AN EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

The AI Ready School™

The same tool can help a child learn,
or keep a child from learning.

Stephen R. Jordan

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The difference was not the tool.

It was how adults designed its use.

Practice scores rose.
Exam scores fell 17 percent.

In a trial with nearly 1,000 high school students in Turkey, those who practiced math with a plain chatbot scored 17 percent worse on a later exam taken without AI. Most had copied answers (Bastani et al., 2025).

In Nigeria, students used a similar tool for six weeks, with teachers writing each opening prompt and staying in the room. They gained 0.31 standard deviations (De Simone et al., 2025).

What made the difference:

01 How adults designed its use.

02 What the tool was allowed to do.

03 Whether a teacher was present.

WHY NOW

AI reached schools before the policies did.

Students found free chat tools before most districts had a policy. Teachers used AI to plan lessons before anyone trained them. Vendors added AI features to products schools already owned.

As of June 2026, between 35 and 37 states plus Puerto Rico had issued guidance on AI in schools, and Ohio required every district to adopt an AI policy by July 1, 2026.

What guidance leaves open:

01 Which uses help students learn.

02 Which uses save staff time.

03 Which uses cause harm.

Five rules that run through every chapter.

01 People make every decision that affects a student.

02 Student names and details stay out of any tool without a signed data privacy agreement.

03 Tools that help students learn give hints rather than answers.

04 Every AI draft is checked by a person before it is used.

05 Every flag a system raises leads to a person who reaches out.

EVIDENCE LABELS

300 ideas, each labeled honestly.

The Volume gathers 300 practical ideas across 20 chapters, from preschool through graduation and from the classroom to the business office.

Every idea carries an evidence label. The labels are honest about how young this field is, and they tell readers how much weight each idea can bear.

How the 300 ideas are labeled:

01 Strong: 17 ideas.

02 Moderate: 27 ideas.

03 Emerging: 28 ideas.

04 Practice: 228 ideas.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE VOLUME

Twenty chapters, in four parts.

Every chapter opens with outcomes and closes with the question a board should ask, the evidence needed to answer it, the failure pattern that trips districts up, and a Thirty Day Move any school can take.

Part I, Getting Oriented

What AI can and cannot do, ten patterns, privacy, and piloting.

Part II, The Classroom

Subject by subject, from preschool through twelfth grade.

Part III, Every Student, Every Family

Special education, English learners, families, wellbeing, and counseling.

Part IV, Running the School

Planning and grading, early warning data, operations, and leadership.

Ten patterns that show up everywhere.

01 Draft, then a person edits.

02 The human review gate.

03 Adaptive practice.

04 Hints, not answers.

05 Early warning, then a person reaches out.

The same shapes, in every subject and every office.

06 Language access.

07 Speech as a bridge.

08 Feedback before grades.

09 Scheduling and logistics.

10 Pilot small, measure, then scale.

Some of the strongest findings involve no classroom at all.

Weekly messages to families

About missed work, grades, and absences, they cut course failures by 27 percent in a randomized trial (Bergman & Chan, 2021).

Plain, supportive notices

Outperformed legal language in attendance letters (Lasky-Fink et al., 2021).

Reminders from a student's own counselor

Helped students reach college, while national campaigns reaching hundreds of thousands of students had no effect (Bird et al., 2021).

What the Volume refuses to oversell.

AI detectors

They misclassify writing by students still learning English, so a detection score must never be treated as proof.

Online monitoring of students

A review found no evidence that it improves student health or safety (Burke et al., 2020).

AI security systems in schools

The research gathered for this Volume found no independent evaluation of them.

Honesty about uncertainty is part of using AI well.

Long term effects

Most studies last weeks or months, not years.

Young children

Many children aged 4 to 6 trusted a voice assistant’s answers over their teacher’s (Haber et al., 2026).

Students with disabilities

A review of studies of students with learning disabilities found none with a low risk of bias (Paglialunga, 2025).

FOR FAMILIES

Five questions every parent should be able to ask.

01 Which tools touch my child’s information?

02 Does the school have signed agreements with those companies?

03 Who makes decisions about my child?

04 How does the school teach children to use AI well?

05 What can I do if I have concerns?

Four roles.
Nothing to buy.

Superintendent

Publish the approved tool list and the human review rule, use AI visibly, and report one measured pilot to the board.

Principal

Name an AI champion, run a small time study, and decide with teachers where saved time goes.

Teacher

Try AI for one planning task and one feedback task, checking every output, and label assignments with AI use levels.

Parent

Ask the school the five questions, and ask your child to explain how they use AI.

THE CORE ARGUMENT

Tools do not change schools. The people in them do.

Adoption fails when

Leaders mandate tools they do not use, reward logins instead of results, and skip the rules.

Adoption succeeds when

Leaders model use, measure hours saved and student outcomes, and publish the rules for privacy, review, and accountability.

Every chapter ends with

The question a board should ask, the evidence needed to answer it, the failure pattern, and a Thirty Day Move.

BUILT FOR

Written for the people who decide on Monday morning.

Teachers

Get ideas for planning, teaching, feedback, and grading, by subject and grade.

Principals and district leaders

Get guidance on policy, pilots, purchasing, and professional learning.

School board members

Get the questions to ask and the evidence to expect.

Parents

Get sections written for families, and five questions for any school.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen R. Jordan

Founder and Principal Advisor of SRJ Consulting & Services LLC, an operator led AI advisory practice in Frisco, Texas, built on three decades in enterprise operations, security, and risk.

At Citi he owned endpoint security across roughly 500,000 endpoints in 165 countries. At Intel and McAfee he led product security incident response. The practice sells no software and holds no vendor partnerships.

The Library

Book 10 of 10 in The Operating Discipline for AI Library™, and Volume X, the first Volume of Pillar III, AI in Education™.

Status

Available now in hardback, paperback, and Kindle.

Free today

All 134 figures from the book, free to download at srjconsultingservices.com.

Publish the rules.
Then pilot, measure, and scale.

A 30 minute consultation for school and district leaders, to scope the question your board needs answered. No deck, no pitch.

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