

**Submission to the People’s Consultation on Artificial Intelligence (AI)
By
Parents for AI Caution in Educational Spaces Vancouver (PACES)
and
For Our Kids Vancouver**



March 14, 2026

A. WHO WE ARE - Parents Working Together on AI and Climate

[PACES Vancouver](#) is a group of parents who are concerned about AI being deployed into Vancouver classrooms without sufficient evidence. They ran a petition campaign calling for more information from Vancouver School Board over its plans to deploy Copilot AI to classrooms that gained 350+ signatures.

[For Our Kids Vancouver](#) is a group of parents, educators, grandparents and other allies organizing on the unceded and ancestral lands of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations committed to taking collective action for a safe climate for younger and future generations. We are part of the [National For Our Kids Network](#). For Our Kids Vancouver has 250+ followers and joins over 6000 members across the country.

B. OUR MICRO CONSULTATION

On February 28, 2026, we hosted a micro-consultation at a local public library following the People’s Consultation on AI’s Local Facilitation Guide. Through this process we connected with parents and educators concerned about AI. These submissions are the results of this micro-consultation process. We are inspired by the People’s Consultation, which we see as an important grassroots democracy building initiative.



C. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH AI TECHNOLOGIES

Our experiences with AI technologies are generally the AI features offered through everyday digital platforms. The common AI technologies we are exposed to are:

- Microsoft CoPilot
- Google AI Overview
- Google Gemini
- ChatGPT
- Zoom AI assistance

PACES members shared their experience with local school boards and reports from local parents on how AI has started creeping into schools in British Columbia. The Vancouver School Board has announced that they will make Microsoft Copilot AI available to all children over 13 years old. Surrey, Richmond and West Vancouver have already partnered with AI companies and made generative AI available to teachers and students in classrooms. Parents shared their concerns with the Vancouver School Board's minimal guidance to teachers, and how the messaging to parents and guardians is unclear. Stories were shared that the first time that parents have heard about AI being used at our schools is when they see "try generative AI at home" as part of Technology homework assignments and no other information provided or consent sought.

We discussed how the experience with the Vancouver School Board is in contrast to the University of British Columbia where a parent and participant is employed. This parent shared with the group their positive experience at UBC, which has taken a proactive approach to AI education and regulation providing detailed guidance of when and how UBC staff and faculty should be using AI. UBC has provided guidance in order to help protect privacy, data and intellectual property. The experience of this participant was that this was a helpful approach in empowering this individual to have more confidence in their work and their engagement with AI. Additionally, we learned that there is a UBC Student AI advisory council which is a student-led body that shapes the development and implementation of AI policies at UBC. This parent liked the idea of empowering students to help shape policy.

Parents with For Our Kids' Vancouver have engaged with AI generally from the perspective of AI data centres and their increasing greenhouse gas emissions and environmental footprint, from high electricity and water use data centres and destructive chip mining. A climate educator in the group shared that much of the ores for chips are low-concentration ores, such as Rare Earth Elements (REEs) and that mining low-concentration ores results in more land and habitat destruction, more mine waste, more energy and water use and smelting them results in toxic, even radioactive, waste water as we have seen in Inner Mongolia, China. Furthermore, many of these ores are located in areas with high ecological value or in peat bogs that store vast amounts of carbon. We discussed how these minerals should be prioritized to electrify what currently uses fossil fuels and that electricity and water must be prioritized for basic necessities otherwise in the near future we may have blackouts and water shortages so that data centres can continue to operate. This is of significant concern to parents in the network during the climate and biodiversity crisis when all efforts should be made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and our energy demands to slow down global warming.

Overall our personal experiences with AI are experiences of avoidance and discomfort. We feel a lack of agency in choosing whether we want to engage with AI. We feel frustrated by the effort required to try to protect ourselves from AI exposure. One parent shared their experience of having to spend a considerable amount of time researching online to find ways to disable AI features of necessary use of basic software like Adobe. Another member expressed their overwhelming feeling of not knowing when and how they are using AI and where it is showing up in their daily lives. This group discussed how this all feels insidious and manipulative. We want an “Opt In” approach rather than the current Opt Out approach that assumes a basic level of competence in engaging with AI technologies.

