



A FREE GUIDE FOR ARKANSAS PRINCIPALS

The Principal's Guide to Leading AI in Your School

How Arkansas principals set the tone for AI in their buildings, support teachers and support staff, and answer parents with confidence, inside your district's policy and Arkansas law.



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THE WHOLE THING IN ONE SENTENCE

Use an approved tool yourself first, give your staff time to learn, name a go-to person in the building and answer parents the same way every time.

SECTION ONE

The principal's part.

Teachers follow their principal's lead. When a principal uses AI openly, stays inside the district's policy and talks about it in plain language, teachers feel free to try it the right way. That makes the principal the single most important person in a building's AI work.

What the principal brings to AI in the building

- A calm, consistent message that matches the district direction.
- Permission for teachers to try approved tools, with clear lines they do not cross.
- Time on the calendar for staff to learn and practice together.
- Steady answers for parents.
- Attention to support staff, who are often the last to be trained.

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

It is written for principals and assistant principals in Arkansas public school districts and charter schools.

SECTION TWO

Your first 90 days.

A simple ninety-day rhythm keeps AI from becoming one more thing on a full plate. Adjust the dates to your school calendar.

DAYS	WHAT YOU DO	WHAT YOUR STAFF SEE
1 to 30	Learn the district policy and the approved tool list. Use one approved tool yourself for a task of your own, such as drafting a newsletter.	Their principal knows the rules and uses AI the right way.
31 to 60	Bring your staff to training on an in-service or early-release day. Name a go-to person in the building for questions.	Time set aside to learn, and someone nearby to ask.
61 to 90	Ask each team to share one way AI saved them time. Collect questions for the district and send them up.	Their ideas are heard, and their questions get answers.

START WITH YOURSELF

Staff believe what they see. A principal who drafts the weekly staff note with an approved tool, and says so, does more than any memo.

SECTION THREE

Setting the tone with your staff.

Say what is welcome

Teachers want to know they are allowed to try. Tell them which tools are approved and which tasks are good places to start, such as drafting parent letters, lesson ideas and rubrics they will review.

Say where the lines are

Student names and records stay out of any tool the district has not approved. The teacher decides every grade. The IEP team writes and decides every IEP, and the 504 team decides every 504 plan.

Celebrate the time it gives back

When a teacher saves an hour on paperwork and spends it with students, share that story at the next staff meeting. Stories travel faster than policies.

Keep the door open

Make it easy to ask a question before trying something new. A quick question is always better than a guess.

A SENTENCE YOU CAN USE

"We use AI to give you time back for students, we use only approved tools, and a person always makes the decisions that matter."

SECTION FOUR

What to look for in classrooms.

During walkthroughs, these are the signs that AI is being used well. They are for coaching conversations, not evaluations.

LOOK-FOR	SEEN	NOT YET
The tool in use is on the district’s approved list.	☐	☐
No student names or records are visible in the tool.	☐	☐
The teacher has reviewed and edited anything AI helped create.	☐	☐
Students know the AI rule for the assignment in front of them.	☐	☐
Students show how they used AI when the assignment allows it.	☐	☐
Grading and feedback decisions clearly belong to the teacher.	☐	☐
Students are thinking, writing and explaining in their own words.	☐	☐

When something is not yet in place, treat it as a coaching moment and point the teacher to the person who can help.

SECTION FIVE

Answering parents' questions.

Parents usually ask a handful of questions. Steady, consistent answers from every principal build trust across the district.

A PARENT ASKS	A PRINCIPAL CAN SAY
Is my child's information going into AI?	Student names and records stay out of any tool the district has not approved, and our approved tools are reviewed for privacy first.
Is AI grading my child's work?	The teacher decides every grade. AI may help a teacher draft feedback, and the teacher reviews it.
Will my child just let AI do the homework?	Each assignment has a clear rule for AI use, and students show how they used it when it is allowed.
Is AI replacing teachers?	No. Our teachers use AI for paperwork and preparation so they have more time with students.
Where can I read the policy?	The district's AI policy is available to anyone who asks, and here is how to get it.

SECTION SIX

Your support staff.

Paraprofessionals and office, cafeteria, transportation and custodial staff keep the building running, and they deserve training built around their own work. Arkansas law asks that employees be trained on appropriate use, and that includes support staff who use AI.

- Schedule support staff training at a time that fits their day, not after it.
- Give every support staff member the district's one-page quick reference.
- Name a person in the building they can ask.
- Include them when you share stories of time saved.

THE FREE QUICK REFERENCE

Using AI at School, A Staff Quick Reference, puts the district's rules on one printable card for every role. It is free at GrowthRight.Solutions/resources.

SECTION SEVEN

A principal's checklist.

STATEMENT	YES	NOT YET
I know the district AI policy and the approved tool list.	☐	☐
I have used an approved tool myself and told my staff about it.	☐	☐
My staff have a date on the calendar for training.	☐	☐
My support staff have a date on the calendar for training.	☐	☐
There is a go-to person in my building for AI questions.	☐	☐
Teachers know the rules for student use and academic integrity.	☐	☐
I have a consistent answer ready for parents.	☐	☐
I send staff questions and feedback to the district each quarter.	☐	☐

When you want help.

Part of every district program is a half-day session for principals and district leaders on leading AI in their buildings, supporting teachers, answering parents, staying inside policy and reporting progress to the board.

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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