

The Transformative Potential of Artificial General Intelligence in K-12 STEM Education

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Introduction

Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) is a hypothetical form of AI with broad cognitive abilities comparable to a human's general intelligence. Unlike today's "narrow" AI, which is specialized for specific tasks, AGI (sometimes called "strong AI") would be capable of understanding, learning, and applying knowledge to solve any complex problem, much like a person [spiceworks.com](https://www.spiceworks.com). An AGI system could transfer learning from one domain to another and adapt to new challenges without needing additional human programming, performing **"any intellectual task that a human being can"** [ibm.com](https://www.ibm.com). This is a significant leap from current AI systems (e.g., a chess program or a math tutor) that excel in one domain but fail outside their training bounds. Though AGI remains theoretical today [ibm.com/spiceworks.com](https://www.ibm.com/spiceworks.com), researchers and tech companies are actively exploring it, underscored by substantial investments (for example, a \$1 billion investment in AGI by OpenAI/Microsoft) [spiceworks.com](https://www.spiceworks.com).

AGI's relevance to education lies in its enormous transformative potential. Education is fundamentally about nurturing human intelligence and skills, so an AI with human-level general intelligence could revolutionize how we teach and learn. Even current AI tools hint at the possibilities: artificial intelligence can personalize learning experiences, automate routine tasks, and provide tutoring support. A fully realized AGI could take these benefits to another level – serving as an ever-present expert tutor or assistant teacher for every student. The promise is that AGI might help **"address the gaps global education systems are struggling with"** by enabling more personalized, accessible learning for all [weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org). In K-12 STEM education, where challenges like inequity and resource gaps persist, AGI could dramatically enhance educational outcomes. At the same time, the advent of AGI raises essential questions about how to integrate such powerful technology responsibly in schools. This case study explores the current state of U.S. K-12 STEM education, proposes transformative applications of AGI in that context, and examines the potential benefits and risks of AGI-driven education.

Industry Analysis: Current State of K-12 STEM Education

A student uses a microscope during a middle school science class.

The landscape of K-12 STEM education in the United States faces multiple systemic challenges. Despite various reforms and investments, issues such as uneven educational quality and outdated methods hinder student progress in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Key challenges include:

- Educational Inequality:** There are significant disparities in STEM achievement among different student demographics and regions. Students from under-resourced schools or disadvantaged backgrounds often have less access to quality STEM instruction and materials. National assessments reveal significant performance gaps – for example, minority and low-income students score far lower on standardized math exams than their peers. **Racial/ethnic minority students (except Asians) score much lower than white students on critical STEM tests, and low socioeconomic status students consistently perform significantly worse than higher-SES students of all races**[nsf.gov](https://www.nsf.gov). These gaps, exacerbated by inequitable school funding and fewer advanced course offerings in high-poverty schools, translate into fewer minority and low-income students pursuing STEM careers, perpetuating a cycle of underrepresentation.
- Teacher Shortages:** There is a chronic shortage of qualified STEM teachers in K-12 schools. Many schools struggle to recruit and retain teachers for mathematics, physics, computer science, and other STEM subjects, resulting in larger class sizes or classes taught by instructors out of their field. Data from recent years are alarming – in the 2017–2018 school year, about **100,000 high school STEM teaching positions were unfilled, along with ~150,000 unfilled STEM teacher jobs at the middle school level**[at the74million.org](https://www.the74million.org). This shortfall has worsened over the past decade. By the 2020–2021 school year, roughly one-third of U.S. public schools could not find a qualified teacher for math or science classes, up from about one-fifth of schools in 2011[the74million.org](https://www.the74million.org). Such shortages mean that many students, especially in rural and urban districts, may be taught by substitutes or teachers without deep STEM expertise, negatively impacting learning outcomes.
- Standardized Testing Limitations:** STEM education in the U.S. has heavily emphasized standardized tests to measure achievement. However, these tests have well-known limitations. **At best, standardized exams evaluate rote knowledge in math and science; they do *not* measure creativity, problem-solving, or critical thinking skills**[britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com). The pressure to “teach to the test” can narrow the curriculum, with teachers focusing on test-taking skills and factual recall rather than hands-on experiments or exploratory learning. This undermines deeper understanding and enthusiasm for STEM. Moreover, test-centric accountability can penalize schools serving high-need populations without addressing root causes. There is growing recognition that innovation and inquiry – vital components of STEM – are stifled by an overreliance on multiple-choice testing.
- Underperformance in Math and Science:** American students’ STEM performance has room for improvement relative to international benchmarks. Results from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate that U.S. 15-year-olds lag behind many of their global peers, especially in mathematics. In the most recent PISA results, the **U.S. ranked 28th out of 37 OECD countries in math, well below the OECD average, while ranking 12th in science**[pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org). U.S. average math scores have declined in recent years (a 13-point drop from 2018 to 2022)[pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org), partly due to disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately affected math learning. While U.S. science scores are steady and above the international mean[pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org), the overall picture is that American 12 STEM education is not leading the pack globally. Public perception mirrors this: about two-thirds of Americans rate U.S. K-12 STEM education as “average or below

