

Details

How to Roll Out a Strategy for AI in Schools with Katie Page -340

In this episode, I chat with Katie Page, an Instructional Technology Coordinator and author of AI Blueprint for Schools, about how her district developed a districtwide strategy for AI in schools grounded in intentionality, inclusion, and real classroom needs. You'll also hear practical tips from her book, including how to build teacher trust, meet staff where they are, and spotlight real use cases to foster buy-in. If you want to design or refine a sustainable districtwide AI strategy rooted in relationships, educator support, and classroom impact, this episode has you covered!

Link to live show notes:

<https://classtechtips.com/2025/10/07/strategy-for-ai-in-schools-340/>

*strategy for ai in schools

Introduction

Hello there, and welcome to today's episode of the Easy EdTech podcast. My name is Monica Burns, and I am so glad you're here to join me today. If you want to make the most of education technology, AKA EdTech, you are in the right place. My goal has always been to help make EdTech easier and give you ideas to try yourself, share with a colleague, or bookmark for later in the school year.

Every Tuesday on the Easy EdTech podcast, you'll hear stories from my time in the classroom, my work with schools and districts, and my travels to different EdTech events. Get ready for solo episodes where I share some quick tips, stories, and interviews full of practical ideas and stories from new guests each month. If we mention something you'd like to check out, make sure to click the link. You'll find it in the episode description or the summary area where you're listening to this podcast, or you can find every episode and all of the resources we mention by going to EasyEdTechPodcast.com or by going to classtechtips.com and just clicking on the Easy EdTech Podcast button at the top of the page.

Intro Sponsor Message

This episode is sponsored by my Easy EdTech Club — a membership designed to help K-12 educators save time and simplify technology integration. When you join, you'll get instant access to dozens of months worth of content from the past couple years — plus new masterclasses, guides, and resources each month. It's all self-paced, so you can dive in whenever it works for your schedule. Head to **EasyEdTechClub.com** to learn more and sign up. That's **EasyEdTechClub.com** for all the details!

Today's Intro

This week's episode is titled: "How to Roll Out a Districtwide AI Strategy with Katie Page" Katie is an Instructional Technology Coordinator based in the suburbs of Chicago and the author of *AI Blueprint for Schools: A Practical Guide for Educators to Integrate AI*. In today's conversation, she shares how her district built an intentional and inclusive approach to AI integration—grounded in relationships, real use cases, and teacher trust. Whether you're just starting your AI journey or ready to take the next step, Katie offers strategies, mindset shifts, and examples that can help. Let's jump into the conversation.

Episode Transcript

Monica Burns:

Welcome to the podcast, Katie. I am so excited to chat with you about all things AI today. But before we get into that, can you share a bit with listeners, what is your role in education? What does your day-to-day look like?

Katie Page:

Yeah, sure. Thanks for having me, Monica. I'm very excited to chat about AI. I feel like that's all I'm doing lately. I am sure you as well. So my name is Katie Page and I'm an instructional technology coordinator for my district, and last year was actually my first year, full-time year out of the classroom. So I was an instructional coach and sharing my my teaching duties with doing some instructional coaching. I was an every single technology committee that has existed in the last 15 or 20 years. I was a physics teacher for all of that time in astronomy, things like that. But now I am just, I have a full-time job, which is great that my district is supporting that, just doing instructional technology.

Katie Page:

Yeah. So yeah,

Monica Burns:

Just the ability to allocate your time kind of to, to one big

Katie Page:

Fantastic.

Monica Burns:

Right. Although I'm sure there's lots of components. And you know, today we're talking about some of the, just the themes and kind of general advice from your book *AI Blueprint for Schools*. And so I'm curious what first sparked your interest in exploring AI and education, particularly at that district level?

Katie Page:

Yeah, so really I think my, my interest in technology, I've always been an early adopter. I'm sure many of your listeners and you have seen those bell curves mm-hmm <affirmative>. You know, just generally of humans. But in the teaching world, you know, the early adopters, the innovators, and then, you know, the skeptics are on the other end. I've always been like a, a jump first look later, <laugh> kind of person. And so what I was noticing in my instructional coaching role was that instructional technology in our district in particular, and I'm in a very large public high school district in the suburbs of Chicago. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. Their seven school buildings were at about 2000 students each building. And I was noticing that the instructional coaches in each building, there really wasn't consistency at this particular point. Like back in the day when we first implemented and every student had one-to-one iPads, there was a person in each building that was sort of focusing on that, like, you know, teaching staff how to use iPads.

