



District Administration®

September 2023

Student discipline

Why educators are toughening up

Data-informed decisions:

3 tips for K12 leaders

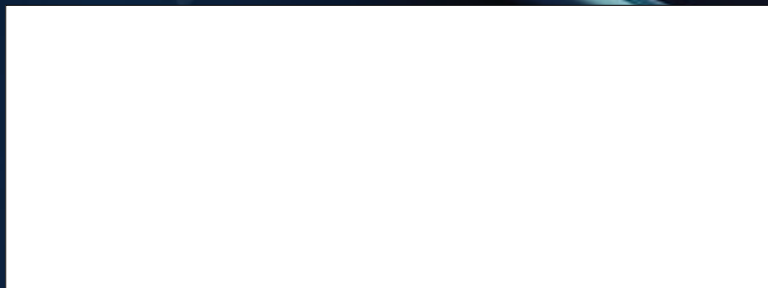
K12's new cyber threat

(It's not ransomware)

BACK TO SCHOOL

What's top of mind for leaders this year?

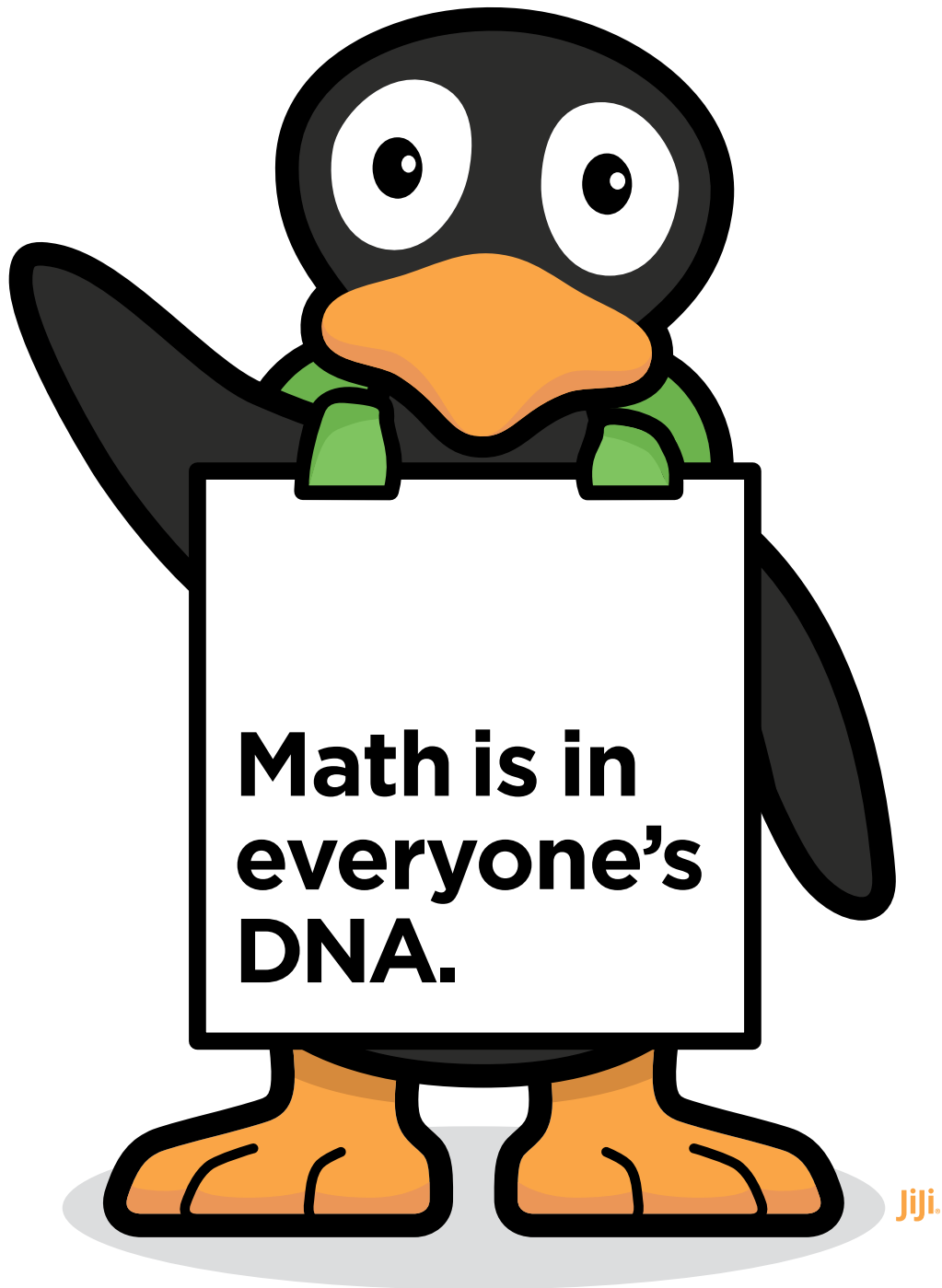
DistrictAdministration.com



Make School Restrooms Safe Again!

Learn more
halodetect.com





Jiji.

Give all students the power of problem-solving.

It's scientifically proven our brains learn best by doing. For PreK-8 students, playing is doing. ST Math is the only learn-by-doing math program based entirely on how the brain learns. **92% of administrators agree ST Math effectively engages all students. And students across all groups who use ST Math obtain higher state scores.**

ST Math created by MIND Education.

ST Math. //CODiE//
2023 SIA CODIE WINNER

Just play at stmath.com/da/play

Publisher Tim Hart

EDITORIAL

Executive Editor Lori Capullo

Senior Writer Matt Zalaznick

Education Staff Writers

Alcino Donadel, Micah Ward

ART

Art Director Xavier Marañón

Graphic Designers

Brendan Lawn

Matthew Ali

ADVERTISING, EVENTS AND CUSTOM MEDIA

Vice President, Event and Media Sales, Education Group

Jim Callan, james.callan@etcnetwork.com
(404) 353-5276

Sales Manager (East), Rachel Davis

rachel.davis@etcnetwork.com
(678) 521-7584

Sales Manager (West), Paul Milnamow

paul.milnamow@etcnetwork.com
(847) 648-0416

Content Marketing Editor

Kurt Eisele-Dyrli

CIRCULATION AND OPERATIONS

Vice President,

Marketing/Audience Development

Rennette Fortune

REPRINTS/PERMISSIONS

For more information,
districtadministration.com/contact-us

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Send email address changes to:
Rennette Fortune
rennette.fortune@etcnetwork.com

HOW TO REACH US

222 Lakeview Avenue, Suite 800
West Palm Beach, FL 33410
Website: DistrictAdministration.com



Above the Fray

And just like that—it’s the start of another school year. The summer flew past like a torrid gust of wind, and while classrooms may have been quiet, the K12 education landscape was anything but.

As districts continued their search for teachers (and other staff) and AI proliferated, drawing a panoply of reactions (“Students love it!” “Teachers hate it!” “Teachers love it more than students!”), the issue of pandemic-related learning loss remained an almost-lost-in-the-shuffle reality three years after the onset of COVID. Controversial curriculum changes dominated the news, and book bans continued apace as the next election cycle has begun to ramp up. It’s been a lot.

