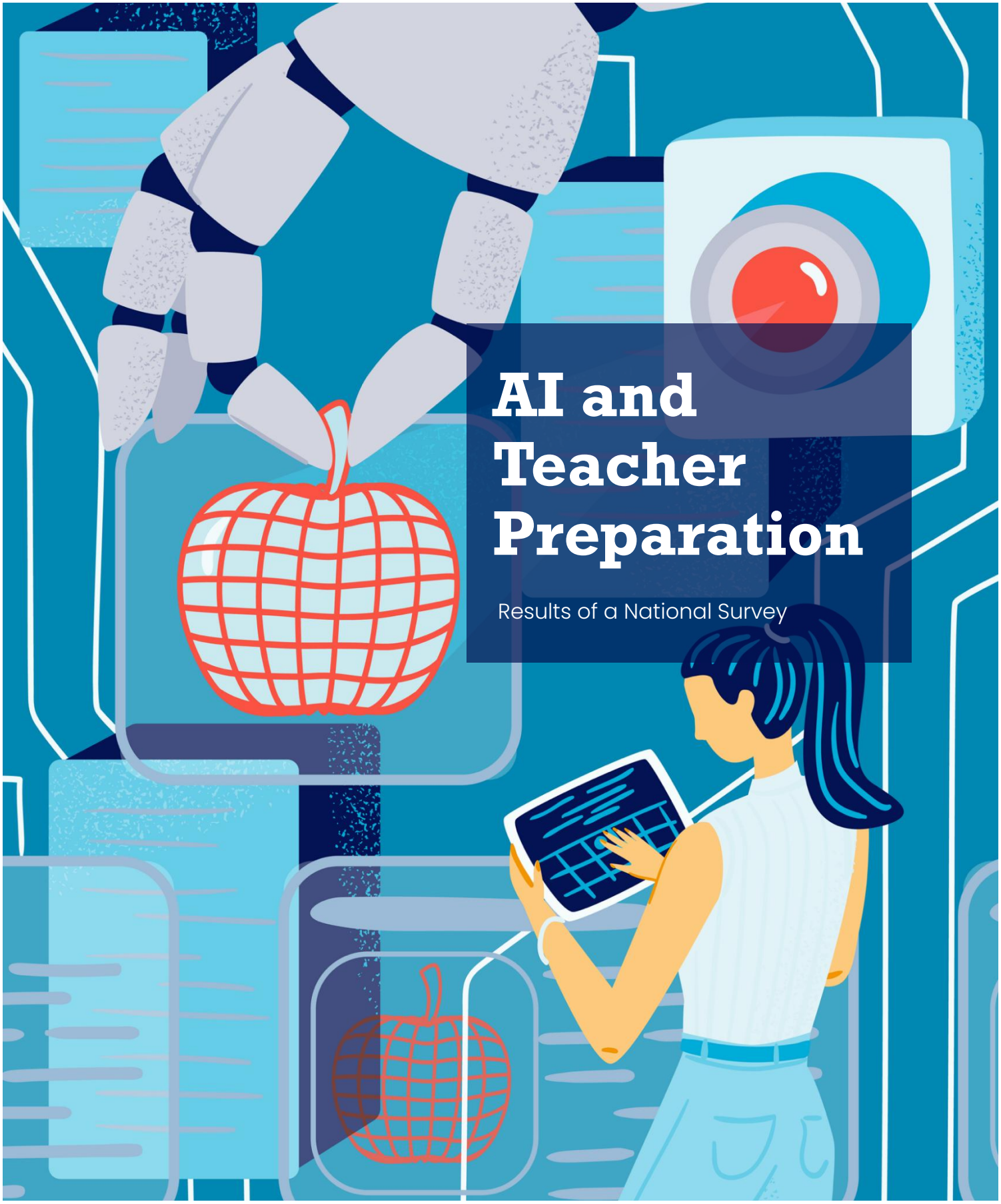


# AI and Teacher Preparation

Results of a National Survey

This study prepared with support from Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

EdWeek Research Center®

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The EdWeek Research Center conducts surveys, collects data, and performs analyses that appear in Education Week and EdWeek Market Brief. The center also conducts independent research studies for external clients including for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

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The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative supports Education Week's coverage of education technology. CZI also provides general support for capacity-building investments in Education Week's infrastructure. The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative is using technology to help solve some of our toughest challenges—from preventing and eradicating disease, to improving learning experiences for kids, to reforming the criminal justice system.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teacher-preparation programs are being asked to ready future K-12 teachers for classrooms where artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly common. A national EdWeek Research survey of 268 teacher educators—conducted August 13 through September 4, 2026—finds that most programs have no coordinated approach to the task and that faculty themselves are divided over AI's role in schools.

Six in 10 respondents say AI preparation is left to individual instructors and fewer than 1 in 10 say it is infused across the curriculum. Faculty training lags demand. One-third have received none from their institution and just 14% receive ongoing training despite the fact that 34% say they want that type of support. When asked to identify major challenges for teaching teachers to use AI in their own classrooms, the obstacles cited most often are the pace of AI development (57%) and faculty uncertainty about how to prepare teachers (56%) rather than a lack of funding or opposition from leadership. Half of respondents report that their institution does not have any AI-related partnerships with K-12 districts or schools.

Teacher educators are split on AI in K-12 teaching. Forty-six percent view it positively, 35% negatively, and 19% are neutral. Support for teachers using AI rises by grade level. Forty-one percent say pre-K and kindergarten teachers should not use AI at all, compared with 18% for high school teachers.

Programs most often prepare future teachers to use AI for instructional ideas (59%) and course materials (54%). Grading and feedback are a different story. Sixty-four percent and 55%, respectively, say their programs do not prepare teachers for these uses and should not start. Faculty draw a similar line for recommendation letters (54%), even though 44% have used AI to write their own.