Katie Page:

Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. Teaching staff how to teach students how to use iPads, you know, what we could use them for. But very quickly as time moved on, I feel like that really got stirred so far into the soup that there wasn't one particular role in the district that was focusing on ed tech. Some instructional coaches did like me, 'cause I love it. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. You know, so I would, I would coach with staff around instructional technology, but in other buildings that really wasn't happening. So last year or the year prior in the spring, I had kind of brought this conversation up to district leaders and I said, listen, I think with AI on the horizon here, really, it was already here, but <laugh> mm-hmm <affirmative>. PE people, people weren't like really clued in at that particular point so much. I said, you know, really, we should have a, a person at the district doing this and I would like to do it.

Katie Page:

And then they said, yes. And for those of you that work in public education, if your draw is dropping, dropping minded too, I couldn't believe they said yes. And so then just like that I wasn't in the classroom and I've been doing this pretty much since that day, really before that school year even ended and all through that summer. And so, yeah, I just, I was using it a little bit in my classroom with my space science students and I could see that this was going to be different than when kids started just googling something, you know, <laugh>.

Monica Burns:

Oh, yeah. And just like you, you know, alluded to like the idea that a district would make that commitment, right? Or signal right. That this is a priority. You know, it doesn't happen all the time especially right in our ed tech world. And so it speaks so much to just what the proliferation of this technology both inside and outside of education has looked like. So when you started thinking about, you know, this work, what kind of vision did you develop for what AI would look like in schools and the district level?

Katie Page:

Yeah, that's a great question. I didn't really start out so much with a vision other than the vision that I have been carrying really since like 2014. In 2014, I did a presentation at Isti way back in the day about the SAMR Model because again, I am one of those early adopters and I was like, Hey, everyone, look at what we can be doing with iPad. And so my vision has always been to be having my students doing the creating and innovating. And so I kind of took that piece with me into this role really, because so many staff still haven't kind of picked up that message. I feel like a lot of teachers, even in my own district and, and just kind of, I'm sure across the globe, never really kind of jumped onto the whole last wave of technology and or didn't really use it to its fullest.

Katie Page:

Yeah. So I brought that with me into this role just kind of adding on AI as that next piece. Mm-Hmm. Maybe starting out as using it with a tool, but really now is moving so quickly, you know, using it as like a partner and you know, more of like an agent <laugh> with us. So it, it, my philosophy, my vision has been just changed across the entire school year as it started to roll out. And the more and more I worked with staff seeing their needs and kind of where people were at. So.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And I would imagine getting that real time feedback from your colleagues, from just the quickly developing nature right. Of some of this technology and the use cases, right? There's a lot that can evolve right. Over a short period of time. And so I know when I done some work with schools and districts around AI implementation, oftentimes we, you know, lean back into what a district's vision is, right? What their mission is, what's kind of always been a core values for them, as opposed to saying like, we need a completely separate AI thing. Like, the guidelines will come, right? But a lot of this is <crosstalk> and like what our values are. So I'm curious from, you know, your personal philosophy or your district's kind of core values, were there any guiding principles that really helped shape your AI rollout strategy?

Katie Page:

Yeah, so we have a new superintendent actually, and we have a brand new strategic plan and a brand new portrait of a graduate. And the great news is, is that a big portion of the student facing parts of, of all of those new plans and ideas, and some of it's not new, it's, it's just been kind of updated is about the creativity and the innovative, you know, piece mm-hmm <affirmative>. So that's great. And I think really all of it starts with building relationships, building relationships with kids, building relationships with staff and helping people and students especially find their best parts, their passions their, their thoughts about what they wanna do, what they wanna build, what they wanna create, and having staff tap into that.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And just that, you know, that gets to kind of some of the, the questions I have for you about challenges, right? And building buy-in, you know? Yeah. <Laugh>, when we're listening to all those voices in our community, I'm sure you hear, you know, some of the similar things that I do. It's been really interesting to see it evolve also, where like a lot of my early conversations with educators went straight, understandably, right? To the cheating piece, right? Yes. Like, essays are done back to blue books, like completely get that sentiment. Absolutely. And then I've watched it kind of evolve over the past year or so where the questions have changed, like around environmental impact or around IP, like intellectual property, you know, kind of, we make the comparison sometimes back to distance learning, where beforehand, before everyone was like on their devices, they were asking very different questions about ed tech implementation, and they're just vocabulary increase. They were asking really, you know, smarter questions, if you will, because we're forced to interact with all of this. And I've kind of seen a similar parallel with the AI of it all. So, you know, what are some of the biggest challenges you face during the implementation of your, you know, plan in

your schools and district? And how did you build buy-in with these stakeholders? That I'm sure came to the conversation with a variety of perspectives,

Katie Page:

<Laugh>. Yeah. I mean, that's the million dollar question. If we can solve buy-in from staff you know, we would, we would be sitting on a beach somewhere, I'm sure with a, a nice fluffy cocktail <laugh>. But yeah, some of the ways that I have found buy-in is for sure relationships. Now, luckily for me, I've been in the district for a very long time mm-hmm. Decades. I know people in all of the buildings at this point, so it's great. So that, that's nice because people know me, I know people, but, so I would say that that is the, the first part is buy-in. The second part is of course, building relationships. You have to have trust with your staff. You know, if you're having conversations around technology, people are in so many different places mm-hmm <affirmative>. And you need to listen to the, either the staff member or the group of people that you're with and hear what they're actually saying and internalize it.

Katie Page:

Yeah. And not just listen to respond but listen to understand what they're saying. And I think if you can meet people where they are, that is going to be the biggest step forward with implementation. But some of like the nuts and bolts, you know, getting in front of staff is hard. You know, <laugh>, we have a, yeah, we have a great union, which I appreciate. And we have a lot of autonomy of staff, and we don't have like, tons of required PD. We have required PD Yeah, of course, mm-hmm <affirmative>. But there's not like tons and tons. And so most of what I do is, is optional. And so getting in front of staff is tough. So I try to make sure that I go to where staff are, either I'm making recordings, I have morning Zoom sessions that are optional.

Katie Page:

But the biggest piece I think that I've found is actually getting into the buildings in front of staff. So I will go to division meetings. I will do just like popup, you know, pd. I'll go to a building in the morning and I'll just say, Hey, I'm here and I wanna just show you some tips and tricks with your MacBook in your iPad. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. Just something simple. Yeah. You know, are, you know, are you annoyed that this particular menu keeps popping up and you don't know why it's doing that? Come on down and let me help you. And then while they're in front of me, I'll say, by the way, have you turned on Apple intelligence? Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. You know, so just using those little inroads, keeping it easy meeting people where they are, and then just coming at it from all angle, all angles. I've got a website, you

know, I put recordings there, how tos, I've got a newsletter, just boom, boom, boom, every angle. Trying to just make things accessible for staff when they're ready to receive and, and maybe learn a little something new.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And that's such a huge part of like, just ed tech and probably All right. Topics of professional development is, you know, what are your pain points? Like you said, what's bugging you about the menu that keeps popping up. Yep. And then kind of sneaking in, if you will, <laugh>. And again, adding on that additional layer when someone's ready and receptive to it. And so, you know, a lot of times with the ed tech of it all, you know, we focus a lot on the what, like what this tool is, right. What this tool does onto the next one, here's another one. But as we shift kind of to the when and the why, right. How are you helping educators understand not just what's out there right. And how to press all the buttons, but <laugh>, when and why it makes sense for teaching and learning.

Katie Page:

Yeah. So I do, I talk about that a lot with staff. Like, why, why would they bother? And I think the easiest way for me to show them is to show them what other staff are doing. So if we're talking about teachers in particular because I'm lucky enough to have been in the district for so long, and I know so many people I, I just reach out to staff that I know are doing cool things, and I highlight that in my newsletter and I just say, Hey, like in this, in the SPED department over in this other building, did you know that they are taking when they're in a classroom, especially if they're not super familiar with the content, like let's say they get put as a co-teacher into a history class Yeah. And they wanna make that material accessible for their students that they're helping. This is how they did that. You know, they took that assignment, they loaded it into Gemini, they asked it to lower the reading level, and then also guess what? They had a new student from another country and they translated it into another language. And all of this took a minute <laugh>.

