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**ECASB**

Erie County Association of School Boards

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*Is Your  
District  
Preparing  
Generation  
Alpha for  
Success?*

*How is  
Your District  
Preparing  
Generation  
Alpha for  
Success?*



## *ECASB Asks the Experts...*

***ECASB "Ask the Experts" is a monthly paper that brings ECASB and an expert in the field of education together to provide ECASB Board Members information about a variety of topics of interest to Board Members.***

### **Generation Alpha and Artificial Intelligence**

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Generation Alpha is the demographic cohort following Generation Z. These individuals are currently being born and will shape the future of our society. As such, it is important to consider their educational needs. One key consideration for Gen Alpha is the rapid pace of technological advancement. These young people will be entering a world that is increasingly reliant on technology, and it is important that they have the skills and knowledge to navigate it. This means that education needs to prioritize STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and math) and provide students with opportunities to learn about and engage with technology in a meaningful way.

In addition to tech skills, Gen Alpha will also need to be able to think critically and communicate effectively in order to succeed in the modern world. This means that education should place a strong emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. It is also important for Gen Alpha be inclusive and diverse. This means acknowledging and valuing the unique experiences and perspectives of all students and providing them with the tools they need to succeed. This includes addressing issues of equity and addressing the needs of students with disabilities.

Overall, the educational needs of Gen Alpha are diverse and multifaceted. It is important that we prioritize the development of tech skills, critical thinking, communication skills, and inclusivity in order to give these young people the best chance at success in the 21st century.

The previous paragraphs were written with Artificial Intelligence, specifically the ChatGPT interface that you may have recently seen on the news. I would agree with everything that was harvested to create this response with a couple of additions: Generation Alpha will need to create products of value, perhaps with an entrepreneurial mindset that will help them have high levels of buy-in and interest in school. Additionally, these students will need much direction around dispositions for interactions such as those outlined in Bena Kallick's and Art Costa's *Habits of Mind*. They may be the most highly connected and online humans in the history of humanity but we don't want that to be at the detriment of meaningful human relationships and real-world interactions.

For Gen Alpha, Artificial Intelligence is going to be as common as crayons and paper were to previous generations of students. Generation Alpha, and Artifi-

cial Intelligence, are grouped together here for two reasons. One, they are both new and entering/altering the educational landscape. Two, they are both misunderstood, as their newness brings an entirely new ecosystem to learn to navigate, in the midst of the realities of the day-to-day operations of present-day schools.

I find this extraordinarily exciting. I've been investigating/playing with different Artificial Intelligence tools over the last year and I'm constantly amazed at what they can do and the implications they have for education moving forward.

With ChatGPT, you can generate many different types of text just by giving the tool a prompt. Then, the tool uses the entirety of its database to construct a response around your prompt parameters. I've used StarryAI and Night Cafe apps to generate art from the text. You enter a few keywords, give the system some feedback on output around stylistic decisions, and voila...instant art! There are tools that can help you create 3D models, be a virtual assistant, auto-post social media, create and play games... the opportunities are infinitesimal. And they are growing at an exponential rate.

AI has been impacting our lives in subtle but distinct ways for years now: personalized Google results, Youtube recommendations, Alexa, Siri, targeted Advertisements, face recognition, predictive text, automatic speech recognition...the list is ongoing. While some may be concerned about the way technology is impacting our lives, it's hard to deny that we are increasingly dependent upon it. And now, it is becoming more and more pervasive and harder to escape its impact. Rather than fear what's coming for our Generation Alpha students, I think it's a good time to start thinking about how we embrace technology in general and Artificial Intelligence specifically as it relates to teaching and learning. I think it's too easy just to label these tools as opportunities for cheating. I think there are opportunities, to be sure, but opportunities for providing feedback, generating new ideas, critical thinking, and more:

- We can better personalize learning experiences for students, tailoring the curriculum and teaching style to the individual needs and abilities of each student.
- We can improve efficiency in grading assignments and providing feedback, freeing up valuable teacher time for high-impact activities such as one-on-one instruction or facilitating group discussions.
- We can provide opportunities for immersive and interactive learning experiences and gamified learning environments.
- We can enhance assessment to be more objective and accurate and provide better feedback and better monitoring for areas where students may need additional support.

Generation Alpha is unlike any other generation of students we have ever encountered. As such, educating these children who were practically born with devices in their hands creates a whole new economy for educational and interactive endeavors. We are no longer preparing kids for growing up and staying in their communities, we're preparing kids for the world, maybe the universe.

For more information about Generation Alpha and their contemporary learning needs, please check out Michael's book, written with co-authors Marie Alcock and Allison Zmuda: *The Quest for Learning: How to Maximize Student Engagement*. Michael can be found on Twitter (@fisher1000), Instagram (@mikefisher821), or his website at [Digigogy.com](http://Digigogy.com).