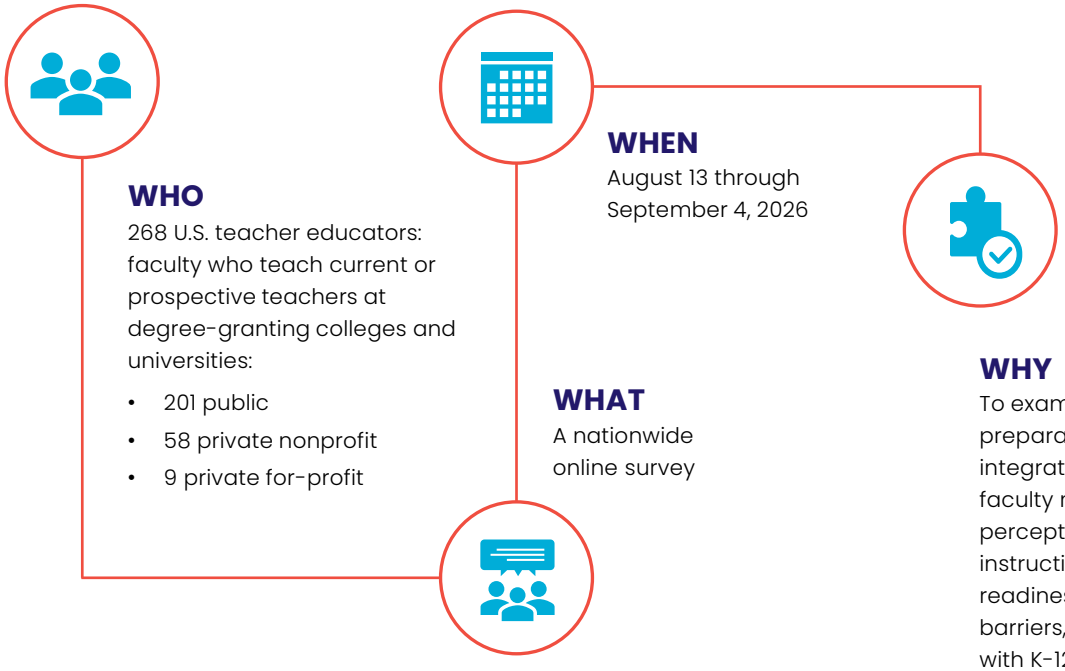
Nearly 9 in 10 agree future teachers should be prepared to teach students about ethical AI use, but 28% say their programs do not yet do so.

## INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already changing how teachers plan lessons, develop instructional materials, assess student work, and manage classroom responsibilities. As these uses become more common in K-12 education, questions arise about how teachers should use AI and prepare students to navigate an increasingly AI-driven world. Teacher-preparation programs must consider how AI fits into existing coursework, what skills prospective teachers need, and how faculty can prepare them to use the technology responsibly.

In August 2026, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education released a framework urging university-based programs, which by federal estimates prepare more than 90% of new teachers, to take a comprehensive approach to AI. At the same time, AI training for practicing K-12 teachers is expanding. EdWeek Research Center surveys show the share of current teachers reporting no AI training fell from nearly 60% in fall 2024 to 42% by winter 2025-26. Training may be expanding outside of colleges of education. For instance, a $23 million partnership between the American Federation of Teachers and three AI developers aims to train 400,000 teachers.

To learn how teacher-preparation programs are responding, the EdWeek Research Center surveyed 268 educators who teach current or prospective teachers at degree-granting colleges and universities from mid-August through early September 2026. The survey examined whether faculty have the training, resources, and institutional support to prepare future teachers for AI, how they use and view the technology themselves, how their programs build AI into teacher preparation, the skills they emphasize, the challenges they face, and their partnerships with K-12 districts.

