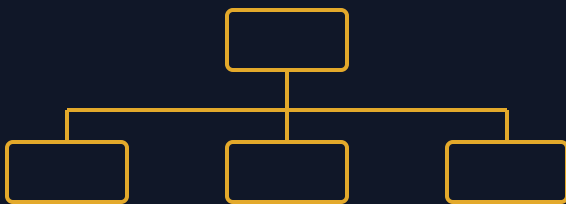




A FREE GUIDE FOR ARKANSAS SUPERINTENDENTS AND CENTRAL OFFICE TEAMS

The Superintendent's Guide to Leading AI in Your District

How Arkansas superintendents set the direction for AI, organize the cabinet, fund the work and report to the board, so every building moves the same way inside your policy and Arkansas law.



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THE WHOLE THING IN ONE SENTENCE

Write a one-page direction with your cabinet, give each leader one clear part, train your principals first and report to your board every year.

SECTION ONE

What leading AI from the central office means.

Teachers and staff take their cue on AI from the central office. When the superintendent sets a clear direction, every building moves the same way, and principals spend their time leading rather than guessing what the district wants.

Five things only the central office can do

Set the direction Say in one page why the district is using AI, what it will and will not do, and how you will know it is working.	Own the policy Keep the board's AI policy current and make sure it is available to the public, as Act 848 asks.
Organize the people Give each member of your cabinet a clear part to play, so nothing depends on one person.	Fund the work Decide which budget lines and professional development funds pay for training and tools.
Report to the board and the community Tell your board and your families what staff learned, what they asked for and what comes next.	

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

It is written for Arkansas superintendents, assistant superintendents and the central office team that supports them.

SECTION TWO

Your district AI direction on one page.

A one-page direction gives every principal, teacher and parent the same answer to the question "What is our district doing with AI?" Write it with your cabinet, share it with your board, and post it where staff can find it.

Why our district is using AI

What we will use AI for this year

What we will not use AI for

How we will know it is working

Who to contact with questions

A STRONG DIRECTION IS SHORT

If it takes more than one page, it is a plan rather than a direction. Keep the plan separate, and keep the direction short enough that a principal can repeat it from memory.

SECTION THREE

Policy and Arkansas law.

Act 848 of 2025 asks every public entity in Arkansas, including school districts and charter schools, to have a written AI policy, to train employees on appropriate use, to keep a person making the final decision, and to make the policy available to the public on request. Many Arkansas districts adopted the school boards association's model policies on AI for licensed staff, support staff and student use.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT	YES	NOT YET
Our board has adopted a written AI policy that covers licensed staff, support staff and students.	☐	☐
The policy is posted, or available to anyone who asks, and staff know where to find it.	☐	☐
One person in the central office owns the policy and its review date.	☐	☐
Our attorney has reviewed the policy language.	☐	☐
Our training plan matches what the policy asks of staff.	☐	☐

Federal rules already protect student information, including FERPA for education records and COPPA for children under thirteen online, and those protections apply to AI tools the same way they apply to any other software.

We are not attorneys. Your district's attorney reviews policy language and decides legal questions.

SECTION FOUR

Your cabinet's roles.

AI works best in a district when each leader owns a clear part. This table is a starting point for your cabinet conversation.

ROLE	WHAT THEY OWN
Superintendent	The district direction, the board relationship and the yearly report.
Assistant superintendent or professional development lead	The training plan, the professional learning plan and the records of who was trained.
Technology director	The approved tool list, district accounts, settings and the review of each tool's privacy terms.
Finance officer	Which funds pay for training and tools, and renewal dates.
Communications lead	The plain-language page for parents and answers to community questions.
Principals	Leading AI in their buildings, supporting teachers and answering parents.
Special education director	Making sure every IEP and 504 decision stays with the team that makes it.

ONE NAME PER ROLE

Write one name next to each role. When two people share a role, agree on who has the final word.

SECTION FIVE

Paying for it.

Most of what a district needs for AI is training and time, not new software. The tools many districts already own often include AI features, so the first question is what you already have.

Questions for your finance officer

1. Which tools do we already pay for that include AI features, and are those features turned on or off?
2. Which professional development funds are available this year, and how much is already committed?
3. Which renewals come up in the next twelve months, and could any of them cover what we need?
4. What does a year of training for licensed staff, support staff and principals cost, building by building?

In July 2025, the U.S. Department of Education issued guidance on the responsible use of AI in schools, including how federal grant funds may support it. Your finance officer and attorney confirm what applies to your district before any funds are committed.

TRAIN BEFORE YOU BUY

Staff who are trained on the tools you already own can tell you, with confidence, which new tool would help them most.

SECTION SIX

Reporting to your board and community.

Your board wants to know three things: what the district is doing, whether it is working, and what comes next. A short, regular report answers all three and builds trust.

An outline for a yearly board report

1. Our direction for AI this year, in one paragraph.
2. Who was trained, by building and by role, with dates.
3. What staff told us in their feedback, including what they asked for.
4. The tools on our approved list and how each one was reviewed.
5. Any questions or concerns from families, and how we answered them.
6. What comes next, with dates and owners.

You decide how the report is presented. You may present it yourself, present it with a partner, have a partner present it, or share a short video.

FOR FAMILIES

A plain-language page on your website that explains how AI is used in your classrooms answers most questions before they are asked.

SECTION SEVEN

Your first semester.

This checklist puts the central office work in the order that makes it hold together. Most districts can complete it in one semester.

STEP	DONE
Write the one-page district direction with the cabinet.	☐
Confirm the board policy is current and available to the public.	☐
Name one owner for each cabinet role.	☐
Form or refresh the AI tool selection committee.	☐
Train principals and district leaders first.	☐
Schedule training in every building on in-service or early-release days.	☐
Schedule training for support staff around their own work.	☐
Add AI sessions to the professional learning plan.	☐
Post a plain-language page for parents.	☐
Put the board report on the calendar.	☐

When you want help.

Every district program starts with a free goals conversation with the superintendent and the leaders you invite. Your goals decide what every session covers, and you choose the pieces that fit your district.

Growth Right Solutions trains the teachers, administrators and support staff of Arkansas school districts to use AI safely and well, with every session built around your board's policy, Arkansas law and federal student privacy rules. Ed Becker leads the sessions himself, with our team behind him.

START WITH A CONVERSATION ABOUT YOUR GOALS

It is free, there is no sales and no obligation, and your goals decide what every session covers.

GrowthRight.Solutions/arkansas-schools

More free resources for Arkansas school districts

The Arkansas School District AI Readiness Checklist, The School AI Tool Review Worksheet, Using AI at School, A Staff Quick Reference, and the leadership guides for superintendents, principals and department chairs are all free at GrowthRight.Solutions/resources.

Sources

Arkansas Act 848 of 2025, on the use of artificial intelligence by public entities. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), 15 U.S.C. §§ 6501 to 6506. Arkansas Student Online Personal Information Protection Act. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Executive Order 14277, Advancing Artificial Intelligence Education for American Youth, April 23, 2025. U.S. Department of Education Dear Colleague Letter on the use of AI in schools, July 22, 2025. Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, professional development requirements for licensed staff.

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About the author

Ed Becker is the founder of Growth Right Solutions, LLC. He spent more than twenty years in education, including as a school principal, before leading technology programs and running a managed services company, and he now leads AI adoption for owner-led companies and Arkansas school districts.

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