Monica Burns:

Right,

Katie Page:

Yeah. For them to do. And just showing them those easy first step use cases, I think that other staff are, so it's not just coming from me, right?

Monica Burns:

Yeah.

Katie Page:

You know, saying, listen, your colleague down the hall is using this. Yeah. I

Monica Burns:

Love those kind of examples. Mm-Hmm. 'cause I think just like you said, they, they hit differently, right? They resonate in a different way. They're not as abstract. Right. Even if that person doesn't know Right. The science teacher on the other side of a very large district. Right. They have some level of community with that person. Yes. And it just, it reinforces, you know, a big idea. And so I love that, especially, you know, you having a newsletter where you're able to, or give those shout outs, share those examples. And so, you know, one question I, it comes up a lot when talking with schools who are making decisions on what to use, what not to use, how to use something, you know, is around just the ethics, student privacy access. So, you know, I'm curious, how are you addressing some of these concerns about AI ethics, student privacy, equitable access as part of your district-wide rollout and conversations on this topic?

Katie Page:

Yeah, I mean, we have definitely updated as far as on a policy side. I helped update policy with the technology department. And that is top of mind with the student data and privacy. Luckily, our district was already on top of student data and privacy and really equitable access. We've tackled that as well. So, I mean, I, I can think about this in many different ways. So policy, we didn't have to change very much because we already had really good Yeah. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. Policy or not only around let's say like cheating, right? 'cause That's the thing that comes up all the time. But also about student privacy. And so with ai, I think really staff just needed to be reminded, you know, you should not be putting a data sheet full of student information. <Laugh>, you know, and attaching that to ChatGPT we had a lot of discussions around, once we implemented Gemini across our Google workspace, we had a lot of talks about student privacy and data, because Google already has access, right?

Katie Page:

Right. We use Google Drive to store all of our things. And we, we had very complex discussions with staff about, you know, it's, it's a little bit complex. They already have access. So if you let Gemini take a look at your Google Drive, like that's okay. It's already under our educator window. We've signed the, the privacy, we've got the guardrails, and it's okay. But if you're gonna go outside to someone else that we don't have these agreements signed with no student, you know, personally identifiable information. I've had to do some training around what is SOPPA, what is FERPA <laugh>, you know? Yeah. What, what are these things and, and why does it matter? And staff have been really responsive and listening. And from, from where I sit, it seems like they've gotten the message around that. And then as a far, as far as equitable access, you know, we're one-to-one district, so every student has an iPad. We also offer wifi to communities that maybe don't have wifi access. We also have wifi on all our buses. And so we're coming at equitable access from a lot of different avenues. And we've actually added both Gemini and ChatGPT student apps to our we have like an internal app store Yeah. In our district. And so I feel like, you know, we've got some pretty equitable access going out. And then this year I'm gonna be also reaching out to parents in the community as well. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>.

Monica Burns:

And I think that's, you know, an area too where, you know, families are curious, they hear things, and even just giving them some quick ways to make the most right. Of this technology that is also consumer facing. Right. Not just in fact Sure. Classroom, particularly the chat bots, like you mentioned, is a great, you know, component for someone to consider as they're kind of looking at this whole rollout that they might, you know, they might be taking on. So, you know, Katie, you've written a book called *AI Blueprint for Schools: A Practical Guide for Educators to Integrate AI*. What inspired you to write it? You know, who is it for?

Katie Page:

Yeah. so I, you know, like I had said before, I'm new to this role really mm-hmm <affirmative>. In this last year. And I, the more I read and man, is it just rapid fire, the news about AI and education, at least in the circles that I'm living in, in my newsfeed mm-hmm <affirmative>. And, and that sort of thing. The more that I read, the more that I'm seeing that districts are not as lucky as me in my district that have a person, you know, a singular person who is tasked with staying on top of all of this. And I thought, well, geez, I could easily just write about what I just did in the last year. I had a lot of success in a lot of places. And then also talk about maybe the places that, you know, didn't really work so great. And then what our, our future plan is, and why not just write it all down.