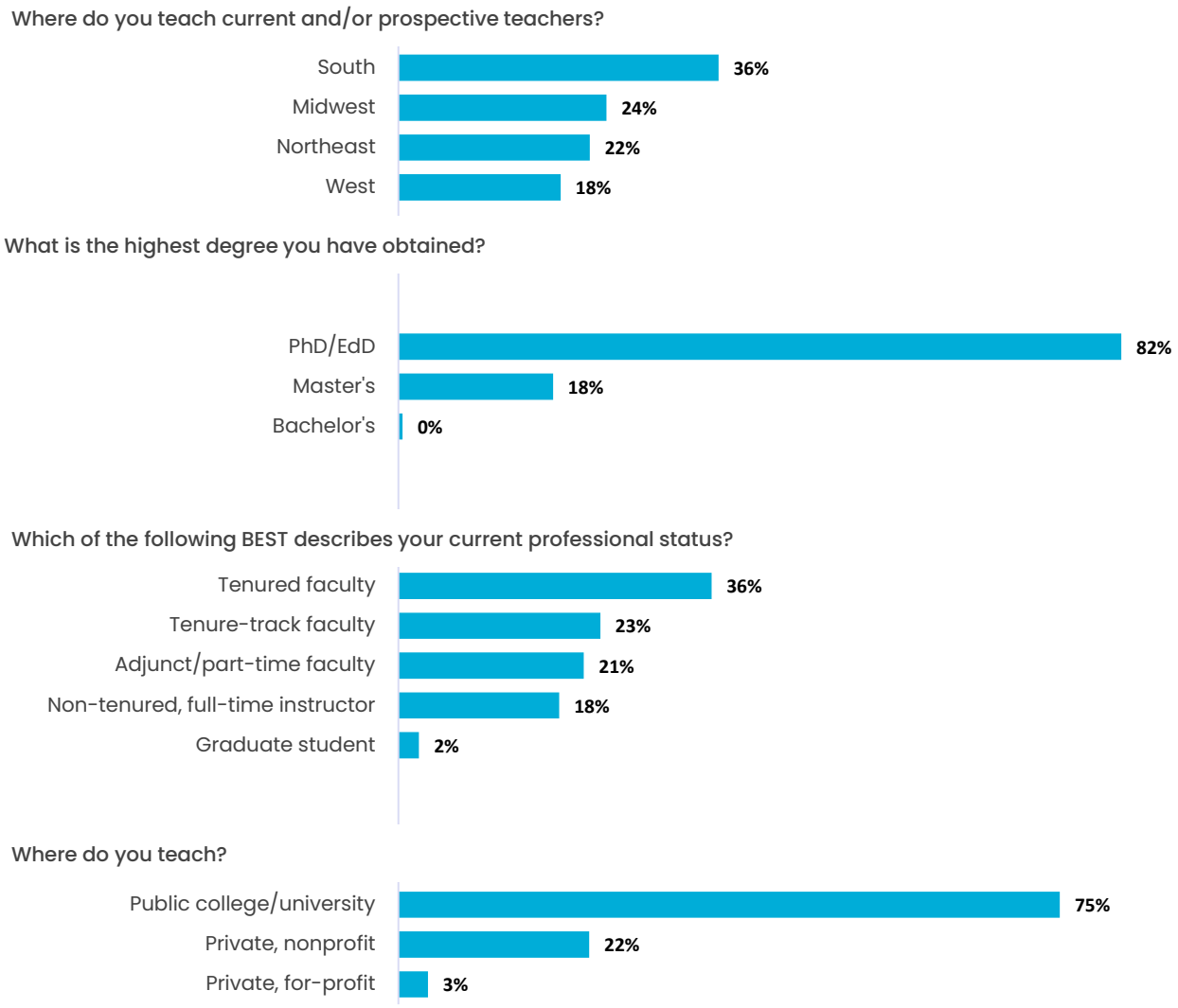


# Respondent Profile

Survey respondents are most commonly working at postsecondary institutions located in the South (36%), followed by the Midwest (24%), Northeast (22%), and West (18%). More than 4 in 5 hold a doctorate. Thirty-six percent of respondents are tenured and 23% are tenure-track, while 18% are nontenured full-time instructors and 21% are adjunct or part-time faculty. Three-quarters of respondents teach at public colleges or universities; 22% teach at private nonprofit institutions and 3% at private for-profits.

Figure 1

**Respondent profile: institution type, professional status, highest degree, region**



TAKEAWAY | 1

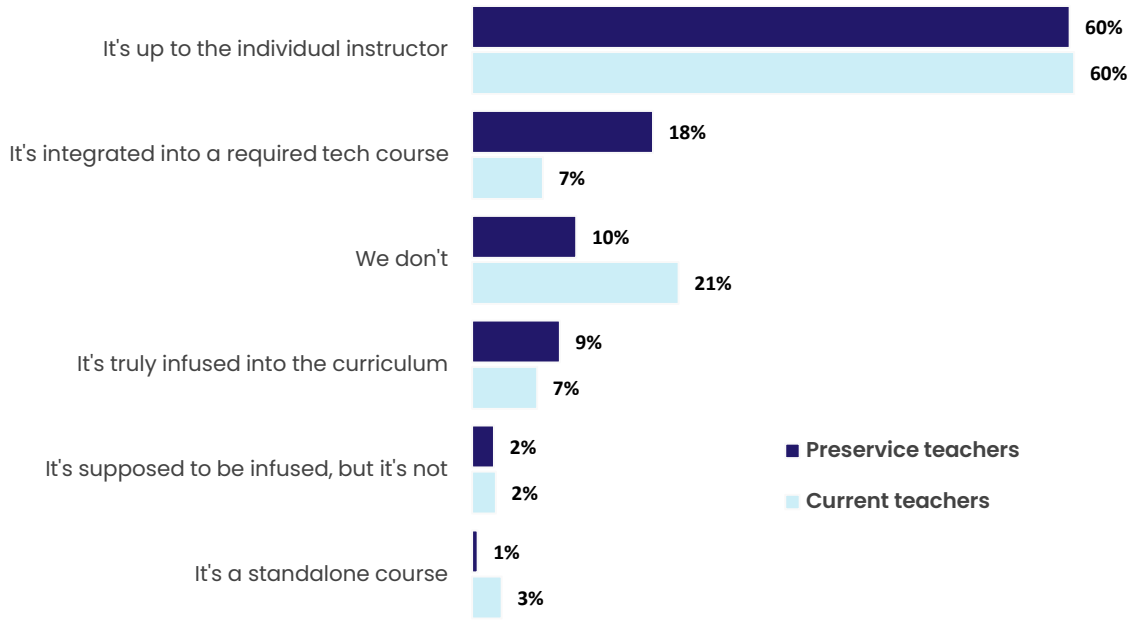
## Most teacher educators say AI preparation is left to individual instructors; fewer than 1 in 10 say AI is infused across the curriculum.

Asked to describe the primary way their program teaches prospective teachers about AI, 60% of teacher educators say it is up to the individual instructor and 10% say their program does not teach it. Another 18% say AI is integrated into a required technology course, 9% say it is infused into the curriculum, 2% say it is supposed to be infused but is not, and 1% report that it's taught as a standalone course.

For the current teachers enrolled in their programs, the approach is even less structured. Sixty percent say it is left to individual instructors, 21% say the program does not address it, 7% say it is integrated into a required technology course, and 7% say it is infused into the curriculum. Taken together, the shares saying AI is left to instructors or not taught at all come to 70% for preservice teachers and 81% for current teachers.

Figure 2

**What is the primary way in which your program aims to teach current and preservice teachers about AI?**



TAKEAWAY | 2

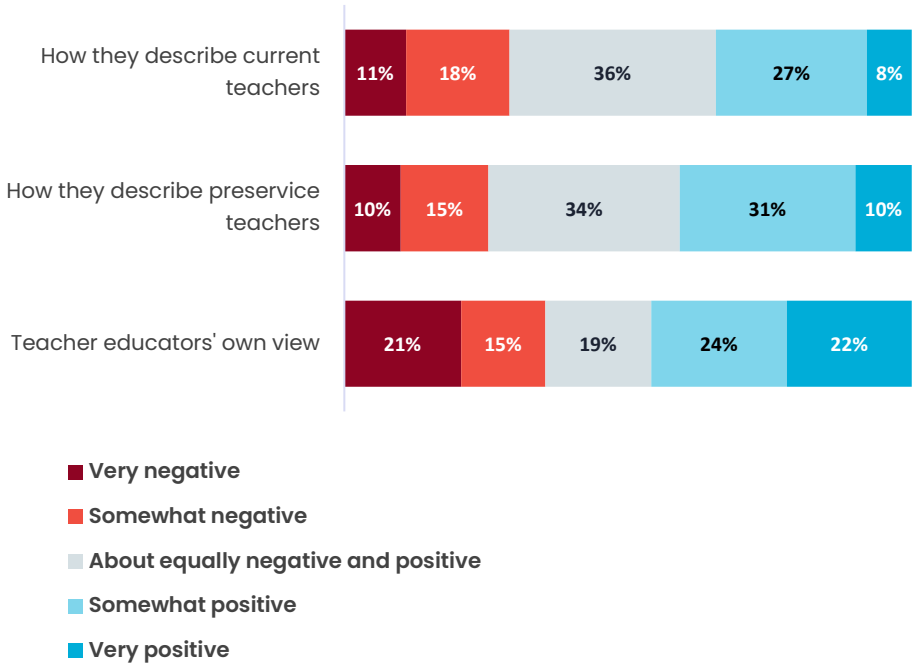
## Teacher educators are split on AI in K-12 classrooms and see the teachers they train as more moderate than themselves.