But while the old back-to-school staples of new pencils, backpacks and books have long been in the rearview mirror—replaced by electronics and, well, a much more limited selection of reading materials—one basic tenet remains: Our kids’ education is the most important thing.

That objective keeps you all above the fray.

Throughout the year, we at *District Administration* spend time talking with the esteemed district leaders and edtech specialists who are immersed in K12 education issues 24/7. We know you don’t work from 8 am to 3 pm nine months a year, as so many people mistakenly believe. We know your jobs are your lives, and that you devote yourselves to bettering our children’s present as well as their futures. We know you don’t cave under the pressures you face every day both inside and outside the schools that house your offices. And we know you don’t spend your entire summers chilling by the pool, that planning and strategizing for the upcoming year doesn’t stop when the final bell rings in May. We listen. And we learn from you.

As you welcome your students back this fall, we applaud you. We support you on your mission and will continue to cherish the opportunity to exchange information with you every day in our collective quest to uphold excellence in public education.

Lori Capullo, Executive Editor

“I had very conservative and liberal people on my board. It used to not be radical. It used to be somewhat boring. But now, finding compromise is considered radical.”

—Katy Anthes, former commissioner for Colorado Dept. of Education

“I thrive in this kind of environment. I like problem-solving, I like working with others. I have some of the best, if not the best, cabinet-level educators working with me.”

—Superintendent Xavier De La Torre, Ysleta ISD, El Paso, Texas



DEPARTMENTS

55 Data-informed decisions

How administrators can develop communication strategies to address student needs and empower parents.

57 AI and education

Are there more risks or rewards for K12?

59 Equity in education

5 keys to equity leadership for K12 decision makers

61 Safety first

To recruit and retain teachers, prioritize their safety.

63 Math by the numbers

All students are powerful mathematical thinkers, but they need to believe they are capable to succeed.

64 Last word

Addressing the exodus: 3 ways to recruit and retain school leaders

BEYOND THE NEWS

5 Women on top: How to get more females into leadership roles

7 The latest cyber threat to K12 (it's not ransomware)

9 Police in schools: 13 alternatives for keeping kids safe

10 What's on parents' minds this school year?

13 What will it take to have a full fleet of school bus drivers again?

15 Why teaching recovery is key to getting students back on track

17 Surprise: Teachers like ChatGPT more than students do

21 How K12 is transforming to meet the demand for cybersecurity talent

FEATURES

22 Back to school: This year's hot topics

The latest ways to use AI and the banning of cellphones are just two of those on the list.

30 12 things school leaders should stop doing right now

Veteran educator, leadership coach and author Jimmy Casas shares his experience and insights on how to excel as a successful leader in K12 education.

36 K12's current partisan divide

These 7 defining studies shed light on what's behind all the points of contention in education today.

40 Alberto Carvalho: "We're in a new age of the superintendency"

"Be so bold in your approach to work that you actually invite termination for being so passionate," says the superintendent of the second-largest district in the country.

45 Hung up on cellphones

Here's why regulating them in schools is both an administrative and a tech issue.

FEATURETTES

50 School behavior breakdowns

Why more leaders are turning away from restorative discipline and getting tougher again.

51 How much ESSER funding do you have left?

On average, states have spent only 54.5% of their ESSER dollars, according to a new analysis.



53 Making the grade

Can districts get fully staffed before the new year begins?

transfinder



POWER UP!

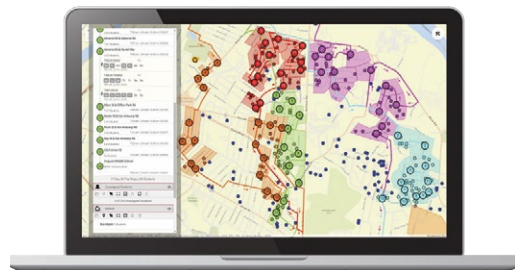
POWER UP your transportation operation with the hard-hitting combination of the award-winning, browser-based **Routefinder PLUS** routing solution with the driver navigation app **Wayfinder**. Together this pair provides the winning combination to help combat your school transportation woes.

Manage staff shortages, efficiency, optimization, and safety with Transfinder!



Wayfinder - Driver GPS Navigation App

- Take attendance with the tablet or RFID cards
- Turn-by-turn voice navigation for drivers
- Alerts when taking attendance to notify driver of important child data
- Substitute resources quickly – change vehicle, driver or bus aide for a specific day or date range



Routefinder PLUS - Routing & Planning

- More efficient routes and fewer trips and drivers with Artificial Intelligence Optimization™ or AIO
- Forms creation with **Formfinder** (included in PLUS) – discipline forms, pre and post inspection and more
- Messaging with **Chatfinder** (included in PLUS)



Add our Telematics Hardware for
'One Partner, One Solution, No Headaches.'

Contact us for more information!

800-373-3609 [transfinder.com](https://www.transfinder.com)

STNEXPO
INNOVATION
AWARDS

BEST SOFTWARE

2023
WINNER

STNEXPO
INNOVATION
AWARDS

BEST HARDWARE

2023
WINNER

BACK TO SCHOOL SUCCESS



What Matters is What Works

DreamBox Learning is the only solution rated ESSA-Strong for both math and reading. Get the learning solution backed by more than a decade of research.

4X more effective



than the average elementary school math intervention



2.5 years of

reading growth in 60 hours of personalized instruction



Get started > dreambox.com/back-to-school



BEYOND the news

Women on Top

More than two-thirds of superintendents are men. But the issue is not about finding talented females to fill the slot—it goes deeper.

The “Great Resignation” of the COVID pandemic represented a missed opportunity for women in education—or, rather, a missed opportunity for the education system to promote more female leaders to the superintendency.

The swath of vacancies created when unprecedented numbers of superintendents left the profession was “a major opportunity to rectify a dramatic imbalance in district leadership,” says the Women Leading Ed coalition in “The Time Is Now,” a just-released playbook on closing the gender gap. “As a nation, we missed it.”

A higher percentage of women than men are graduating from college and entering the workforce and while a majority of the nation’s teachers are women, more than two-thirds of K12 superintendents are men. “The problem is not a lack of female talent,” the organization asserts. “It’s that women face both systemic and informal obstacles to advancement that seldom impede—and in some cases, give advantage to—many male leaders.”

Those obstacles include discrimination perpetuated by both male and female school board members, an absence of family-friendly policies and leave practices, pay inequities, and biased leadership pipelines and hiring processes. For example, rising male educators receive more positive feedback and coaching, and are more likely to land on accelerated leadership pathways, the group says.



“At every stage in her career, a woman encounters stronger headwinds than her male colleagues—and the challenges intensify the higher she climbs,” WomenLeadingEd points out. The organization is calling for five major strategy shifts:

- 1. Promote intentional support systems to prepare women for leadership roles:** Women in education need sponsors as well as mentors. While mentors provide encouragement and advice, sponsors “take a hands-on role in managing career moves and promoting executives as potential CEOs.” Sponsors are also key in helping candidates build confidence to seek promotions and pay raises. Kyla Johnson-Trammell, superintendent of Oakland USD, said she is where she is today because of coaching she received from her sponsor, a former superintendent of her district. “This man coached me for two years every Friday ... and pushed me to be the leader I wanted to be as a Black woman,” Johnson-Trammell says in the report. “He said, ‘Your first year, everything is going to feel urgent, important,

like it could be the end of your career, but it’s not. You have to start learning what’s a bullet and what’s a feather.”