average” compared to other wealthy nations [pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org). This underperformance raises concerns about the nation’s future scientific workforce and innovation capacity.

In response to these challenges, educators and schools have begun adopting AI (artificial intelligence) tools on a smaller scale to enhance STEM teaching and learning. While these AI systems are “narrow AI” (not true AGI), they offer a glimpse of technology’s potential in education. For example, **adaptive learning platforms** like DreamBox and ALEKS use AI algorithms to adjust math lessons in real-time based on each student’s performance, pacing the difficulty to the individual learner fetc.org. Such platforms provide personalized practice problems and hints to help students master concepts at their own pace. Similarly, **intelligent tutoring systems** have emerged – one prominent example is Carnegie Learning’s AI-driven tutor for algebra, which analyzes students’ problem-solving steps and offers targeted feedback and hints to address misunderstandings fetc.org. These tutoring systems act like digital one-on-one coaches, reinforcing classroom instruction. Early studies indicate that AI-powered personalized tools can boost student engagement and achievement by tailoring support in ways a single teacher with 30 students might struggle to do.

AI is also being used to streamline administrative and assessment tasks. Machine learning techniques enable **automated grading** of assignments and tests – from auto-scoring multiple-choice answers to evaluating written responses for content and coherence. Tools such as Gradescope (for grading) and Turnitin’s AI writing analysis can handle routine grading much faster than humans, providing instant feedback to students fetc.org. Some classrooms have experimented with **chatbot teaching assistants**, which answer students’ frequently asked questions online or provide homework help after hours. An expanding array of AI-driven educational games and simulations (e.g., the math game Prodigy or virtual lab simulations) makes STEM learning more interactive and fun by adapting to student inputs. Notably, **roughly 60% of U.S. educators report using some form of AI in their classrooms as of 2023** fetc.org, highlighting that AI adoption in education is already underway.

These current applications of AI remain limited in scope – they are tools focused on specific functions like tutoring a single subject or automating a task. However, they set important precedents. Teachers in AI-enabled classrooms can devote more time to individual mentorship as AI handles repetitive tasks; students can benefit from personalized practice and support that would be difficult to provide otherwise. The experience with these systems builds an understanding of how more advanced AI might be effectively integrated into teaching. In the next section, we envision how a future **Artificial General Intelligence** – far more powerful and flexible than any present system – could transform K-12 STEM education in the United States.

AGI Application Proposal: Transforming STEM Education with General AI

If achieved and deployed, AGI could be a game-changer for STEM education, enabling learning experiences that were previously unattainable at scale. Below are specific ways AGI could be applied in K-12 STEM classrooms and their anticipated benefits. Each proposal builds on the idea of an AI that can understand and respond to students as adeptly as a human teacher but with tireless patience, vast content knowledge, and the ability to adapt continuously.