Asked to describe their own opinion of using AI for teaching and learning in the K-12 classroom, 21% of teacher educators say it is very negative with 15% describing it as somewhat negative. By contrast, 24% say it is somewhat positive and 22% see it as very positive. Only 19% describe their view as about equally negative and positive.

The same respondents describe the teachers they train as more moderate. Just 10% describe the views of their preservice teachers as very negative and only 10% see them as very positive. For the current teachers in their programs, 11% see their students' views as very negative and 8% describe them as very positive.

Figure 3

### Opinions of using AI for teaching and learning in the K-12 classroom



TAKEAWAY | 3

## One-third of teacher educators have received no AI training from their institution; one-third want ongoing training.

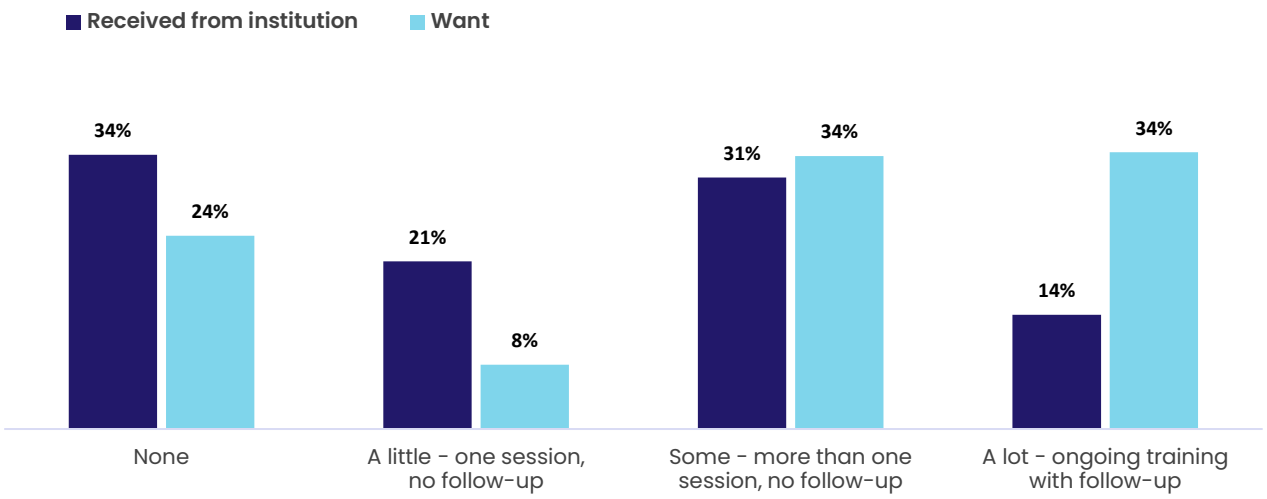
One-third of teacher educators have received no training on generative AI from their institution. Another 21% have had a single session with no follow-up, 31% more than one session without follow-up, and 14% ongoing training with follow-up.

Asked how much training they want, 34% say ongoing training with follow-up—more than double the share receiving it—and 34% want more than one session. Demand for one-off sessions is low (8%) though that is the format 21% have received.

Nearly a quarter (24%) want no training at all.

Figure 4

**How much training have you received from your institution on generative AI? How much do you want?**



TAKEAWAY | 4

## Teacher educators favor AI preparation for lesson ideas and materials but are wary of grading and feedback.

Teacher educators are most likely to say their programs prepare prospective teachers to use AI for teaching and instruction ideas (59%), assignments that require students to use and assess AI tools (54%), and locating and developing course materials (54%).