- 2. Re-balance the hiring process:** Districts seeking new leaders must build a diverse finalist pool that includes more than one woman or candidate of color. School board members and other personnel involved in hiring and promotions should receive training to help them become aware of their biases and how they can prioritize diversity. Districts and other education systems should ensure that search and hiring committees are also diverse.

- 3. Provide a “constellation” of family and well-being supports:** Women in education need the flexibility of hybrid and remote work, both of which have been shown to increase job satisfaction and reduce burnout. Districts should also implement comprehensive leave policies that offer female and male employees paid time off without repercussions. “In the private sector, companies committed to increasing female leadership offer a constellation of benefits to



Get answers to your most important questions about student performance.

//CODiE//
2023 SIIA CODiE WINNER



See all student data in one place so you have clear insights to confidently make decisions for your district.



Learn more at otus.com/answers

improve women’s day-to-day work experiences, including flexibility, emergency childcare and eldercare leave, and mental health support,” the report says.

4. Set transparent goals for female leadership: Districts conducting superintendent searches should be required to make their finalist pools public or share information such as the number of finalists and

the percentage of male and female candidates, and candidates of color. Districts could also be required to select at least two women as finalists. “Data shows that if there is only one woman or person of color in a finalist pool, the individual has ‘statistically no chance’ of landing the job,” Women Leading Ed asserts.

5. Ensure financial fairness: A “self-assessment pay calculator”

allows employees to check if their district provides women and men with equal pay for equal work. District leaders should also audit their pay structures to identify and close gender wage gaps, and share these findings with employees. Finally, districts should commit to reporting the previous salary of the outgoing superintendent in job postings to increase transparency.

By Matt Zalaznick

The latest cyber threat to K12

Ransomware attacks have abated, but leaders have a new worry to deal with.

Despite several high-profile cyberattacks against some of the largest school districts in the country, the education sector saw fewer ransomware attacks compared to this time last year, a new analysis suggests. However, security leaders shouldn’t be too quick to let their guards down as another threat is quickly taking the spotlight.

Last week, the cybersecurity company SonicWall published its mid-year update report in which it identified some of the latest trends and tactics used by cybercriminals. Based on its findings, the researchers offer both good and bad news for K12 leaders to consider ahead of the 2023-24 school year.

A dip in ransomware incidents
Since becoming the No. 1 target for ransomware attacks, several security organizations have advised leaders throughout the education sector to keep a sharp focus on cybersecurity. While this advisory ceases to fade in importance, the number of ransomware incidents against educational



institutions actually decreased compared to data taken this time last year, according to the report.

While attacks against higher-ed organizations increased by 6% during the first half of 2023, this minor spike is offset by a significant drop (19%) in incidents against K12 schools, in addition to an “astounding” 95% drop among “other educational organizations.”

However, the education industry continues to be the most-targeted sector compared to government, healthcare, retail and finance.

Tech leaders through the education industry should keep a watchful eye on malware attempts from cybercriminals, the report suggests. Similar to ransomware, education is also the most common victim of

malware attacks.

During the first six months of 2023, this industry saw a 179% spike in overall attack volume compared to the first half of 2022. The attacks are seemingly regular as well, with 16.6% of victims reported being targeted at least once a month.

Again, these trends tell a different story across K12 and higher education respectively.

“Higher education actually saw a decrease in malware attempts in the first half of the year, bringing their total attack volume down 42%,” the report reads. “But this was more offset by a massive spike in malware among K12 organizations, which saw a staggering 466% increase in attacks year to date.”

By Micah Ward



Meet students where they are with ebooks & audiobooks

Give your school the power to deliver the right books to every student with the award-winning Sora digital reading platform.

With Sora, you can handpick titles from the industry's best catalog of ebooks and audiobooks for students at every grade level and across all subjects to meet their reading and learning needs.

And it's 100% digital. So books can be read anytime, anywhere, on every device.



Visit DiscoverSora.com to see why over 61,000 schools have partnered with Sora.

Sora

The student reading app



Police in schools

Advocates detail 13 public safety alternatives for K12 besides having officers on campus.

Advocates who doubt the benefits of police in schools are not leaving superintendents, principals and other administrators in the dark when it comes to making schools safer. A range of organizations are encouraging safety-minded K12 leaders to focus on social-emotional learning, counseling, restorative justice and other approaches that some stakeholders see as more preventative and more equitable than using armed officers to enforce school discipline.

Most educators are familiar with research that shows Black and brown students and youth with disabilities face disproportionately harsh discipline in schools. For instance, a recent report found that 80% of the 285 documented police assaults on students from 2011-2021 were against Black students, according to a new study of K12 public safety by the nonprofit Center for Policing Equity.

Using police to enforce discipline often fails to address the underlying causes of a student's behavioral problems and may hinder the accommodations the child needs to succeed, the nonprofit contends. "School safety requires investing in effective programs that reduce bullying, violence, and misbehavior that disrupts learning," the Center argues. "It also requires ending unnecessary, inequitable, and widespread systems of police enforcement and surveillance so that students can learn without fear of criminalization or deportation."

The group acknowledges that school resource officers can be a comforting presence for some students who are experiencing difficulties at school or at home. "This can



also be said of officers responding to a call for service—when compassionate professionals bring their best to critical situations, those they have helped are often grateful," the study continues. "CPE looks well beyond individual officers, however, and studies the policies, procedures, and culture that placed those officers in those situations and has for so long created the unjust, ineffective and unequal policing that the organization was founded to address."

Alternatives to police in schools

A range of educational and public health approaches may better equip educators with the skills and resources to prevent disruptive behavior and make schools safer overall. Black students, disabled students, LGBTQ+ students, Indigenous students, Hispanic students and other vulnerable children most affected by disproportionately harsh discipline should have a role in reforming school disciplinary policies, The Center for Policing Equity contends.

Here are its recommendations for ending school-based policing and SRO programs:

- Redirect state and federal funding for SRO programs and police-school partnerships toward public health approaches.
- School districts should implement

policies specifying that staff may not call the police to address student behavior unless there is an emergency.

- Repeal laws that require school administrators to call the police for minor student misbehavior.
- Decriminalize truancy, curfew violations, and other status offenses.
- Decriminalize consensual "sexting" between teenagers of similar ages.
- End school-based drug testing and the use of drug-sniffing dogs.
- Ban facial recognition software in school video surveillance systems.
- Ban remote access of cameras and microphones on school-owned tablets and laptops.
- Remove vague language in school discipline policies and codes of conduct to reduce the risk of inequitable application.
- Ban corporal punishment, seclusion and restraint in K-12 schools.
- Explore social-emotional learning and trauma-informed school environments to prevent school violence.
- Require school districts to collect and report data on staff-initiated student-police contacts.
- Require police to document the outcome of student referrals as well as all investigatory detentions and uses of force.

