devices (phones and smart watches). We will continue to allow these devices to be brought to and from school **but will require that they be off and away during school time**. I realize that this may be an unpopular decision among parents who purchased devices for children to wear in school, and it weighed heavily. However, the benefit of maintaining as much of a distraction-free learning environment as possible is our responsibility as a school district. We will continue to monitor this issue throughout the year and revisit it in the springtime for next year. Thank you very much for your patience and understanding.

-Sincerely,

Robert J. Fisicaro, Ed. D. Superintendent