

Continuation Executive Summary

- **Ethical considerations:** According to CIDDLL (2024), ensuring equitable access to AI technologies is crucial to prevent exacerbating existing educational inequalities, as students in well-funded schools may have greater access to cutting-edge AI tools.

These challenges are particularly acute for the 7.5 million students receiving special education services nationwide (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2024). Without structured intervention, the increasing adoption of AI tools risks exacerbating educational disparities rather than reducing them (Holmes et al., 2022).

Program Framework and Theoretical Foundation

The AIEIP is grounded in the Diversity, Equity, Intersectionality, Power, and Anti-Racism (DEIPAR) framework (Dyer & Gushwa, 2023), ensuring that social justice and inclusion remain central to all implementation efforts. Two additional theoretical perspectives complement this foundation:

- **Diffusion of Innovations Theory** (Dearing & Cox, 2018): Guides the phased implementation approach and adoption strategies for educators with varying levels of technology comfort.
- **Constructivist Learning Theory** (Fernando & Marikar, 2017): Informs the development of training materials that engage educators in active, experiential learning about AI ethics.

Together, these frameworks create a comprehensive approach that addresses both the technical and social dimensions of ethical AI implementation in SPED settings. The AIEIP addresses a critical gap in educational technology governance by establishing a comprehensive framework for ethical AI implementation in special education. This initiative is particularly timely as AI adoption in K-12 education accelerates without corresponding ethical guidelines. The program's significance extends beyond compliance to address fundamental questions of equity, accessibility, and student rights.

Program Components and Implementation Strategy

The AIEIP provides a multi-faceted approach to ethical AI integration through four interconnected components:

- **Ethical AI Professional Development:** Tiered training modules for SPED educators on AI literacy, bias recognition, and ethical decision-making (Holmes et al., 2022; McMahon & Firestone, 2024). These modules are designed to accommodate varying levels of technological familiarity and incorporate trauma-informed approaches (Elliott et al., 2005).
- **AI Compliance Frameworks:** Structured protocols and assessment tools that align AI-driven educational decisions with IDEA, FERPA, and Section 504 requirements (Roschelle et al., 2024; Holler & Zirkel, 2008). These frameworks ensure that AI tools support rather than undermine legal protections for students with disabilities. These frameworks translate complex regulations into actionable guidelines, allowing educators to evaluate AI tools against clearly defined compliance standards varying in technological proficiency. They can also be integrated into SAU41's existing professional development structure (SAU41, 2022).
- **AI Bias Audits and Monitoring:** Regular assessment processes to identify and mitigate potential biases in AI-driven recommendations, particularly for students with intersecting marginalized identities (Nguyen et al., 2023). These audits will evaluate algorithmic fairness in student assessment, behavior monitoring, and personalized learning recommendations (Maslej et al., 2023; Akgun & Greenhow, 2021).