By Matt Zalaznick

What's on parents' minds this school year?

Safety, class size, flexibility in their child's educational options and the costs of education are among parents' top concerns, EdChoice asserts.

The number of Americans who say K12 education is “heading in the right direction” has declined sharply—but that’s according to the latest “Schooling in America” survey by a leading school choice advocacy group. And while the increasingly competitive school choice landscape may be among many administrators’

top 10 concerns as the new year gets underway, EdChoice’s poll aims to warn K12 leaders of the issues that parents are most worried about.

More than two-thirds of the 2,700 parents and adults surveyed by the nonprofit said K12 is “on the wrong track,” a 17% increase from 2021. School safety, class size, flexibility in their child’s educational options and the costs of education are among parents’ top concerns, EdChoice asserts. “In the last few years, a number of states have enacted or expanded universal/near-universal school choice programs,” said EdChoice Vice President of Research and Innovation Paul DiPerna.

Here are EdChoice’s top 10 takeaways from its “2023 Schooling in America Survey”:

1. Parents and the general public

are more pessimistic. The percentage of parents who say they are optimistic about K12 education fell 5 points from 2022 to 2023, from 48% to 43%. Public district school parents are more pessimistic than private school families.

2. Private school and homeschool parents are most likely to say they are “very satisfied” with their child’s education. Overall parent satisfaction is high, regardless of the type of school. Nearly three in four private, charter and homeschool parents are “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with their child’s schooling experience, as are 57% of public district school parents.

3. Parents choose schools for a variety of different reasons. More parents are now prioritizing safety



Choose your next Superintendents Summit



Grand Geneva,
Lake Geneva, WI
October 11-13, 2023

Featuring - DA Lead-HER-ship networking event



JW Marriott Tucson Starr Pass,
Tucson, AZ
November 8-10, 2023



Naples Grand Beach Resort,
Naples, FL
December 13-15, 2023

National DA Distiction Awards Ceremony!

Join other high-achieving superintendents and industry thought leaders for an intensive program that will yield exciting new insights on district leadership and pragmatic strategies you can implement to address school improvement, online and virtual

Space is limited, reserve your spot today!

www.DALeadershipinstitute.com | daleadershipinstitute@etcnetwork.com | (561) 622-0352 |   

when choosing schools and it is the No. 1 factor for families who chose public charter and homeschooling. Convenience of location and socialization of their children were the top two reasons given by parents who chose public schools.

4. Safety is on parents' minds. Charter (65%) and private school parents (58%) are most concerned about a violent intruder entering their child's school. Public school parents (46%) were less likely than other adults to be "extremely" or "very" concerned.

5. Americans are much less likely to say state education spending is "low too" when shown actual funding levels. When asked generally about state K12 funding, a clear majority of parents say it is too low. But less than half said the same

when they were shown per-pupil expenditure levels in their state.

6. About one-third of parents have switched schools. Student anxiety and bullying were the two problems parents cited for switching their children's schools. Academic needs not being met and bad peer groups were next on the list.

7. Parents are not completely satisfied with how public schools handle bullying, violent behaviors, guns and mental health. Public K12 parents were the least confident about how their child's school handles guns (47%), violent behaviors (41%), mental health (39%) and bullying (36%).

8. Parents' estimates of their child's class sizes don't match their preferences. Most parents want their chil-

dren to be in classes with fewer than 20 students but guess those classes have as many as 25 students. These preferences hold for elementary, middle and high school.

9. The majority of Americans support school choice. More than two-thirds of parents said they favor school choice. Also, more adults said they had never heard of school choice than were opposed to it.

10. Education Savings Accounts remain the most popular educational choice policy. Three in four Americans support ESAs, which is relatively unchanged from 2022. However, ESAs are the least well-known educational choice policy among the public, compared to school vouchers and charter schools.

By Matt Zalaznick



For over 55 years, hand2mind has encouraged hands-on learning and discovery by offering high-quality products that are:

- Classroom-tested
- Research-based
- Standards-aligned

hand2mind

Visit hand2mind.com and explore supplemental solutions for math, literacy, science, STEM, and SEL.



Voyager Sopris Learning®

The Reading, Writing, and Math Intervention Specialist



“Programs that follow a Structured Literacy approach help students develop knowledge of language structure, which in turn supports both reading comprehension and writing.”

—Dr. Louisa Moats, author of *LANGUAGE! Live®* and *LETRS®*



“Fifty years, we’ve known a lot about the science of reading and we keep getting it expanded upon and clarified as we go forward. For fifty years, we’ve known the power of direct or explicit instruction, which then is also expanded over time.”

—Dr. Anita Archer, author of *REWARDS®*



Backed by decades of literacy research, our intervention and assessment products are built and based on the science of reading. Explore our evidence-based K–12 solutions and help get your students on the path to success. Learn more at voyagersopris.com.



Scan to learn
about SOR!



What will it take for schools to have a full fleet of bus drivers again?

In some districts, the bus driver shortage is “worse than ever,” but why? From retirements to a lack of funding, administrators are in over their heads looking for a solution to the crisis.

Every school district experienced its own share of challenges during the pandemic. Some fared worse than others, but to say that every district is still experiencing some sort of pandemic-related impact would be an understatement. For many administrators, one key area essential to the daily operations of a school district continues to top their list of challenges: finding and maintaining a full school bus fleet.

Chatham County School District, GA

As of July 12, the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System had only 154 official bus drivers, compared to last year’s tally of 222. Even worse, in 2019, the district had 328 drivers, GPB reports. Unfortunately, leaders don’t see an easy fix to the issue.

“We want to acknowledge that we know we have some challenges,” said newly hired SCCPSS Superintendent Denise Watts. “I have not been here long enough to truly unpack that... I’m not prepared to speak today to what those challenges or impacts are.”

Education Director at the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute



Stephen Owens told GPB that the issue stems from the state’s outdated budget policies. Schools rely on supplemental help to operate transportation budgets, but the system was set in 2000. Without proper adjustments to funding to meet current transportation costs, schools in the district inevitably run into problems.

Ector County ISD, TX

Administrators across Ector County ISD are working on finding new and innovative ways to incentivize drivers to join their fleets. Like school districts across the country, Ector County is also experiencing its fair share of shortages. As a result, they’re promising drivers a competitive salary, benefits and other appreciative efforts, CBS7 reports.

“We are very proud that we implemented a pay increase for all of our employees across the board,” Associate Superintendent Anthony J. Sorola told CBS7. “A 3% raise classification.”

“Our starting salary is very competitive,” he added. “We also have flexible scheduling for our bus drivers. A lot of times they choose to work part-time as a bus driver because they require that. We offer that benefit, as well as medical benefits.”

Shenendehowa Central School District, NY

“We take that time to, kind of, take a breath and start to prepare for fall,” Assistant Director of Transportation Belinda Govich told News10 regarding the district’s summer plans.

“Unfortunately, because we are short drivers, we have not had that breath.”

Many of the district’s former bus drivers reached retirement age since the pandemic, and now there aren’t enough applicants to fill in the gaps.