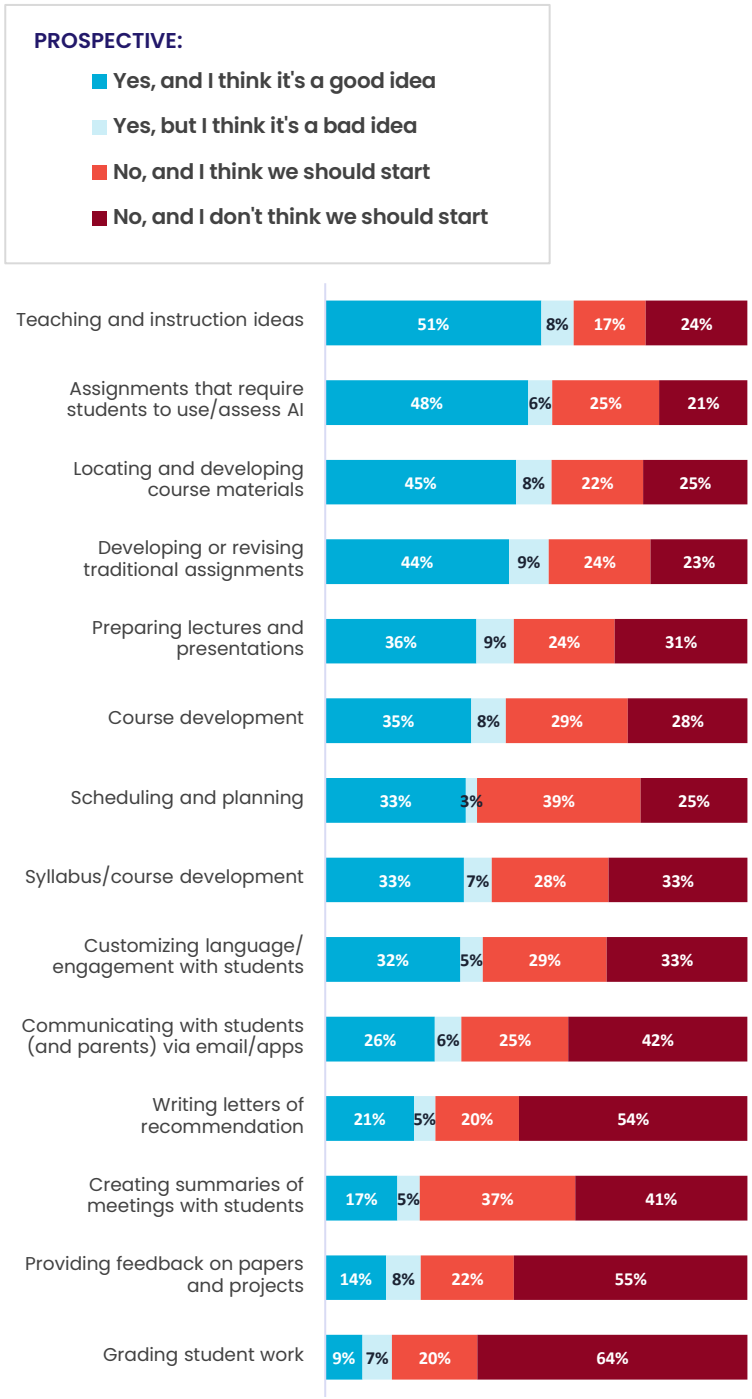
A majority (51%) say their program's current efforts with preparation for using AI for instructional ideas are something they support. They are less supportive of preparing future teachers to use AI for evaluating student work and certain communication tasks. Nearly two-thirds (64%) say their programs do not prepare prospective teachers to use AI for grading student work and should not start, while 55% say the same about providing feedback on papers and projects. More than half (54%) say their programs should not begin preparing prospective teachers to use AI for writing letters of recommendation and 42% say the same about communicating with students and parents.

Teacher educators also identify several areas where they believe preparation should expand. Nearly 4 in 10 (39%) say their programs do not prepare prospective teachers to use AI for scheduling and planning but should, while 37% say the same about creating summaries of meetings with students. Other areas in which substantial shares of survey respondents say their programs don't currently prepare future teachers but should include customizing language and engagement with students (29%), course development (29%), and syllabus development (28%). Even for grading and feedback, 20% and 22%, respectively, say their programs should begin preparing prospective teachers to use AI for those purposes.

Across all 14 purposes, no more than 9% of teacher educators report that their programs currently prepare prospective teachers to use AI in ways they consider a bad idea.

Figure 5

**Does your program prepare PROSPECTIVE teachers to use AI for the following purposes in K-12 classrooms?**




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TAKEAWAY | 5

## Teacher educators' own AI use generally aligns with reported preparation for future teachers, with some notable gaps.

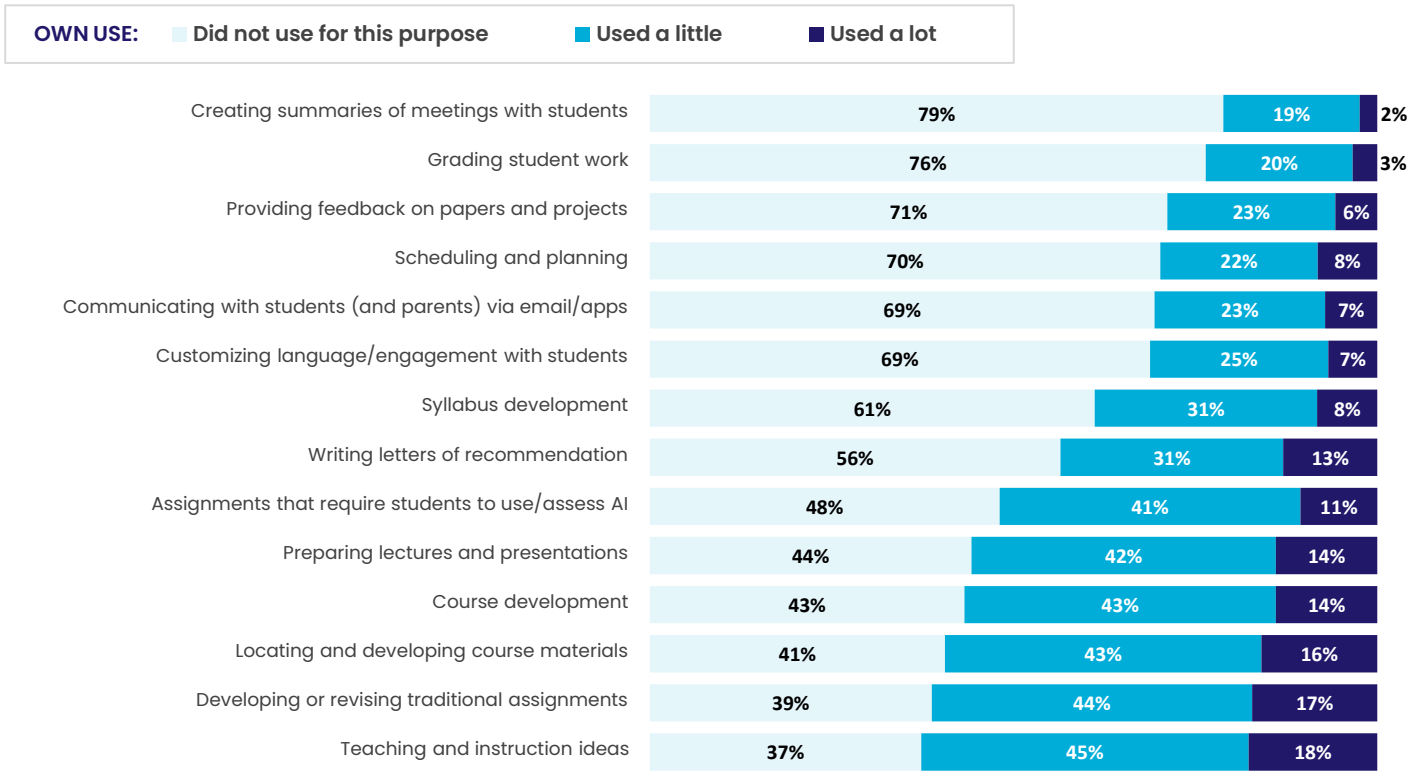
In their own postsecondary teaching, teacher educators used AI most often for teaching and instruction ideas (63% used it atleast a little; 18% a lot), developing or revising traditional assignments (61%), locating and developing course materials (59%), course development (57%), and preparing lectures and presentations (56%). Use was less common for providing feedback on student work (29%), grading (24%; just 3% a lot), and summarizing meetings with students (21%). Across all 14 purposes, no more than 18% reported using AI a lot.