- **Hyper-Personalized Learning:** An AGI system could function as an ultra-personalized tutor for every student, customizing the learning process in real-time. It would track each learner’s strengths, weaknesses, and preferred learning styles across all STEM subjects. For instance, if

a student struggles with algebraic equations but learns best through visual examples, the AGI could recognize this and adjust its teaching approach – perhaps by showing a video or interactive graphic to explain the concept. Over time, the AI would refine a unique learning profile for the child and continuously tailor the curriculum to maintain the optimal level of challenge. The result would be a truly individualized education plan for everyone. This hyper-personalization goes beyond current adaptive software: an AGI tutor could seamlessly integrate knowledge from various domains (math, science, engineering) and relate concepts to a student’s interests or real-world contexts to boost engagement. The benefit is that students could master topics at their own pace without boredom or confusion – the AGI would always present material at the “just right” level. Struggling learners would get more reviews and alternative explanations, while advanced learners could accelerate or delve into deeper topics. Such customization has the potential to **close achievement gaps**, as each student gets exactly the support they need. It also fosters a growth mindset since AI can ensure a student experiences success and progression, building confidence in STEM.

- **Intelligent Virtual Tutors and Companions:** AGI-powered virtual tutors could provide scale-based one-on-one instruction and mentorship. Envision an elementary science class where each student interacts with their AI tutor through a tablet and discusses a science experiment. The AGI could ask students questions, answer their curiosities, and guide them through hands-on activities or problem-solving processes. Because of its general intelligence, the AI’s explanations would be as nuanced and intuitive as those of a human expert, and it could rephrase or use analogies when a child is confused. These AI tutors would be available 24/7 – a student at home could ask their AI for help with homework in the evening and get instant, accurate assistance. Virtual tutors ensure no student is left without individual help in areas with teacher shortages or overcrowded classrooms. They could also serve as **adaptive practice partners**, patiently drilling math facts or coding skills in an interactive way that keeps the student motivated. Importantly, AGI tutors would not replace human teachers but complement them by handling repetitive teaching tasks and reinforcing lessons, while human educators focus on higher-level guidance and emotional support. This “**AI co-teaching**” model (with AGI as a classroom assistant) could bring expert-level help into every classroom [at ajjuliani.com](https://www.ajjuliani.com). Students would effectively have a personal tutor anytime they need clarification or enrichment, which could dramatically improve understanding and retention of STEM material. Such tutors can also speak multiple languages, making STEM content accessible to English learners by conversing in the student’s native language when necessary.

Dynamic Curriculum Generation: AGI could dynamically generate and adjust the curriculum in response to student needs and the latest developments. Rather than a static textbook, the AGI would act as a living curriculum that updates and evolves. For example, if a student has mastered fundamental physics ahead of schedule, the AGI might introduce more advanced topics or interdisciplinary projects combining physics with coding or math, creating a challenge that keeps them engaged. Conversely, if many students struggle with a particular concept, the AGI could allocate more time to foundational material, offer remedial modules, or find new ways to explain the idea until it clicks. An AGI’s broad knowledge base means it can draw from real-world data and current events to make lessons relevant – imagine learning climate science using up-to-the-minute climate data or practicing statistics by analyzing the day’s news polls. The curriculum would no longer be one-size-fits-all but fluid and customized in real-time.

- Additionally, an AGI could generate new problems and projects on the fly, tailored to each learner's progress. Teachers today spend countless hours devising differentiated lesson materials; an AGI could handle this instantly, creating, for instance, a personalized set of chemistry practice problems for each student or even designing virtual lab experiments suited to the class's current learning level. This flexibility could make STEM learning more **engaging and relevant**, as content continuously adapts to student input and contemporary context. It also helps ensure that standards are met in a mastery-based way – students only advance when ready, and no one is stuck doing busy work or waiting for others to catch up.
- **Real-Time Feedback and Assessment:** One of the most potent applications of AGI in the classroom would be providing instantaneous feedback to students and teachers. When a student completes a test or assignment, there's a delay before they get results and corrections – by which time the learning moment might have passed. An AGI could observe a student working through a math problem or science project in real time (via their interactions on a device or even through cameras/sensors that watch how they proceed) and immediately detect misconceptions or errors. It could then intervene on the spot: for example, pointing out a calculation mistake as soon as it happens and prompting the student to reconsider or asking a probing question that leads the student to self-correct a misunderstanding in a physics lab. This instant feedback loop helps students learn from mistakes *while* still engaging with the material, reinforcing understanding more effectively. For teachers, the AGI can provide analytics and alerts: it might notify the teacher that a particular concept (say, solving quadratic equations) is giving half the class trouble, allowing the teacher to re-teach it the next day. The AI could also grade open-ended assignments like essays or science project reports on the fly, supplying students with detailed feedback on their reasoning and offering suggestions for improvement. Such formative assessment capability ensures that no student “falls through the cracks” – the AGI would continuously monitor progress and flag if a student is falling behind, enabling timely intervention. It effectively personalizes assessment, moving beyond test scores to better understand each student's learning process. Over time, this could lead to improved learning outcomes, as every mistake becomes a teaching opportunity, and students get a more **interactive, responsive learning experience** instead of waiting days or weeks for feedback.