Katie Page:

'Yeah. And, you know, other educators, other districts could take it and it's literally a blueprint. Blueprint, but fun fact, there are a zillion AI books apparently on Amazon with the word blueprint. So that was a rookie mistake, but <laugh>, but really that's what it is. It's not, it's not a book about necessarily how to use AI. I mean, I of course mentioned that across the book mm-hmm <affirmative>. But it's about how someone in my role or how leaders Yeah. Or ed ed tech leaders or admin, how you might go about like, the different components of reaching staff and mm-hmm <affirmative>. Building capacity at the building level and that sort of thing. So it's a blueprint in that, in that way, like how to integrate AI

Monica Burns:

And we'll make sure to link out to it in the show notes so people can find yours, <laugh>.

Katie Page:

Oh, great. Going

Monica Burns:

Out to search for great resources.

Katie Page:

I appreciate

Monica Burns:

Option. Yeah. On Amazon of books from past podcast guests. So users will be there for when anyone Oh, fantastic. Is listening into this too. But for anyone who's just kind of on the go, on the move as they're listening in today and wants to make that mental bookmark of how to stay, I connected. Where can people connect with you? Where can they learn more about your work?

Katie Page:

Yeah, I mean, I would say LinkedIn would probably be the easiest, or you could visit my website at katiepage.ai. K-A-T-I-E-P-A-G-E dot A-I. Yeah, so I've got some courses online too.

Some are free, some are paid. And a link to my book is on the website as well. But yeah, this has been really fun. I love talking about all of this <laugh>. Yeah.

Monica Burns:

It's a, a favorite topic and very timely, so thank you so much for your time today.

Katie Page:

Yeah, thanks Monica.

So let's make this EdTech easy with some key points from the episode...

Relationships and trust are essential for AI adoption across schools.

Real-life use cases build staff buy-in more effectively than tool demos.

Ethical AI use requires clear reminders—not just new rules.

Small, practical tech tips can open the door to deeper AI conversations.

Remember, you can find the shownotes and the full list of resources from this episode including all of the ways to connect with Katie Page on EasyEdTechPodcast.com and finding today's episode #340!

Outro Sponsor Message

This episode is sponsored by my Easy EdTech Club — a membership designed to help K-12 educators save time and simplify technology integration. When you join, you'll get instant access to dozens of months worth of content from the past couple years — plus new masterclasses, guides, and resources each month. It's all self-paced, so you can dive in whenever it works for your schedule. Head to **EasyEdTechClub.com** to learn more and sign up. That's **EasyEdTechClub.com** for all the details!

Outro

Thank you for listening to this new episode of the Easy EdTech Podcast! I love creating new episodes for you each week, but I could use a bit of help spreading the word about the podcast. Can you leave a rating or review on your favorite podcast app?

Spotify will let you tap on the stars, and Apple Podcasts will let you tap on the stars and leave a one or two sentence review.

Thank you so much for taking this extra step, it helps other educators find episodes like this one when they are searching for EdTech tips.

Episode Resources

- Connect with Katie Page on [LinkedIn](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Find Katie Page's book *AI Blueprint for Schools: A Practical Guide for Educators to Integrate AI* on [Amazon](#)
- Explore courses on prompting and basic AI at [katiepage.ai](#)
- [ChatGPT](#) (Chatbot)
- [Gemini](#) (Chatbot)
- [SOPPA](#) (Student Online Personal Protection Act)
- [FERPA](#) (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
- [Tips for Having Coaching Conversations About AI with Educators](#) (Blog Post)
- [Practical Tips: AI for School Leaders with Vickie Echols](#) (Podcast Episode)
- [AI Tips for Educators from Easy EdTech Podcast Guests](#) (Blog Post)
- [Creativity and Ethics in the Age of AI with Eric Walters](#) (Podcast Episode)
- [The District-Wide Applications of Real-Time AI Filtering](#) (Blog Post)