“We lost about 19 drivers this year, and we only have about 10 in training so far, so we are already going into the fall short again,” said Govich.

They’ve also been unable to provide students with transportation to various summer camps and field trips as they could in the past because summer school alone is occupying all their drivers.

“A lot of my colleagues who are directors and transportation supervisors are out on the road every day,” Govich explained. “Basically, anyone with a CDL is out on the roads.”

Govich’s message to parents this year, according to News10, is “Be patient. We most likely will be facing some delays as we did last year, as we have very similar challenges to those we did last year.”

By Micah Ward

Forward FundED™

One investment brings you better student results for years to come.

To ensure sustainable improvement in your school or district, choose Forward FundED™ and customize a multiyear professional learning plan.

One price point provides:

- › Ongoing, customized, research-based PD
- › Locked-in pricing on all resources and services for the duration of your plan
- › Progress monitoring and support to keep you focused on key goals
- › Better results for students

All Forward FundED PD services and resources qualify for Title I, and ESSER funding.



Let's build a plan together
SolutionTree.com/**FundED**



Solution Tree

Why teaching recovery is key to getting students back on track

Though “day-to-day chaos” is now ebbing, staffing shortages and teacher development snags have knocked district COVID recovery plans off-track, a report warns.

A “teaching recovery” must take place before students can bounce back from one of the most disruptive periods in the history of U.S. education, a new study asserts.

A “crisis in the quality of classroom teaching” is the biggest barrier to providing students with the targeted support they need, according to district leaders who were granted anonymity to discuss the unfinished learning with researchers from the Center on Reinventing Public Education at Arizona State University.

“The unguarded feedback is an important peek into systemic challenges that force us to evaluate our shared expectations for what kind of student recovery may—or may not—be possible,” CRPE explains in a recent “Teaching recovery?” report. “It provides an important piece of the puzzle for why we continue to see lackluster student test scores and why school systems struggle to implement and scale targeted student supports.”

The leaders—who represent five different school systems—also told researchers that, though “day-to-day chaos” is now ebbing, staffing shortages and teacher development snags have knocked district COVID recovery plans off-track. Administra-



tors warned that the disruptions of the last three years have driven some teachers to fall back on “outdated and ineffective instructional practices” or to reduce the rigor of instruction below grade level. Also, teachers are continuing to exit classrooms for higher-paying jobs outside K12.

“School systems that had planned on supporting students to recover lost learning time through learning acceleration found that this approach required significantly more teacher training than systems were able to provide or teachers were willing to adopt,” the researchers wrote.

Academic recovery plans saddled educators with the difficult task of accelerating learning to get students to grade level while backfilling learning gaps caused by school closures and other disruptions. The resulting need to build—or rebuild—teachers’ core skills have scuttled tutoring programs and other academic assistance. It has also forced administrators to centralize instructional support, a process that has left leaders with less time to deliver personalized support to students who have fallen furthest behind, the report says.

A look at the routes to ‘teaching recovery’

The top piece of advice that “Teaching Recovery?” has for administra-

tors is to seek greater support from state and federal policymakers, higher education, community advocates, service providers and other key stakeholders. The goals of this collaboration would be to build teachers’ instructional capacity and put the needed instructional materials into classrooms.

The report urges K12 leaders to lobby state policymakers to subsidize high-dosage tutoring, as many educators still believe that the approach is the best way to reverse learning loss. Superintendents and their teams should also advocate for “maximum flexibility” to increase student learning time as necessary. Finally, they can ask states to track the performance of any outside tutoring services retained by districts.

At the federal level, K12 leaders should press Congress to provide greater Title I flexibility to pay for out-of-school private tutoring or extra coursework.

“Administrators made frank assessments about the uneven day-to-day workings of their classrooms,” the report concludes. “These rare observations should spark urgent conversations in schools, communities, and policy spaces about how to provide additional help to struggling students and reverse pandemic-related learning loss.”

By Matt Zalaznick



Unleash the 'Power of Play' with
Imaginasium™
Blocks & Blips

Up, down, and all around, young students often learn best when they're on the move.

Imaginasium Blocks and Blips allow them to do just that. See how at ki.com/imaginasium



VIEW VIDEO

Experience our industry-leading active learning solutions at **EDspaces 2023** in Charlotte, NC, Nov. 7-9



Ruckus® Collection



Stout™ Tables



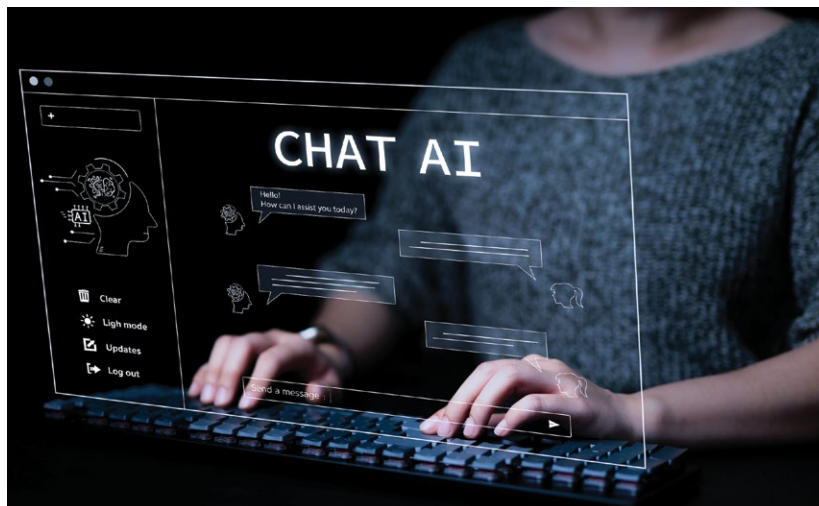
Ricochet™ Stools

BEYOND the news

Surprise: Teachers now like ChatGPT more than students do

More than 8 in 10 teachers say that ChatGPT has “positively impacted” their classes, according to survey data re-released Tuesday by the nonprofit Walton Family Foundation.

While experts worry about humans losing control of potentially dangerous AI technology, educators appear much less worried about the specter



of ChatGPT in the classroom. In fact, many of the teachers who have used ChatGPT are embracing the AI tool that, in the wrong hands, has been seen by some as the biggest boon to K12 cheaters since ... well, since ever.

At the moment, educators appear to like ChatGPT even more than their students do. More than eight in 10 teachers say that ChatGPT has “positively impacted” their classes, according to survey data released

everdriven

Thinking about alternative student transportation?

We can help with that.

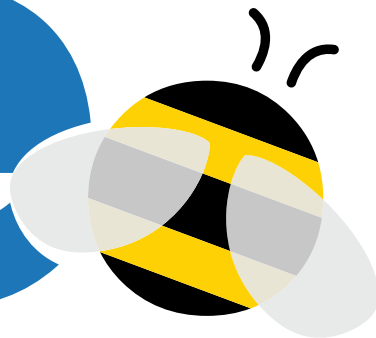
We've helped over 600 school districts nationwide to:

- Overcome driver shortages
- Stay within budget and provide consistent, safe, and reliable transportation
- Meet the needs of children and youth supported by the McKinney-Vento Act

Learn more at everdriven.com



there's a bee



champion at every school in your district.