Because the survey asked about the same 14 purposes for both teacher educators' own use and their programs' preparation of prospective teachers, the two can be compared. Reported preparation generally follows the pattern of personal use, with instructional activities ranking high in both. However, personal use exceeds reported preparation by 14 percentage-points for course development (57% versus 43%) and 11 points for preparing lectures and presentations (56% versus 45%).

The largest difference involves writing letters of recommendation. More than 4 in 10 teacher educators (44%) used AI for this purpose in the past year, including 13% who used it a lot, yet only 26% report that their programs prepare prospective teachers to do the same. Grading shows a smaller gap (24% versus 16%).

Figure 6

**Teacher educators' own AI use in the past year**



TAKEAWAY | 6

## Support for teachers' AI use rises with grade level; 4 in 10 say pre-K and kindergarten teachers shouldn't use it at all.

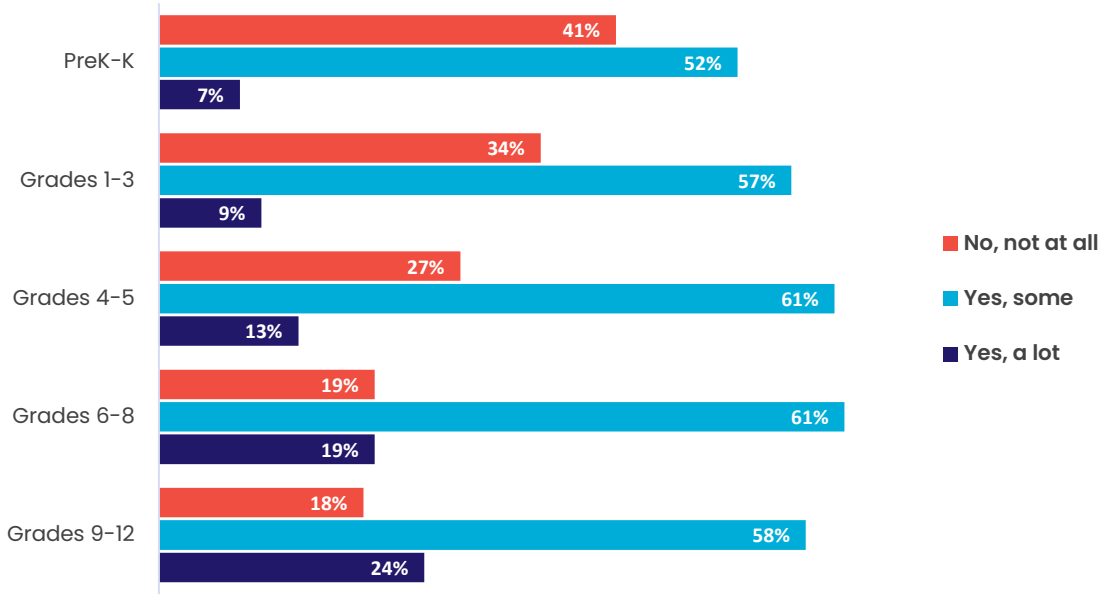
Teacher educators' comfort with teachers using AI rises steadily with the grade level of the students being taught. Asked whether educators at each grade level should use AI for teaching-related purposes (the question concerns teachers' own use, not students'), 4 in 10 (41%) say pre-K and kindergarten teachers should not use it at all. That share falls to 34% for grades 1-3, 27% for grades 4-5, 19% for grades 6-8, and 18% for grades 9-12.

Only 7% say pre-K and kindergarten teachers should use AI "a lot," compared with 24% for high school teachers. Most respondents think teachers should use AI "some" at every grade level ranging from 52% in pre-K and kindergarten to roughly 6 in 10 in later grades.

Even at the high school level, nearly 1 in 5 teacher educators would have teachers avoid AI entirely.

