

# Meeting Teachers Where They Are



## Building on Diverse Experiences

**Emily Badman** is in her fourth year as an assistant principal at John Handley High. Prior to becoming a building leader, Emily worked in the district office for several years as secondary instructional specialist. She also has prior classroom teaching experience at John Handley in the science department.

She first heard about the ISTE+ASCD Communities of Practice program from the district superintendent, who encouraged interested staff at all levels to apply.

## From Chicago to Her Problem of Practice

Emily attended the in-person convening for the first cohort in Chicago in February 2025. She found it to be a valuable experience for considering how artificial intelligence could integrate into her work. As she explained, “I don’t think I really understood the magnitude or how incredible an opportunity it was until I was sitting there in Chicago with everybody around and all of these different positions.”

Emily expressed that it has been really interesting to meet people from all over the country and hear about their experiences integrating AI into their contexts. Additionally, it has been helpful for Emily to receive action research support from the Communities of Practice program. That experience helped her focus on a problem of practice within her sphere of influence.

As an assistant principal for instruction, Emily works with all teachers at the Emil & Grace Shihadeh Innovation Center and the main campus of John Handley High School. Her problem of practice asked: “How can AI help teachers improve alignment, rigor, and engagement?” Emily wants teachers to become instructional leaders within their classrooms—and believes AI can support that goal.

## Emily Badman

*Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction*

John Handley High School,  
Winchester City Public Schools

## John Handley High School, Winchester City Public Schools

- 1,361 students in a 9–12 public high school
- **Student demographics:** 45.5% Hispanic, 35% White, 8.7% Black, 5.7% Multiracial, 4.1% Asian, 1% Native American; 62.3% economically disadvantaged

---

## Building Capacity Through Instructional Leaders

Rather than attempting to push 100 teachers into using AI in their classrooms, Emily started by building capacity among instructional leaders at the school. This included an English teacher in the Innovation Center who also participated in the Communities of Practice program, as well as instructional tech specialists and multi-classroom leaders.

In collaboration with instructional leaders and building administrators, Emily highlighted the potential of AI to impact instruction through a weekly memo to all staff that shares classroom examples and resources.

Additionally, Emily makes time for conversations with reluctant teachers, sharing that “you can’t add one more thing. It has to be authentic. It has to be their idea, and it has to make sense.”

***“ I want to take the teachers that love AI and integrate it into their lessons and use them to help spread the knowledge of AI’s potential.”***



## Moving Into Daily Practice

Early on, the district identified AI as a priority in its strategic vision. The district communicated to building leaders that generative AI tools like Gemini would be available for students and teachers, encouraging their use. Emily noted that while the district sets the strategic vision, it’s up to her and other building administrators to help teachers integrate that vision into their classrooms in authentic ways.

While Emily is excited about the potential uses of AI to transform instructional practices, she emphasized that “I don’t need everyone to be at the same place. I want to take the teachers that love it and integrate it into their lessons and use them to help spread the knowledge of AI’s potential.” This year, teachers are becoming more comfortable integrating AI into their lessons for cross-curricular projects, curriculum alignment, idea generation, and student support. In the next two to three years, Emily hopes to see generative AI “become a part of our lives,” just as calculators did.

**GenerationAI's Communities of Practice** bring together educators across roles and regions in yearlong cohorts to explore shared opportunities around AI in education. Through collaborative learning and experimentation, participants develop responsible, context-informed approaches to integrating AI in teaching and learning.

**GenerationAI** is a groundbreaking educational movement led by ISTE+ASCD alongside six coalition partners designed to empower PK-12 educators with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to safely and responsibly capture the power of AI in the classroom.

Learn more and join the movement at [generationalai.org](https://generationalai.org).