D. CONTEXT - WE OBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH AMERICAN TECH BILLIONAIRES ARE ALLOWED TO EXPLOIT EVERYDAY PEOPLE WITHOUT ANY REGULATION

We have no trust in the private interests and values of the American billionaire class that are leading the AI race. Alex Karp, Mark Andresson, Mark Zuckerberg, Sam Altman, Peter Thiel and Elon Musk are people who we know do not share our values and we do not trust that their values of hate, greed, exploitation, climate destruction and antidemocratic values won't be embedded in their AI technologies. Peter Thiel has said that democracy and freedom (of the wealthy) are incompatible and that democracy should be abandoned. We do not want AI to be used to polarize society so that the democratic gains that have been made during 1914-1980 (and slowed since) can be dismantled and any democratic resurgence prevented by using AI.

We are dismayed that our governments have allowed the profit driven greed of these companies to risk harm to our children and our communities without any regulation, consent or notice. We expect the Government of Canada to engage with the underlying social and economic context that allows a few American billionaires to breach our basic rights, harm our children, further destroy the planet and threaten our democracy. The current geopolitical context that is causing wars; deepening the climate crisis; and threatening free elections and freedom of speech is leveraged by the AI corporate elite and we do not accept that their actions should go unregulated. We regulate everything: drugs, chemicals, guns, cars, building codes, food safety. There are laws against libel and slander. Yet these AI industries hide behind an American absolutist vision of free speech that only the wealthy can enforce. We understand that “nothing is free” and we do not agree with the American AI elite exploiting our data, privacy, human ingenuity and creativity and further causing climate warming for their greed and non-democratic power.

E. OUR VALUES AND VISION

Through our discussions, we developed a vision for our children:

Our kids' grow up in a climate safe world that fosters critical thinking skills, supports mental health and social development and that respects Earth, humans and humanity and all peoples' basic Charter rights, civil liberties and democratic rights.

In engaging in stories and our experiences about AI, we identified the following values and principles that we want reflected in a National AI Strategy.

POLITICAL FREEDOM	Democracy - human not corporate political power.	Charter rights and civil liberties	Freedom of choice, autonomy, consent, Agency.	Sovereignty.
CHILD PROTECTION	Critical thinkers.	Positive mental health.	Safe from predators.	Safe from violence.
HUMANS	Human productivity, experience and creativity.	Job opportunities for people in all sectors.	Control and ownership over work products and intellectual property.	Care for people and communities at the core of political, economic, industrial and business decisions.
CLIMATE	Phase out fossil fuel use and reduce greenhouse gases.	Water for people and the planet over industry and concentration of wealth.	Electrify everything and prioritize electricity for homes, schools, transportation, institutions.	Simplify and slow down our way of life and build a circular economy.

F. Use Cases: MACHINE LEARNING VERSUS CONSUMER FACING GENERATIVE "AI"

We understand that “machine learning” that analyzes and summarizes large volumes of data and information for summary purposes is not new technology and has served useful benefits. As such, we believe there are benefits to AI technologies that are specifically designed for a specific purpose; can be tested; and used and controlled by people who understand the technology and are bound by ethical and privacy requirements in public interest fields such as in medicine, investigative journalism and academic research.

We do not believe there are any benefits to AI technologies that are not regulated. We believe all AI that can be used for therapeutic and social purposes should be banned entirely for its mental health impacts. The recent tragic events in Tumbler Ridge are just one example.

We believe that there should be a moratorium on “free” consumer facing generative AI until there is enough evidence available about the potential risks and harms especially to our children. We discussed that we should heed the lessons learned from unregulated social media use and its harm to young people. Social media has been completely unregulated and now years later the evidence is unequivocal about the harms to our children. There is enough scientific evidence of harm by use of generative AI to young people's learning outcomes and mental health to take action now.

