K-12 AI Purchasing Guide
A Guide and Scorecard for School District Administrators

Classworks
by TOUCHMATH

This guide and scorecard are designed to help decision-makers evaluate AI tools with confidence. Each category includes context on why it matters, common red flags to watch for, and expert-level questions to ask vendors. Use this guide to determine whether a potential purchase supports responsible, teacher-centered, and equitable classroom practices, and qualifies for upcoming federal funds based on the recently released guidelines.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

CRITERIA	Why it Matters	Questions to Ask the Vendor	Green Flags	Red Flags
TEACHER CONTROL	• Teachers must remain the instructional decision-makers. AI should support judgment, not replace it. If the system overrides teacher control, it undermines pedagogy, compliance, and trust.	• Does the teacher stay in charge of key decisions? • What percentage of the AI's outputs are reviewed by humans? • What happens if the model is uncertain or produces a potentially harmful result? • Can you show how a human intervenes before students see content?	• The tool incorporates Human-in-the-Loop (HITL), human review, escalation workflows, or approval steps. • Mentions of continuous feedback loops, and human oversight indicates structured human checks are in place.	• Emphasis on automation or end-to-end AI without mention of teacher or human review. • Vague promises that AI ensures accuracy without showing who validates it.
TRANSPARENCY & PRIVACY	• Transparency and compliance are critical for protecting student data and not violating FERPA and COPPA. Compliance is a key requirement for grant funding.	• What student data is collected, how is it used, and who can access it? • Can you provide documentation of compliance with FERPA and COPPA? • How is student data anonymized or de-identified?	• The vendor provides clear explanations of what data is collected, how it is stored, and who can access it. • They make explicit references to compliance with FERPA and COPPA.	• Vendor provides vague or incomplete answers about data handling. • They are unable to show policies or compliance documentation.
FIT FOR THE CLASSROOM	• Technology should enhance, not burden, instruction. If it adds to teacher workload without offsetting	• Does the tool make teacher's work in the classroom easier and more effective? • How does the tool integrate into classroom routines?	• Concrete examples of reducing paperwork, improving communication, or saving time.	• The tool creates additional reporting requirements or duplicate data entry. • Teachers must spend significant time troubleshooting instead of teaching. • Extensive PD is required.

	benefits, it risks reducing instructional time.	• What feedback do you have from teachers on workload changes after implementation?	• Clear evidence of alignment with instructional goals or reduced administrative burden. • Case studies or testimonials from other districts with similar demographics are shared.	• The program doesn't prevent students from entering open responses or mitigate the risk of inappropriate/off topic conversations with the AI.
PERSONALIZATION	• Personalization ensures students engage with material. Without it, students may face one-size-fits-all approaches that can frustrate those who need more support, and ultimately distort understanding of progress.	• Does the tool personalize learning based on each student's needs and progress? • What specific data does your tool use to personalize? • How do you ensure that students are appropriately challenged rather than stuck in repetitive tasks? • What evidence do you have that your approach to personalization supports diverse learners?	• Clear explanation of how the tool adapts to differences in student performance. • Descriptions of flexible pathways, scaffolds, or adjustments that allow all learners to make progress. • Independent studies or classroom evidence that adaptations improve engagement and outcomes.	• Overly broad claims like "the tool is adaptive" without explanation of how. • All students are given the same sequence of lessons or assessments regardless of progress. • No evidence that adjustments meaningfully impact learning.
EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY	• Equity requires that AI tools be accessible for all learners, including those with disabilities or language needs.	• Can all students use it, including those with disabilities or multilingual needs? • Is it WCAG 2.1 compliant? • Does it provide content in multiple languages? • How do you ensure accessibility for students with visual or hearing impairments?	• Support for multiple input and output formats such as text, audio, and multiple languages. • Accessibility features aligned with Section 504, IDEA, and WCAG standards.	• Limited or no support for accessibility • English-only • Text-only delivery.

Scorecard

PRODUCT NAME: _____ DATE: _____/_____

CRITERIA	1 – Does Not Meet Criteria	2 – Partially Meets Criteria	3 – Meets or Exceeds Criteria	Score (1-3)	Notes
TEACHER CONTROL	Product has no evidence of human in the loop or teacher review.	Limited teacher visibility into decisions; minimal AI outputs reviewed or override options available	Teachers remain in full control. AI supports decision-making; outputs can be reviewed/approved before reaching students.		
TRANSPARENCY & PRIVACY	No evidence of data protections. Vendor is vague about what data is collected or how it is handled.	Limited transparency. Some details are shared, but clarity on access, use, or compliance is incomplete. Access or compliance.	Clear documented data practices; explicit compliance to FERPA, COPPA, and other student privacy requirements.		
FIT FOR THE CLASSROOM	No evidence the tool reduces workload. Adds reporting or trouble shooting that pulls time from instruction.	Limited benefit. Some efficiencies, but overall still creates burdens such as intense training or ongoing troubleshooting.	Clear evidence the tool supports instruction. Demonstrated time savings, smoother routines, or reduced tasks with positive teacher feedback or case studies.		
PERSONALIZATION	No evidence of personalization. All students receive the same lessons or assessments regardless of need.	Limited adaptation. Some features adjust content, but little proof they improve engagement or outcomes.	Clear personalization. The tool adapts to student readiness, language, and accessibility needs. Students are appropriately challenged, not stuck in repetition. Independent evidence shows improved outcomes.		
EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY	No evidence of accessibility. English-only or text-only delivery; not usable for students with disabilities	Limited accessibility features. Some support is included, but not fully aligned with Section 504, IDEA, or WCAG standards.	Strong accessibility and equity support. Multiple formats (text, audio, language options) and compliance with Section 504, IDEA, and WCAG standards.		
			TOTAL SCORE		