Figure 7

**In your opinion, should educators at the following grade levels use AI for teaching-related purposes?**



TAKEAWAY | 7

## The obstacles to teaching teachers about AI use are capacity and belief, not money or leadership.

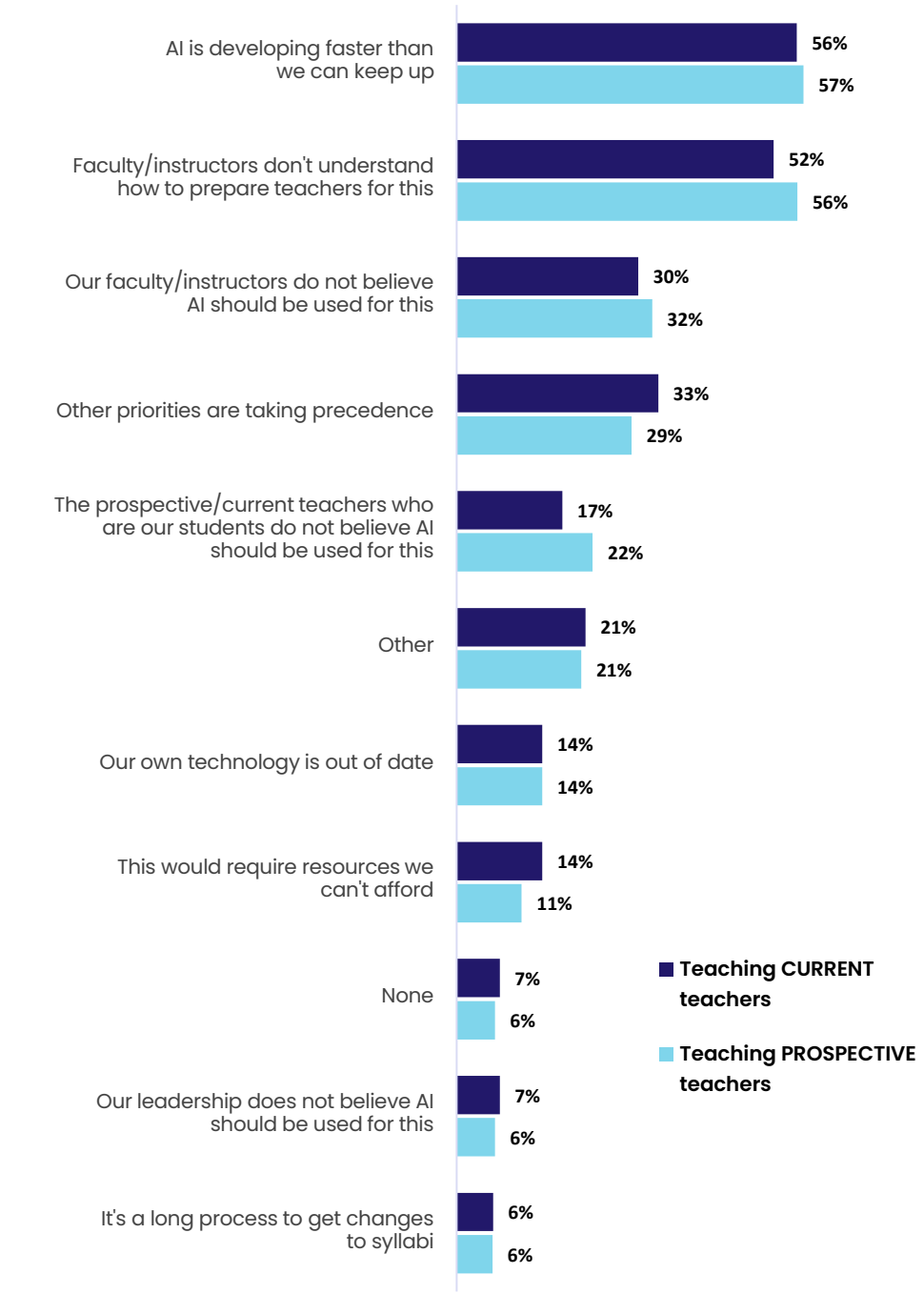
The most-cited obstacle to preparing prospective teachers for AI is about keeping up, not paying for it. Fifty-seven percent say AI is developing faster than they can keep up and 56% say faculty do not understand how to prepare teachers for this purpose. About one-third (32%) say their colleagues do not believe AI should be used for this purpose at all, 29% say other priorities take precedence, and 22% say the prospective teachers themselves do not believe AI should be used.

Money, equipment, leadership, and bureaucracy barely register as obstacles to teaching prospective teachers about using AI in their own classrooms. Just 11% cite resources they cannot afford with relatively low percentages citing several other areas (14% outdated technology, 6% opposition from leadership, and 6% the slow process of changing syllabi). The rankings are nearly identical for teaching current teachers.

Figure 8

**When it comes to teaching teachers about addressing and/or using AI in their own classrooms, what MAJOR challenges do you face?**

*NOTE: Respondents were asked to select all that apply.*



TAKEAWAY | 8

## There is broad agreement that future teachers should teach ethical AI use, but more than a quarter say their programs don't yet.

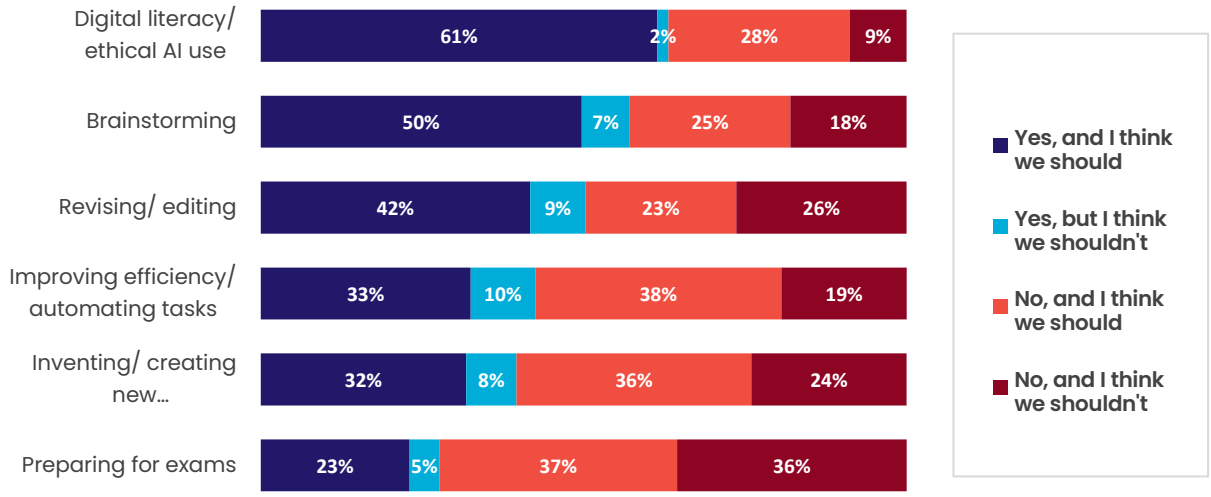
When asked whether prospective teachers should be prepared to teach K-12 students about digital literacy and ethical AI use, teacher educators come as close to a consensus as they do anywhere in the survey. Sixty-one percent say their program does and should, and another 28% say it does not but should, for a combined 89%. Just 9% say their program does not and should not.

Three-quarters (75%) say programs should prepare teachers to teach students about using AI for brainstorming with broad support for preparing future teachers for other aspects of AI (71% for improving efficiency and automating tasks and 68% for inventing new tools or approaches). Preparing for exams is the only aspect on which opinion is divided. Thirty-six percent say programs should not teach it, 37% say they should start, and 23% say they already do.

The largest gaps between what programs do and what faculty think they should do are on efficiency and automation (38% say "no, but we should") with similar results for exam preparation (37%), and inventing new tools (36%). For current teachers, the pattern is broadly similar, with ethics again on top (59% already do; 28% should start).

