

New York Pauses Robot Teacher Plan

A school district in New York has paused its plan to deploy an AI-powered teaching assistant in classrooms. The shift follows education officials, teachers, and residents expressing concern over the initial effort.

The state's Education Commissioner, Betty Rosa, sent a letter to Salamanca Superintendent Mark Beehler, writing that the "Department remains concerned about the effect that a humanoid robot may have within a high school classroom." She explained, "Many parents, teachers, and stakeholders are understandably concerned about the presence of artificial intelligence technology in classrooms, particularly when it involves robots that resemble humans."

According to the letter, obtained by New York Focus, the education department expected to be "kept fully apprised of the district's plans" should the effort have moved forward.



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Realbotix CEO Andrew Kiguel told the outlet, "We fully respect any decision the school makes and encourage thorough due diligence by all parties involved."

"We want the program to be demonstrably safe, fully district-approved, and strongly supported by teachers," he said. "We stand firmly behind [the program] as a supportive tool designed to assist teachers and students, not replace them."

New York State United Teachers President Melinda Person criticized the initial plan, declaring that students need "real relationships with caring adults. Educators notice when

students are struggling, celebrate when they succeed and help them discover who they can become. No robot can do that, no matter how lifelike its skin or specific its regional accent.”

The robot was previously reported to be named “Sally” and come with a price tag of \$57,000. It was expected to have brown hair, latex skin, and move its arms and hands. It was also slated to speak with a western New York accent.

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