Give your champions a chance to compete in the **Scripps National Spelling Bee** program. This year, you can easily enroll all of your district's elementary and middle schools. Early bird pricing ends October 31.

Enroll today at [spellingbee.com!](https://spellingbee.com)



2023 Champion Dev Shah
Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School
Largo, Florida
Scripps National Spelling Bee®



BEYOND the news

recently by the nonprofit Walton Family Foundation. Plus, more and more teachers are testing out ChatGPT in the classroom: Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed said they have tried it, an increase from the 50% of educators who said the same in the Walton Family Foundation's February survey.

The survey, however, did not provide specifics on how these teachers are using ChatGPT.

Since February, the number of students who say they've used ChatGPT grew from 33% to 42%, according to the survey that the Foundation says was designed to gauge how well schools are preparing young people for jobs of the future. But it's parents who now appear to have the most favorable view of ChatGPT in the classroom, with more than 60% saying AI has the potential to enhance learning. About one-third of parents still believe that ChatGPT is used mostly for cheating.

When it comes to preparing students for their future careers, only 37% of Americans overall gave schools positive marks. Those surveyed were not confident that today's educators are trained to teach students the skills they need for jobs in quantum computing, 5G/6G technology, semiconductor production, financial technology (also known as "fintech") and other emerging fields. Even four in 10 teachers don't think they are preparing students for these careers.

Finally, a third of the students surveyed said their schools were not preparing them for a future STEM career.

ChatGPT faces a federal investigation

Because ChatGPT has heightened concerns about cheating in K12, the question of whether the AI tool has harmed its own customers appears to be at the center of a federal inves-



tigation launched this summer.

OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, is being investigated by the Federal Trade Commission over its data collection practices and "publication of false information about individuals," *The New York Times* reported in July. *The Washington Post* called the probe "the most potent regulatory threat" to the use of the chatbot and the company's operation in the U.S.

As most administrators know, the emergence and rapid advancement of ChatGPT has educators taking ever more aggressive steps to determine if students are using the AI to complete essays and other assignments. And there's

When it comes to preparing students for their future careers, only 37% of Americans overall gave schools positive marks.

little question about its popularity: Nearly 60% of students aged 12-18 have used ChatGPT, according to a poll conducted at the end of the school year. About two-thirds of parents want their school district to invest in AI to improve learning, that survey also found.

Districts are increasingly banning ChatGPT and other AI platforms while some school systems have responded with less certainty. For instance, New York City schools this spring allowed educators to use ChatGPT just a few months after district leaders had initially banned the software.

In a letter to the company obtained by *The Washington Post*, the FTC has asked OpenAI to detail its strategies for preventing risk and any complaints it has received about its AI tools generating "false, misleading, disparaging or harmful" statements about people.

Meanwhile, a growing number of edtech companies are leaning into the technology. Educational support service provider Chegg just released CheggMate, a study aide powered by GPT-4, the most up-to-date version of OpenAI's software.

By Matt Zalaznick

One for all.

Focused, Flexible, Evidence-Based PD That Works

A holistic approach to professional development equips educators to address diverse challenges. Meet the needs and time constraints of all educators with Catapult Learning's tailored professional learning solutions



Job-Embedded Coaching:

Our team of 250+ coaches provide educators with the necessary tools to grow their skills and create positive outcomes in the classroom



Workshops & Institutes:

Tailored for all educators to improve skills and techniques for effective classroom management and instructional excellence



PDNow:

Our anywhere, anytime professional development platform for asynchronous learning

Why partner with Catapult Learning to help solve your classroom challenges?



97%

satisfaction rate
among all educators*

250+

 Coaches

The ability to scale and deploy PD for any type of engagement.

Start getting the most out of your PD plans. Visit catapultlearning.com/pd today.

How K12 education will transform to meet the growing demand for cybersecurity talent

A new government plan aims to meet the growing demand for cybersecurity professionals because we can't rely solely on educators to do so.

“Technology and humanity are intertwined. Technology itself does not have a value system; rather, it carries the values of its owners and operators.”

The above statement comes from the White House, which released a first-of-its-kind government plan in July that aims to meet the growing demand for cybersecurity professionals. For instance, states like California and Texas have as many as 50,000 job openings in cybersecurity, according to data from Cyberseek, an organization that tracks vacancies in the field.

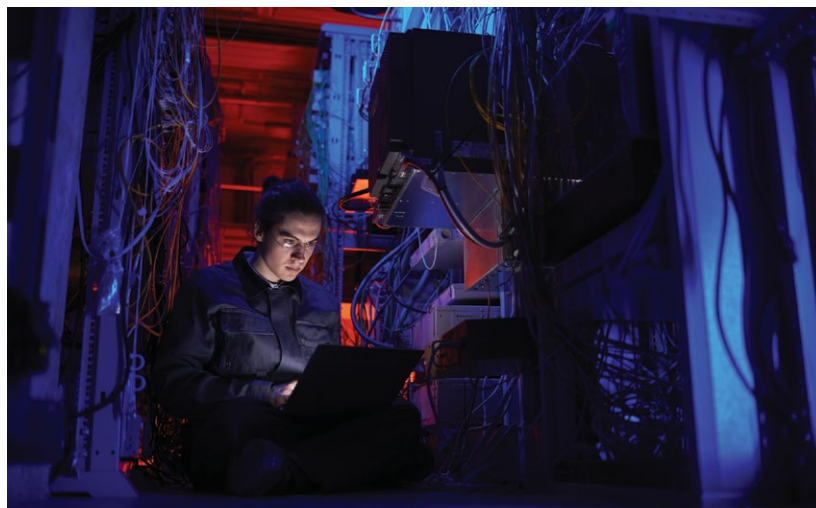
As such, the plan outlines several strategic objectives that outline exactly how the government plans to bolster the pipeline into the profession, including transforming cyber education.

Traditionally, this responsibility has rested in the hands of educators. However, that will soon change.

Here are four primary ways the federal government plans to improve cyber education:

Build and leverage ecosystems

Here's what the White House says you



can expect from them in this regard:

- Expanding and supporting cyber education ecosystems
- Increasing engagement in cyber education programs
- Integrating cybersecurity across disciplines to prepare the workforce
- Protecting learning in safe and secure learning environments

Expand competency-based cyber education

These are the government's lines of effort to achieve this goal:

- Focusing on federal cyber education investments for developing learning resources consistent with stages of cognitive development
- Enhancing applied cyber content in interdisciplinary education programs
- Increasing availability of curricula for education programs
- Increasing concurrent and transferable credit opportunities
- Expanding innovative models for academic credit

Invest in educators

While bolstering the cybersecurity workforce shouldn't rely solely on our educators, they need proper support in building the next generation of cyber professionals. To do so, the

White House plans to:

- Increase cyber teaching capacity of K12 systems and postsecondary institutions
- Establish a national cyber educator fellowship program
- Increase enrollment in advanced degree programs
- Increase participation in advanced degree programs
- Encourage interdisciplinary approaches to teaching cyber
- Incorporate education and training into career pathways
- Expand opportunities to earn credits for experiential learning
- Establish and support national cyber award programs for schools and teachers

Increase affordability and accessibility to cyber education

To ensure every student has sufficient access to cybersecurity education, several barriers to entry must first be removed, particularly among underrepresented and underserved communities.

