

Sign of the Times? Arizona Starts First AI Charter School

Arizona officials have approved a new charter school that educates students using artificial intelligence.

“Our teachers still do a lot of the teaching role, but they don’t do the actual teaching of academic concepts because we know that that’s something that AI can do really well,” Ivy Xu said, to Fox 10 Phoenix. Xu added, “Because everything is personalized to the student, learning for core academics is just two to two and half hours a day.”

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After students complete the two-hour day, they engage in a life skills program in an area of their interest.

“Gave the kids an opportunity to learn things that typically, people don’t get a chance to try and learn until they’re working, once they’ve graduated,” Kristin Mann told the outlet.

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The AI school, called Unbound Academy, was approved by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools in December. Four other U.S. states have rejected the two-hour learning model.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education said the model is “untested and fails to demonstrate how the tools, methods and providers would ensure alignment to Pennsylvania academic standards.”

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Susan Spicka, executive director of public education group Education Voters PA, raised concerns over cyber education standards, telling Chalkbeat Philadelphia, "These schools are failing to ensure that the kids they bring in are learning and will be able to graduate, ready for a productive career or higher education. That is a huge problem."

Similar issues were raised by officials in Arkansas, Utah and North Carolina.

Despite opposition from several states, AI schools are expanding in Austin, Texas. "There's a way we can get kids learning twice as fast in a fraction of the time, and all you have to do is leverage all the ed tech has to offer us," Jamal Gross, head of school for the Lake Travis Sports Academy, told Axios last year.

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