

America's Schools Are Failing: Cheating Scandals Skyrocket Nationwide

Artificial intelligence is making it even easier for college and high school students to cheat.

As more and more students learn to use ChatGPT and other AI tools, teachers increasingly have to decide if an assignment was written by a human, according to Axios.

"I have to be a teacher and an AI detector at the same time," Stephen Cicirelli, an English professor at St. Peter's University in Jersey City, New Jersey, said.

Any assignment "that you take home and have time to play around with, there's going to be doubt hanging over it," he said.

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He shared one frustrating episode on X.

"I just failed a student for submitting an AI-written research paper, and she sent me an obviously AI-written email apologizing, asking if there is anything she can do to improve her grade. We are through the looking-glass, folks," he wrote.

He wrote that he "almost didn't mind the AI-paper. I'm numb to it at this point. It was the thoughtless remorse afterward that got to me."

A Pew Research survey put the level of AI use among teenagers completing school assignments at 26 percent in 2024, double the 13 percent reported in 2023.

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Education Week reported in 2024 that 11 percent of assignments run through Turnitin's AI detection tool had been at least 20 percent generated by AI.

Three percent of the assignments were more than 80 percent AI-generated.

In 2023, Denise Pope, a senior lecturer at Stanford University's Graduate School of Education, said cheating in droves predates AI, according to Stanford.

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"For years, long before ChatGPT hit the scene, some 60 to 70 percent of students have reported engaging in at least one 'cheating' behavior during the previous month," she said.

"That percentage has stayed about the same or even decreased slightly in our 2023 surveys, when we added questions specific to new AI technologies, like ChatGPT, and how students are using it for school assignments," she said.

Axios reported that 66 percent of college administrators think AI use will limit the attention spans of students, per a survey from the American Association of Colleges & Universities and Elon University's Imagining the Digital Future Center.

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The survey also found that 59 percent of administrators said cheating on campus has increased, while 56 percent said their colleges are not ready to grapple with the ramifications of AI use.

“It’s an undeniable and unavoidable disruption,” Lee Rainie, director of the Imagining the Digital Future Center, remarked. “You can’t avert your eyes.”

But as noted by The New York Times, there is a flaw that limits enforcement. AI-detection programs are sometimes subject to false positives that can flag the honest work of students as AI-generated.

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