AI and Screen Time Policy

School Year 2026–27

NYC Public Schools

What We Learned

In March 2026 we issued AI Guidance that placed some limits on teacher-facing AI, such as using AI for grading, behavior monitoring, and decisions about students. We engaged with parents, educators, community members, and others and learned where we needed to strengthen our approach:

- Developmental and learning research points to limiting routine, passive or unstructured screen time and device use.
- In particular, younger students need hands-on learning, social interaction, play, and teacher-guided instruction. Routine individual screen use can crowd out those experiences.
- By contrast, high school students need guided preparation for a world and economy increasingly driven by AI and new technologies - paired with instruction on how AI works, its biases and risks, and how to evaluate its outputs.

This is why NYCPS is taking a cautious, developmentally appropriate approach with our AI and screen time policy.

Where We Landed:

Student-Facing AI

Grades

2-K – 8

Ban on Student-Facing AI

No software that uses student-facing generative AI, including instructional programs and AI tutoring or intervention platforms.

This ban will include nearly 600,000 or 2/3 of all NYCPS students.

Grades

9 – 12

Restricted Use

Limited to specific uses for AI literacy, career readiness, and a small number of pilots.

se headers is 'No Student AI' and 'Limited, Guided Use.' Reconcile terminology before release.

Where We Landed:

Screen Time

Grades

2-K–2

No 1:1 Screen Time

No individual device use by students in the classroom. Smart boards and other devices used for group instruction may continue to be used.

Grades **3–5**

Recommend no more than 30 minutes of daily 1:1 screen time.

Grades **6–8**

Recommend no more than 45 minutes of daily 1:1 screen time.

Grades **9–12**

Screen time is school/course dependent.

Where We Landed:

Teacher-Facing AI

What is allowed

- Teachers may continue to use AI for instructional planning and operational tasks, if they are approved for data security & privacy (ERMA).
- These tasks include brainstorming, lesson planning, drafting communications, streamlining operations, professional learning, and translation.

What is not allowed

- Teacher-facing AI cannot be used for grading, behavior monitoring, placement, promotion, graduation, or other decisions about students.
- All special education documents are developed by qualified professionals.
- Counseling, crisis intervention, and therapeutic support are provided only by qualified staff.

What This Means:

Policy Exceptions

The guidance does not restrict:

- Assistive technologies that support students with disabilities and English language learners
  - Across all grades, this policy does not apply to assistive technology and associated screen time, provided through a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan.
  - Students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) will continue to have access to other necessary tools that provide important communication support.
- Assessments, such as screeners and diagnostics
- Out-of-school learning, such as remote instruction days
- Centrally approved instructional programs, such as e-books, robotics, coding, and simulations

What This Means:

Grades 9–12 Permitted AI Uses

High school use of student facing generative AI is limited and purposeful. Use restricted to specific software in three categories:

AI Literacy

Required modules for every high school student, and a longer course for students using AI in career pathways and pilots.

Career Readiness

AI used within a career readiness pathway, CTE programs, and other certification programs.

Limited AI Pilots

Five centrally approved pilots in select high schools that apply to participate.

All use must be coupled with teacher supervision, instruction on how AI works, its biases and risks, how to critically evaluate its outputs, and the necessity for students to retain ownership of their thinking and work.

Career readiness AI use will be targeted at skills needed for CTE, certification and other career pathway programs.

Pilot tools will not replace teachers; rather the tool allows the teacher to design rigorous differentiated instruction delivered to students with a range of unique learning needs.

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Where We Go Next:

Technology in Schools Coalition

This coalition will help us shape our policy for 2027-2028 and beyond

Membership	Educators, parent leaders, elected officials, advocates, union partners, and experts in the field. The list of members will be published on the website once confirmed.
Charge	Advise NYCPS and provide recommendations on high-level policy ideas, decisions, and guidelines for the future of new technology use in classrooms. Work will culminate in a report with recommendations in April 2027.
Facilitation	Led by NYCPS with the support of co-chairs selected by the membership.
Cadence	Monthly, beginning September 2026. The first meeting will be in person; subsequent meetings will be virtual or hybrid. Subcommittees may meet more frequently.
Format	Each meeting focuses on a key topic and includes in-depth presentations from NYCPS leaders and external experts.

Q and A

- Up to 180 HS or more involved in pilots
- Recommended screen time limits in grades 3-8th not mandated
- Climate impacts – DOE thinking about this to get feedback to go forward. Also for bias/tools etc.
- AI Pilots – students can opt out of data collecting part. [how?]
- Three times per year i-ready or MAP will not be restricted. Diagnostic/intervention/ not limited.
- Google Gemini disabled for Google classroom/ YouTube will be available through Google classroom if teacher assigns.
- No chatbots for any grade
- Iready and Map– allowed at least for 3X a week; HMH will remain in place.
- Procurement process –Just begun to think about
- Teacher facing policy unchanged