“The strategy aims to foster extensive collaboration between employers, educators, government and other key stakeholders to meet both urgent and long-term workforce needs.”

By Micah Ward



BACK TO SCHOOL: This year's hot topics

The latest ways to use AI and the banning of cellphones are just two of those on the list.

BY MATT ZALAZNICK

Set aside the fears of rampant cheating and robot uprisings—heading into the 2023-24 school year, many educators are deploying AI for more ordinary purposes. Providing a safer space for teachers to participate in PD is one way AI-powered video is being used by administrators at Spokane Public Schools in Washington.

“Watching others and watching themselves—those are the two most powerful ways teachers learn more about themselves and their practices,” says Nicholas Lundberg, Spokane’s Title I and special programs coordinator.

The AI coaching platform Spokane uses allows teachers to record themselves and then, like an instructional coach, guides them through reflection questions as they watch the video. Teachers can instruct the AI to focus on specific practices, such as differentiation. The teacher’s typed responses to questions are collected to produce a journal to which teachers can refer back.

“It’s the safest place possible for a classroom teacher—a self-contained reflection on a practice of their choosing,” Lundberg explains. “Our hope is that we start to see teachers becoming more comfortable sharing video with colleagues.”

The end product produced by the platform and the sharing process is a plan that a teacher can use to hold themselves accountable for improving a specific practice. This AI coaching should be particularly effective with early-career teachers looking for user-friendly training and during curriculum adoptions such as Spokane’s current focus on



The #1 Vape Detector now has the Safety & Security Features You Need



Make School Restrooms Safe Again!

HALO 3C helps...

- Stop vaping
- Stop vandalism
- Stop illicit drug use
- Stop fighting and bullying
- Protect students and school property
- Ensure single occupancy with 3C-PC



HALO 3C protects the privacy of individuals as it **does not use cameras, record audio, or capture any personal identifiable information (PII)**, making it the perfect solution for privacy areas such as restrooms and common areas.

Contact Us To Learn How HALO Smart Sensor Can Help

"I want to call these 'smart sensors' because they do more than just one function; they're capable of providing multiple functions for safety and security. **They detect occupancy count for any type of small area such as restrooms.** They also detect vaping, and can differentiate between vaping, an illegal substance versus a legal substance."

DR. JACQUELYN MARTIN

Superintendent, Keystone Central School District

Source: www.lockhaven.com/news/local-news/2023/05/kc-takes-safety-steps/

"It has been a deterrent to possession and use in the school and it's given a sense of comfort to other kids that don't want to be involved or around it. **Students have told me they finally feel comfortable using the school bathroom again.** That's really our heart and goal in the issue, is to prevent vaping, not to try and catch more kids making poor choices."

JASON FERGUSON

School Resource Officer, Eaton Rapids High School, Eaton Rapids, Michigan

Source: www.wilx.com/2023/03/14/vape-detectors-installed-eaton-rapids-school-bathrooms-address-problem/



Back to school: This year's hot topics



foundational literacy, Lundberg adds.

It also allows instructional coaches to reach more teachers. “Teachers looking for short, simple, meaty professional development,” he concludes. “For teachers who have been resistant, it has been an open door to start conversations.”

“Beam me up” with AI

OK, let’s admit that some readers may find this next use of AI a little bit “scary.” Maria Armstrong, executive director of the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, is in regular contact with superintendents across the country. She confirms that some administrators are using artificial intelligence for productivity, such as by streamlining districtwide communications.

But Armstrong may also have gotten a glimpse of a possible future at a recent Latinx Edtech Summit, where she witnessed a holographic teacher for the first time. And, aside from the obvious teacher-shortage solution, why would a district want to “hire” a hologram? “They speak multiple languages,” Armstrong says.

“There’s a wide gap in how people are using AI,” she continues. “We’re homing in on what could get us closer to personalized support, from familial support to learning support.”

Cracking down on cellphone use

A nationwide cellphone crackdown seems to be accelerating as district leaders look to eliminate distractions and shift academic recovery into a higher gear in the 2023-24 school year. Middle and high school students at Georgia’s

Clarke County School District will be required to place their phones into pouches at the beginning of each class and will be able to retrieve them before moving on to the next period.

“A recurring concern from parents and staff was the use of cellphones in middle and high school classrooms, which was cited as a significant distraction from active and continued engagement in classroom instruction,” Superintendent Robbie Hooker said on the district’s website.

In Ohio, Akron Public Schools has expanded a pilot policy to all middle and high schools, where students will now be required to lock their phones in Yondr pouches for the entire school day, WKYC reported. Administrators linked cellphone use to bullying, mental health problems and distraction, WKYC added. Administrators at Orange County Schools, which is headquartered in Orlando, Florida, intend to expand the district’s cellphone ban from during class time to recess and lunch, FOX 35 reported.

Administrators and school boards are facing substantial pushback from families when announcing stricter cell phone policies. In Massachusetts, parents argued that Brockton Public Schools’ plan to restrict phones would put children in danger and prevent them from contacting their kids during emergencies, *The Enterprise* reported. Students told the school board that, when they are experiencing anxiety attacks or other mental health issues, they need their phones to contact their parents, *The Enterprise* added.

Brockton’s new rule would have required students to put their phones in pouches during class. But after a recent

Spark curiosity. Ignite learning.

Maximize the potential of your K-12 spaces with Demco's personalized services.



Personal service
helps you order
with confidence



Innovative products
support learning
excellence



**A wide range
of solutions**
keeps you
on budget



**Expert interior
designers**
deliver spaces
that last



**Seamless project
management**
simplifies it all

Contact us today and we'll help you create a plan that works. Visit demco.com/inside-sales or reach out to get started.

PHONE
866.376.5316
(7 a.m.–5 p.m. CT M–F)

EMAIL
quote@demco.com

FAX
888.329.4728

Demco[®]
demco.com

Back to school: This year's hot topics



school board meeting where parents and students voiced their concerns, Superintendent Mike Thomas announced on the district's website that he and his leadership team will redraft its new cellphone proposal.

Cell phone crackdown: Other considerations

Requiring students to stash their phones during class appears to be the leading choice for administrators who are intending to provide a life lesson while also acknowledging reality.

"The use of cellphones in schools is not going to go away, so learning to effectively manage and handle them is a valuable skill for students to learn," English teacher Nancy Barile posted on Western Governors University's "Hey Teach" blog. "I became more in tune with my own cellphone addiction through this process. Now, along with my students, I'm working to enjoy my life without my phone a bit more."

Students' use of cellphones during class could also be a sign of a lower-tech connection problem. In the *Harvard Gazette*, graduate school education lecturer Victor Pereira said teachers should ask themselves why students are scrolling on their phones rather than engaging in class. Teachers should also consider how cellphones can enrich lessons. "Design better learning activities, design learning activities where you consider how all of your students might want to engage and what their interests are," Pereira told the *Gazette*.