G. WE RESIST THE INEVITABILITY OF AI

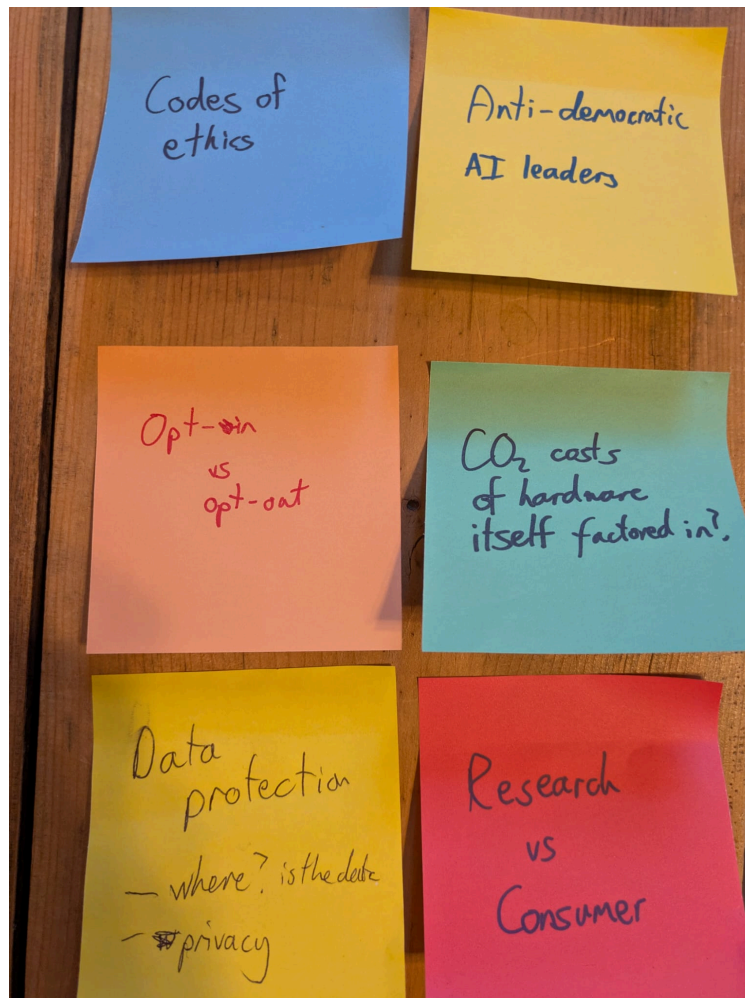
The public dialogue around AI is driven by its inevitability. Media coverage around AI is disempowering because it suggests our lack of agency in stopping and controlling it. We feel this approach is now being taken by our School Board, where it is believed that there is no point in resisting AI and therefore we should just allow it in our schools.

While the media does identify some of the basic harms and industry boasts the job cuts from AI, what is not in the public discourse is what we as people can do to stop its harmful impacts on our kids, climate, rights, democracy and jobs.

We are concerned by the media's lack of attention on comparability between AI and social media. Whereas the public discourse paints AI as inevitable, we are seeing increased regulation and prohibition of social media. We can stop AI's harm on our children and communities before it is too late.

H. DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY AND URGENT REGULATION OF CONSUMER FACING AI IS REQUIRED

We are concerned that the AI discussion is not adequately considering AI threats to Canadian sovereignty. We feel we are being held hostage by American controlled and unregulated AI technology. We need digital sovereignty, Canadian AI technology and data centres and increased taxes for large American AI companies. We support well-scoped and well-defined AI development driven by public universities and small Canadian businesses. We support working with middle power countries with similar values of freedom and democracy to collaborate on AI regulation to counteract American AI technology dominance.



Recommendations

As parents concerned about AI, we would like to see the following:

Recommendations to Protect our Children's Development, Mental Health and Safety

1. Prohibition of consumer facing generative AI for anyone under 18.

2. Require rigorous data privacy and consumer protection of consumer-facing AI products with clear accountability from the product owners.
3. All AI tools should be required to be “Opt-In” rather than “Opt-Out” as they currently function.
4. A moratorium on the integration of generative AI into classrooms and other educational spaces. During that time, school districts should come up with a meaningful way to have a long, meaningful conversation about generative AI involving the whole school community including parents, guardians, and students.
5. Hold corporations accountable for AI generated hate speech including by criminalizing AI produced hate speech.
6. Require industry executives be subject to ethical codes of conduct which are actionable if they fail to comply.
7. Allow for Facial Copyright, which would grant individuals copyright over their own likeness to stop DeepFakes.
8. Require AI algorithms be altered for safety, to avoid promoting violence, hate and harm.

Recommendations to ensure a Safe Climate For Our Kids

9. Limitation on AI data centre electricity use to prioritize electrification for human needs.
10. Prioritize and limit critical minerals to electrify transportation, buildings and critical infrastructure.
11. Ban all fossil fuel powered AI data centers.
12. Corporations’ use of electricity for AI charged at increased rates over consumers and other industries.

Recommendations to Ensure Digital Sovereignty

13. Require data centres to be located in Canada.
14. Support well-scoped and ethically bound AI development at Canadian universities and small Canadian businesses.
15. Tax large American AI companies.