

CASE STUDY • K-12 AI ADOPTION

Why Denver Trusted MagicSchool With Its Classrooms



The full conversation with MagicSchool's leadership team and Denver Public Schools on privacy, trust, and what it takes to earn a district's confidence



PRIVACY SEAL RATING

95%

 up from 93%

MagicSchool holds the Common Sense Privacy Seal, awarded after an independent evaluation against more than 200 published criteria covering transparency, security, and student data protection.

WHO'S IN THIS CONVERSATION

Adeel Khan

CEO, MagicSchool

Former teacher and school principal.

Fiona WrightCompliance & Risk
Manager

CIPM, CIPP/E, AIGP; leads data protection and AI governance.

Evan LapkaSr. Customer Success
Manager

Former special education teacher and edtech veteran.

Dr. Kali PeracchiaLead AI Instructional
Specialist, DPS

Denver's main point of contact for the MagicSchool rollout.

A Year in the Making

Before a single teacher logged in, Denver Public Schools spent a year deciding what it would trust with its classrooms.

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

Denver Public Schools is currently deploying MagicSchool alongside a broader push on AI literacy, with 1,200 teachers trained in the last year and a student advisory council launching this fall at South High School. From MagicSchool's side, what does a rollout like that actually look like?

EVAN

Denver spent a year developing their approach to AI in K-12. Their AI Steering Committee ran a structured pilot across multiple platforms, issued an RFP, and let teacher, student, and community feedback drive the decision. They chose MagicSchool because of data privacy and security features, pedagogical alignment, and the people support behind the product.

The rollout was built around a train-the-trainer model, led by their STEAM and EdTech teams, and anchored to their existing district strategic goals. Critically, the implementation launched with custom-built tools directly informed by DPS's own AI guidance, culturally responsive guidelines, and a focus on equity and representation throughout. Their guidance included a red/yellow/green framework for AI use, giving teachers and students clear, nuanced direction on where AI is appropriate, where it requires judgment, and where it isn't.

DPS deliberately mapped use cases to each department and grade band: custom IEP tooling for special education, sessions for communications staff, differentiated student-facing implementations across elementary and secondary. This specificity, rooted in the district's own values, turned our implementation into a meaningful instructional practice.

Designing for the Moment of Use

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

MagicSchool has talked about building "intentional friction" into the product to protect student privacy — for example, placeholder text in input fields reminding teachers not to enter student PII. Can you walk through why that design choice exists?

ADEEL

The safest student data is the data that never gets entered. Teachers are busy and will default to whatever is easiest, so we put the reminder right where their cursor lands. When a teacher opens a tool to draft an IEP or a parent email, they see "don't include student names or identifying details" before they type a word. As a former teacher and principal, I know a nudge at the moment of use works better than a policy document.

"The safest student data is the data that never gets entered."

ADEEL KHAN, CEO, MAGICSCHOOL

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

Are there moments where teachers or students have pushed back on the friction, and how does MagicSchool think about that tradeoff?

ADEEL

Not really. Teachers are grateful for it. They already know they're responsible for student data, and they appreciate a tool that helps them get it right instead of leaving it entirely on them to remember. It builds trust. When a teacher sees us caring about this at the input field level, they trust us more with everything else. The feedback we do get is usually about making the guidance clearer, not removing it.

What Independent Validation Actually Changed

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

MagicSchool holds the Common Sense Privacy Seal. What did going through that evaluation involve, and what changed on the product side as a result?

FIONA

The Common Sense Privacy evaluation is comprehensive, assessing more than 200 criteria across areas such as transparency, security, student data protections, and responsible data use. It examines how companies collect, use, share, protect, and retain data, as well as their practices around data rights and individual control, advertising and tracking, parental consent, and the use of data for educational purposes.

For us, the process was both a validation exercise and an opportunity to pressure test how clearly our practices were reflected externally. Many of the underlying protections were already part of how MagicSchool operated, but the review helped us identify areas where we could be even clearer about them. We strengthened our external-facing Student Data Policy — provided greater transparency around what student data may be processed and why, clarified our retention and deletion practices, and added more detail about responsible AI and age-appropriate design.

ADEEL

The biggest change was clarity. Most of the protections already existed. What the evaluation forced us to do was write down, in plain language a parent could read, what we do with student data and why. Privacy that only lives inside the engineering team isn't enough. Districts and families need to be able to see it.

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

Has that third-party evaluation changed how conversations with district technology leads go? Do districts ask about it directly?

FIONA

Independent validation is incredibly valuable in conversations with districts because schools should not have to rely solely on a vendor saying, "trust us." District technology, privacy, and security teams are doing increasingly sophisticated due diligence, particularly around AI, and they want evidence that a provider's practices have been independently evaluated.

Our 95% rating is especially meaningful because it reflects continued improvement. We moved from 93% to 95% by strengthening transparency and student data protections, which demonstrates that we view privacy as an ongoing practice rather than a one-time compliance exercise.

ADEEL

Yes. Districts ask about it directly, and even when they don't, it changes the conversation. A district technology lead shouldn't have to take a vendor's word for anything. The Seal lets us point to an independent review instead of our own claims, and that moves the conversation from 'convince me' to 'show me the details.'

Built for the Classroom, Not Adapted for It

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

Some districts have taken a harder line on AI tools recently. Denver reportedly restricted ChatGPT access over feature concerns in early 2026, even while continuing to use MagicSchool. What accounts for that distinction?