A student engages with an AI-driven learning platform on a laptop, receiving individualized guidance.

Beyond these core applications, AGI could enable **immersive learning experiences** in STEM. For instance, an AGI coupled with virtual or augmented reality could create fully interactive science labs or field trips: imagine students exploring a simulated Martian landscape or the inside of a cell, guided by an AGI that can answer questions and adjust the simulation in real-time. AGI might also facilitate collaborative learning by intelligently pairing or grouping students for projects based on their strengths and weaknesses and then moderating the group's interaction to ensure everyone contributes and learns. Moreover, AGI systems could take over routine administrative tasks like attendance, scheduling, and grading, which currently consume teachers' time, freeing teachers to focus more on mentorship and one-on-one interaction with students. In an AGI-empowered classroom, the teacher's role would likely shift to that of a facilitator and coach – providing the human touch, motivation, and oversight, while the AI handles content delivery and skill practice. This scenario aligns with expert visions of the future where **educators become more like mentors focusing on** social-emotional

learning and higher-order skills, as AI manages the heavy cognitive lifting of instruction ajjuliani.com.

Expected Benefits: AGI in STEM education promises numerous benefits if implemented well. Foremost, it could dramatically improve **equity and accessibility**: regardless of their school's resources, every student would have access to a top-tier "AI tutor" and a rich curriculum. This might narrow achievement gaps by raising the floor for those lacking quality STEM instruction. Learning would become more **engaging and tailored** – students will likely be more motivated when lessons adapt to their interests and offer interactive, game-like elements (which an AGI can generate). Personalized pacing means advanced students are continually challenged (reducing boredom), and struggling students get patience and support (reducing frustration), fostering a more positive attitude toward STEM. Real-time adaptation and feedback could lead to deeper understanding and better material retention, potentially reflecting higher test scores and genuine mastery of STEM skills. From a practical standpoint, AGI assistants could mitigate issues like large class sizes or substitute teacher shortages by ensuring each child still receives guidance. It could also assist students with disabilities by offering tailored support – for example, converting science lesson content into accessible formats for visually or deaf students or providing therapies and exercises to students with learning disabilities. AGI would be a powerful ally for teachers – handling labor-intensive tasks such as grading, generating lesson plans, or even answering routine student queries, thereby reducing burnout and allowing educators to spend more time on creativity and personal connection. In the long term, a generation of students educated through personalized AGI-enhanced methods could enter society with stronger STEM competencies and innovative thinking skills, helping fill the talent pipeline in science and technology. In short, AGI has the potential to **"improve learning outcomes, empower teachers, and equip students with the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow,"** as a World Economic Forum report on AI in education noted weforum.org.

However, realizing these benefits depends on careful implementation. Introducing AGI into schools would also bring significant **risks and ethical concerns** that must be proactively addressed:

- **Data Privacy and Security:** AGI tutoring systems would collect vast amounts of personal data on students – from academic performance and learning patterns to possibly sensitive information like expressions or speech if audio/visual inputs are used. This raises serious privacy issues, especially since children are involved. Schools must safeguard all student data and comply with laws like FERPA and COPPA. There is a risk that student information could be misused or breached if proper protections aren't in place. Past incidents show that K-12 institutions are vulnerable to cyber incidents raise.mit.edu. Parents and educators are understandably **wary about what personal data is collected and how it's used or stored** [at education.illinois.edu](http://education.illinois.edu). Any AGI in the classroom must have strict data minimization and encryption protocols. Additionally, informed consent is crucial – families should know what data is being gathered by the AI and have the ability to opt-out or review that data. Without robust privacy safeguards, the introduction of AGI could lead to distrust or even harm if sensitive student information were exposed.
- **Algorithmic Bias and Fairness:** AI systems are only as unbiased as the data and algorithms that shape them. An AGI trained on real-world data might inadvertently reflect societal biases (e.g., gender or racial bias) in how it interacts with students or evaluates their work. For instance, an AGI might more often suggest advanced math challenges to boys than girls if it has absorbed the stereotype that boys excel in math – an unacceptable outcome that could reinforce inequity. We already see related issues: even current AI like facial recognition has

higher error rates for women and children[politico.com](https://www.politico.com), and early AI writing detectors have misclassified non-native English writing as “AI-generated” due to linguistic biaseducation.illinois.edu. In an education context, any bias in the AGI’s decisions (such as who gets more complex problems or how it disciplines or rewards students) could unfairly impact a child’s learning trajectory. Developers of educational AGI will need to test and train systems to be fair and inclusive rigorously. This includes diversifying training data, implementing bias audits, and allowing human oversight. Moreover, transparency is essential – understanding *why* the AGI made a specific recommendation or decision so that biases can be spotted and corrected. AGI could inadvertently perpetuate discrimination or stereotypes in the classroom environment without addressing this.

- **Overdependence on Technology:** If students come to rely too heavily on an AI for guidance at every step, there’s a concern that they might not develop independent problem-solving skills. Part of learning is struggling through challenges; if an AGI always provides an immediate hint or solution, students may become passive learners. Additionally, **reduced human interaction** is a risk – education is about content mastery and social development. If an AI tutor replaces much of the student-teacher or student-student interaction, children may miss out on developing communication skills, empathy, and teamwork. Research suggests excessive screen time or automated interaction can hamper social-emotional growtheducation.illinois.edu. To mitigate this, schools should implement AGI as a supplement, not a substitute, ensuring that students still engage in group work, discussions, and face-to-face learning experiences facilitated by teachers. Teachers would need to deliberately balance AI use with interpersonal activities. Over-reliance on AGI could also diminish a teacher’s own pedagogical skills if they become just an observer of the AI rather than an active instructor. Both students and teachers must remain in control of the learning process, using AI as a tool rather than a crutch.
- **Impact on Teaching Jobs and Roles:** The possibility of AGI taking over many instructional tasks naturally raises anxiety for educators: Will AI replace teachers? While most experts argue that human teachers are irreplaceable for mentorship and inspiration, an AGI could reduce the number of instructors needed or change the skillset required. For example, if one AGI can tutor 30 students individually, a school district might be tempted to increase class sizes or hire fewer teachers. This **could threaten job security for teachers or lead to a devaluation of the teaching profession**. It’s crucial to implement AGI with teachers, not *to teachers* – including them in planning and providing training so they can work effectively alongside AI. The idea is that AGI handles routine tasks, and teachers focus on what humans do best: motivating students, fostering creativity, and providing emotional support. One global teachers’ union has emphasized that teachers should remain at the center of education “*aided by AI, rather than replaced by it*” [weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org). Policymakers and administrators must navigate this carefully, potentially redefining teacher roles (e.g., as “learning coaches” overseeing AI-driven learning) and investing in professional development. In the long run, new job opportunities (such as AI curriculum specialists or data analysts in education) could arise, but a transition period could be challenging for the workforce.

Ethical and Societal Implications: Finally, deploying AGI in schools raises broader ethical questions. Who controls AI and its curriculum? If a private company’s AGI is teaching millions of children and concentrating much influence in the hands of the AI provider, it would be crucial to ensure the content aligns with approved educational standards and values and is free from commercial

or political agendas. There is also the issue of **equitable access**: if wealthy districts can afford cutting-edge AGI systems and poor neighborhoods cannot, the technology could widen rather than bridge the gap in educational quality [weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org). Ensuring all schools have the infrastructure (internet, hardware) to use AGI will be necessary so we don't create a new digital divide in learning opportunities.