Figure 9

**Does your program prepare PROSPECTIVE teachers to TEACH K-12 STUDENTS about the following aspects of AI?**



TAKEAWAY | 9

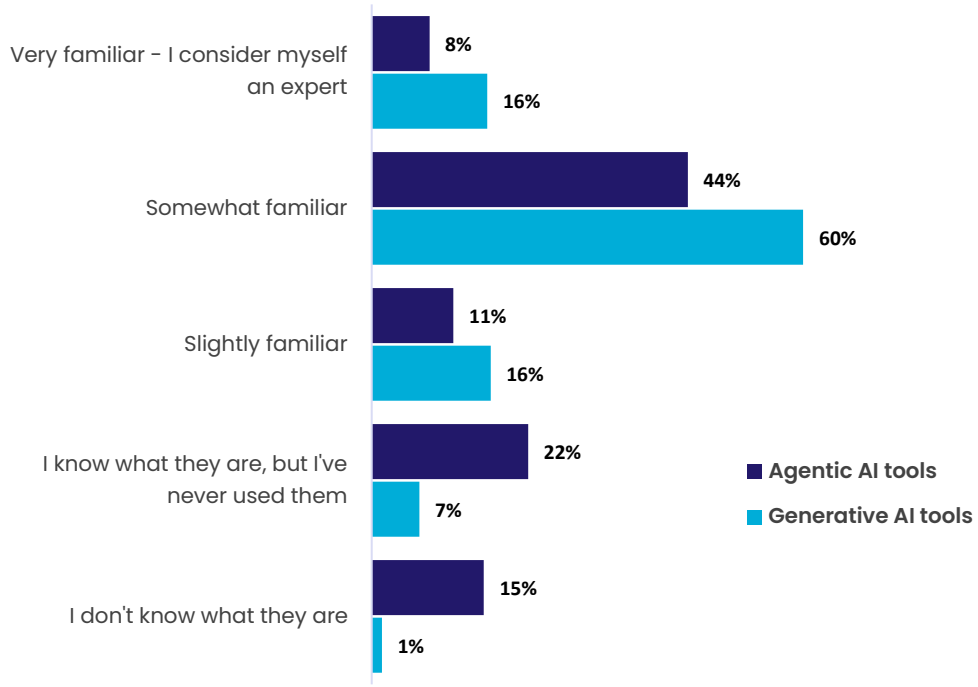
## Nearly 4 in 10 teacher educators have never used agentic AI or don't know what the tools are.

Three-quarters of teacher educators (76%) say they are somewhat or very familiar with generative AI tools though only 16% consider themselves experts. Another 16% are slightly familiar with 7% saying that they know what the tools are but have never used them and 1% indicating that they do not know what they are.

Agentic AI tools, which can carry out multistep tasks with limited supervision, are far less familiar. Only about half (52%) are somewhat or very familiar while 22% have never used them and 15% do not know what they are. That's a total of 37% with no hands-on exposure. Only 8% call themselves experts.

Figure 10

**What is your level of familiarity with generative AI tools? With agentic AI tools?**



TAKEAWAY | 10

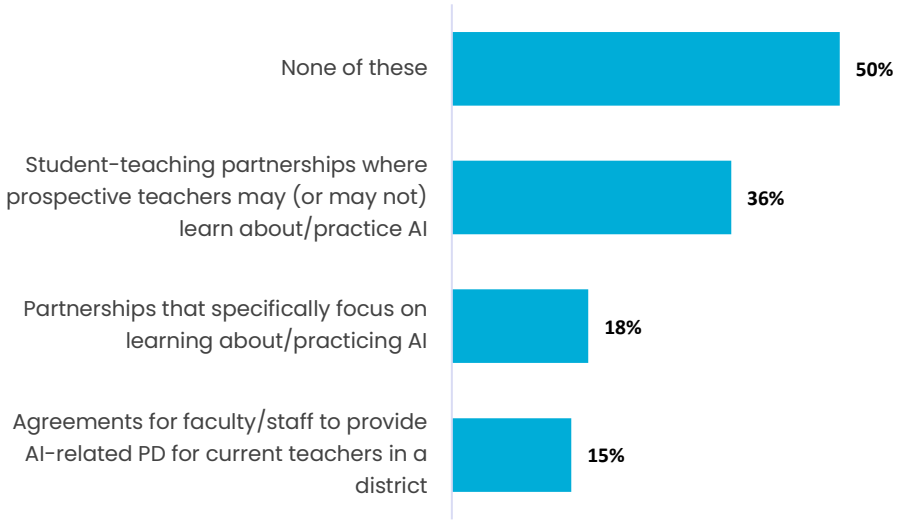
## Half of teacher educators say their program has no AI-related partnerships with K-12 districts or schools.

Nearly 4 in 10 teacher educators (39%) say they do not know whether their program or institution has any AI-related partnerships with K-12 districts or schools. Among those who could answer, half (50%) say it has none of the partnerships listed in the survey. Roughly a third (36%) point to student-teaching partnerships in which prospective teachers may or may not have opportunities to learn about or practice AI. Eighteen report partnerships that specifically focus on AI and 15% have agreements to provide AI-related professional development to district teachers.

Figure 11

**What kinds of AI-related partnerships does your program or institution currently have with K-12 districts and/or schools?**

*NOTE: Respondents were asked to select all that apply.*



CONCLUSION



There is a consensus among teacher educators about use of artificial intelligence for grading. Most do not want AI grading students' work or providing feedback, nor do they want programs to prepare teachers to use the technology for those purposes. Those lines are drawn even as teacher educators report wide use of AI in their own course development and lesson planning, a pattern that may shape what the next generation of teachers learns to do, and not do, with these tools.

Beyond that, survey results describe a field that agrees on the goal but not the means. Nearly 9 in 10 teacher educators say prospective teachers should be prepared to teach students about ethical AI use, yet most say their programs leave AI preparation to individual instructors. Faculty are divided over the technology's role, training falls short of demand, and the most common obstacles to preparing teachers to use AI are knowledge and belief rather than budget.

Whether programs move from instructor-by-instructor efforts toward a more deliberate approach remains an open question, one the field will have to answer even as faculty remain divided over AI's place in K-12 classrooms.