ADEEL

Design intent. MagicSchool was built for classrooms from day one, by educators, with the assumption that teachers and students would be using it and that districts would need control and visibility. A general-purpose tool is built for everyone, which means schools end up managing the gaps themselves. Districts like Denver aren't anti-AI. They're careful about which AI, and they can tell the difference between a tool built with them in mind and one adapted after the fact.

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

Was the CSP Seal a factor in winning the Denver contract? How did it come up in that process?

EVAN

The CSP rating gave us credibility and a seat at the table when discussing data governance, privacy, and data security with DPS. It empowered us to be more than a vendor, taking a more consultative approach to implementing with the district in a way that responded to account concerns from all perspectives in the DPS ecosystem. This led to a hyper-intentional and pedagogically-aligned approach that puts student safety first and foremost.

KALI

100 percent. We needed to speak confidently to our community about how we're integrating AI into teaching and learning in a way that protects our district data and maintains well-being and safety of our students and staff, while also educating our community on why the alternatives are not as safe. The graphic comparing MS rating to ChatGPT — with indicators as to why — is a go-to for us when talking to leaders and families about how we chose the "safer" option.

"The CSP rating gave us credibility and a seat at the table when discussing data governance, privacy, and data security with DPS."

EVAN LAPKA, SR. CUSTOMER SUCCESS MANAGER, MAGICSCHOOL

Beyond Denver: Trust at Scale

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

MagicSchool has also moved into other major districts, including New York City Public Schools. Does the trust-building process look different at that scale?

ADEEL

The fundamentals don't change. Most districts want to know the same things: what happens to student data, who is accountable, and whether it works for their teachers. What changes at NYC scale is the depth of review and the number of people who need to say yes. The privacy work, the documentation, the third-party validation, all of it has to hold up under much closer scrutiny. Doing that work early, before we needed it, is what made those conversations possible.

A Year In: What Changed for Teachers and Students

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

What does success look like a year into a district partnership like Denver's? What changes for teachers and students?

EVAN

- 1 DPS teachers talk about meaningful time savings, and they describe having more capacity to be present with students because the prep and administrative load has shifted.
- 2 Students are learning to engage with AI critically because DPS built AI literacy into the implementation from day one, with tools that reflect the district's equity commitments and culturally responsive frameworks. The district has publicly designated MagicSchool as the only K-12 approved student-facing AI tool across their schools, and that trust was earned through the same community-driven process that selected the platform.
- 3 Once skeptical teachers have become advocates. A student conference about AI grew out of classroom use, and we've worked closely with the district as a whole — synthesizing their feedback into our own platform improvements and operating as a partner, not a vendor.

What's Next

COMMON SENSE PRIVACY ASKS

What's next for the Denver partnership, and for how MagicSchool thinks about privacy-by-design as it scales into more districts?

FIONA

As MagicSchool grows, privacy-by-design has to scale with us. That means thinking about privacy, safety, and responsible AI from the beginning when we develop new features — not treating them as checks that happen only at the end. It also means continuing to listen to districts and making sure our practices evolve alongside the technology, regulatory expectations, and the ways AI is actually being used in schools.

The Common Sense Privacy Seal is an important part of that trust framework because it provides independent reinforcement of the commitments we make to schools and families. We see the 95% rating not as a finish line, but as a benchmark we have to continue earning as MagicSchool and AI in education continue to evolve.

For Denver, next is going deeper: more student-facing work, more custom tools built on their guidance, and continuing to learn from what their community is doing. For MagicSchool, privacy-by-design has to be how we build, not a review step at the end. The Seal helps because it keeps us honest. A 95% rating is a public commitment we have to keep earning as the product and the regulatory landscape change, and we plan to keep going back through that evaluation.

A CALLOUT FROM DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Our partnership with MagicSchool can best be described as thoughtful, exciting, and responsible, approaching educators with trust and care before scale and sale."

Dr. Kali Peracchia

Lead AI Instructional Specialist, Denver Public Schools

Our DPS community — from students to teachers, leaders, and parents — recognized the team's intentionality around privacy, transparency, and an early commitment to building AI literacy for the whole community. Partnering with MagicSchool has allowed for staff and students to move beyond simply accessing AI tools towards building the knowledge, agency, and criticality to use AI with purpose, discernment, and creativity, while keeping culturally and linguistically sustaining, high-quality instruction at the center.

This has been a unique and true partnership in the fullest sense: their team consistently creates space for us to share what we're learning with others across the country, elevates our work through research and co-design, and genuinely champions our larger approach to AI literacy, equity, and inclusive governance. We are grateful to be doing this work alongside a partner that believes, as we do, that the future of AI in education should be shaped with communities, not simply delivered to them.



See how your privacy program holds up under a closer look.

Common Sense Privacy reviews EdTech privacy programs against an independent rubric of more than 200 published criteria. Apply at commonsenseprivacy.net/seal-evaluation.

See if you qualify for the Seal

About the Common Sense Privacy Seal: The Common Sense Privacy Seal is awarded based on an independent evaluation against a published rubric of more than 200 criteria. Common Sense Privacy is not a law firm and does not provide legal advice; its evaluations reflect a rigorous, subjective assessment of a product's privacy practices at a point in time, not a legal or compliance determination.

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