Additionally, society must consider the psychological effect on children interacting with AI “beings” – children might form bonds with AI tutors; we must ensure they understand that AI is a tool, not a human friend, to avoid confusion. There could be dependency or trust issues if an AGI malfunctioned or provided incorrect information – students might accept it unquestioningly. Therefore, maintaining human oversight and encouraging critical thinking about AI responses is essential in an AGI-enabled classroom. Schools may need to introduce AI literacy as part of the curriculum, teaching students *about* AI, its benefits, and its pitfalls so they can use it responsibly and understand its limitations.

In summary, integrating AGI into K-12 STEM education carries both exciting promise and real challenges. It could usher in an era where learning is more individualized, mastery-based, and engaging, helping all students reach their potential in STEM subjects. At the same time, careful planning around data ethics, training, and the evolving role of educators is required to ensure that this technology augments rather than undermines the educational mission. The following section concludes with reflections on how AGI might shape the future of education and society if we manage these considerations wisely.

Conclusion

Artificial General Intelligence can be a transformative force in K-12 STEM education – a “holy grail” technology that could address many longstanding issues. AGI could help raise overall STEM proficiency and ignite a passion for science and technology in upcoming generations by providing every student with personalized tutoring, rich resources, and immediate feedback. The future classroom envisioned is one of human-AI collaboration: teachers working alongside intelligent machines to craft optimal learning experiences for each child. If successful, this could mean a future workforce far more skilled in STEM, more creative problem-solvers, and a populace better equipped to participate in an increasingly high-tech society. Improved STEM education through AGI could broaden the pipeline of inventors, engineers, and researchers, strengthening national competitiveness and driving innovation. As the National Science Board has warned, failing to educate broad swaths of our population in STEM will “**limit future employment options**” and “**weaken U.S. competitiveness,**” whereas effectively leveraging new tools to improve STEM learning will do the opposite [nsf.gov](https://www.nsf.gov).

However, the journey toward an AGI-enhanced education system must be approached thoughtfully. We must ensure **ethical implementation**: students' rights and well-being must remain the priority. Policymakers, educators, technologists, and communities must collaborate to set guidelines for AI in schools, addressing concerns of privacy, bias, and access. Pilot programs and ongoing research will be essential to learn how AGI can best support learning and what pitfalls to avoid. Teachers should be empowered in this transition – given a leading voice in how AI is used and supported with training to harness it effectively. Rather than replacing educators, AGI can free them from drudgery and amplify their impact, but only if we design systems with a human-centered approach.

Looking ahead, the rise of AGI in education also prompts society to reconsider what skills are most valuable. If AI can readily provide factual knowledge and procedural problem-solving, schools may emphasize developing students' **critical thinking, creativity, and social skills** – the uniquely human attributes that even an intelligent machine cannot easily replicate [ajjuliani.com](https://www.ajjuliani.com). The curriculum might shift to focus on interdisciplinary projects, ethical reasoning (particularly about technology), and innovation, with AGI handling personalized content delivery in the background. Lifelong learning could become the norm, with AI facilitating continuous upskilling beyond K-12 [ajjuliani.com](https://www.ajjuliani.com). In essence, AGI might improve how we learn *existing* STEM knowledge and expand what it means to be an educated person in the future, where collaborating with intelligent machines is second nature.

In conclusion, the transformative potential of AGI in K-12 STEM education is vast – from leveling the educational playing field to reinventing pedagogical methods. This transformation will require surmounting technical hurdles and addressing valid concerns through careful policy and design. If we succeed, the payoff is a more enlightened, skilled, and equitable society. The classroom of tomorrow, powered by artificial general intelligence, could unlock the complete creative and intellectual potential of today's students, who will become future scientists, engineers, and informed citizens. The coming years will be critical in laying the groundwork to ensure AGI is a tool for empowerment in education rather than a source of new problems. With proactive effort, the promise of AGI in STEM education – **a future where every child can access an individualized, world-class learning experience** – can become a reality.

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