Some administrators have hesitated to set districtwide rules. In Nebraska's two largest districts—Omaha and Lin-

coln public schools—high school principals set the cellphone policies in their buildings while in some cases these decisions are left to teachers to manage cellphone use in their own classrooms, KETV reported. "Level one issue is just a student on their phone; it's interrupting learning ... they're paying attention to ESPN instead of world history," Lincoln Southwest High School principal John Matzen told KETV. "But we also found students were coordinating with other students to meet up outside of class. 'Hey, I'm out in the hall, come meet me here.'"

Funding and facilities

Here's one of the top messages for K12 tech leadership in 2023-24 that bears repeating: You really do have a role to play in every aspect of your district's operations. For example, the cafeteria refrigerators—and the infrastructure that surrounds them—may need your attention, says Tylene Cunning, technical support supervisor at Pflugerville ISD in Texas.

"Even cafeteria refrigerators are now on the network—to monitor the temperature," says Cuning, who cites this development to illustrate why tech leadership teams have to be extensively involved throughout the design process for new school construction.

Tech leaders also have to be front and center when districts put together bond proposals to raise funds, particularly when it comes to technology replacement cycles, adds Tim Klan, administrator of information and instructional technology at Livonia Public Schools in Michigan. His district last passed a bond for technology in 2014 and



Discover Lasting **SOLUTIONS**
at Our **Annual Conference!**

ELEVATE Conscious Discipline:
Renew Your **PASSION** and **PURPOSE**

 October 12-14

 **Orlando, FL**



**Our evidence-based, adult-first approach
improves every facet of teaching & learning.**

Educators have trusted Conscious Discipline with their professional development for more than 25 years.

Our clients report that implementation yields:

**Sustainable
solutions
for back to
school**

45% fewer
discipline referrals



20-50% increase in
academic achievement



100% increase in staff collegiality
and positive school climate



30% increase in healthy social and
emotional skillsets for staff and students



Our Professional Development team will personalize district-level and school-level **implementation plans** specific to your needs, concerns and budget.

Lasting results for achievement, self-regulation, community-building and teacher retention.

Award-winning implementation tools and eLearning, *Elevate* annual conference, specialty workshops, immersive Conscious Discipline Institutes, and private events.

Begin your transformational journey.

Contact Transformation@ConsciousDiscipline.com

ConsciousDiscipline.com





is now in the process of bringing another proposal to the community's voters.

"You need not just a long-term plan for bond dollars, but for facilities and equipment in general and how you're going to continue to support the purchases after bond dollars are gone," Klan says.

Hot topics for tech leadership

When it comes to replacing edtech, Klan says, consider the Chromebook. The ultra-popular laptops last about four years while districts often wait seven to 10 years to put a bond proposal on the local ballot. That's why Livonia has a 10-year technology plan that details how long every piece of equipment will last. During budgeting season, this helps everyone stay on top of what will need to be replaced and the new purchases the district will need to make.

The exercise doesn't necessarily identify the funding for future expenses but it does help tech leaders spread costs out over different fiscal periods. "School districts, we're not known for spending lavishly. We tend to use equipment to its bitter end," Klan continues.

Another bond essential is building trust, which Klan says he believes Livonia has established in spending the proceeds from the 2014 package. A pleasant surprise has been some of the systems installed back then have lasted longer than expected. The district's communications department also shares with the public the innovative ways Livonia's students and teachers are using technology.

"When you have a good track record, the community knows they can trust you when you're saying, 'This is

what we're doing,'" he says.

Tech leaders are building new schools

Cunning and the IT team have been intimately involved from day one as Pflugerville ISD's architects designed its next new elementary school, which is set to open in the fall. Cunning has tried to review every iteration of the blueprints with an eye toward standardization that will allow teachers to go anywhere in the building and know how to use the projectors and every other piece of technology.

Designing spaces that can be used flexibly is another priority. "We always have to think five years ahead for where technology is heading," Cunning points out. "If architects design a room that's going to be a closet, it will probably be somebody's office in two years so we make sure there's ventilation and AC so it can be converted. Financially, it's better to do all that up front."

And, of course, a school can never have enough Wi-Fi. These days, it's critical for tech teams to guide architects in maximizing outdoor Wi-Fi capacity. There also needs to be space for cameras—and the all-important network connection points—in more places; for special education and security, in particular, Cunning explains.

Plus, no detail is small. In one of Pflugerville's construction projects, there was an issue with the conduits being too small to accommodate HDMI cables. "You have to look at the drawings," she concludes. "The architects want to build schools, make them pretty and come in at budget. We're trying to build schools for the next five years. Cutting costs winds up costing more to fix in the long run." DA



12 things school leaders should stop doing right now

Veteran educator, leadership coach and author Jimmy Casas shares his experience and insights on how to excel as a successful leader in K12 education.

BY JIMMY CASAS

Several years ago, I was part of a group discussion where a building principal shared that he had been called to the superintendent's office. You could tell by the tone in his voice that he was a bit nervous about why his superintendent had requested the meeting. He shared that it wasn't the first time he had been called in to have "a talk." This got me thinking about how often we behave in similar ways (both intentionally and unintentionally) as building and district leaders when it comes to managing conversations and our decisions, and



the negative impact this can have on the overall culture of any organization. Please know I share these with you because, at one time or another, I have acted in the manner I describe below, even though my intentions were to want to be better, not only for members of my school community but for my growth as a leader. As I grew and matured into the role of a building principal, I did my best to learn from my mistakes and not repeat them, knowing full well I would fall short at times. As a building or district leader here are a few things you might want to stop doing right now. Let's begin by addressing one important step—STOP:

1. Calling staff to your office without offering some explanation of what the meeting will entail. This causes a person's anxiety level to increase because, from the moment they receive notice, their mind will begin to swirl with possibilities of what the meeting is about. And in most cases, people will think the worst.

2. Making excuses when you fail to follow up. Understand that when you don't get back to people in a timely fashion it gives others the impression that you are not organized or, in some instances, that their needs are not important to you.

3. Holding faculty meetings for the sake of just holding them. Unless you have a specific purpose to bring your team together, consider passing on the meeting and showing them how much you value their time by giving it back to them.

4. Talking negatively about your staff to other staff. Speaking negatively about others actually says more about you than it does about the people you are singling out. Besides, you are kidding yourself if you think your comments won't get back to those you are gossiping about.

5. Allowing the adults in your school to bully other staff. This is one of the biggest issues facing school improvement initiatives today. We cannot cultivate a high-performing learning environment in our schools if staff is intimidating their own colleagues through their words or actions. This type of negative behavior should never be tolerated and must be addressed.

6. Using the word "they" when referring to other members of your school community, especially when things are not going well or we are not happy about an outcome. Focus more on "we" when celebrating something positive or trying to work through any significant challenge.

"As I grew and matured into the role of building principal, I did my best to learn from my mistakes and not repeat them, knowing full well I would fall short at times."

7. Making assumptions. It is never a good idea to go into a conversation or a situation believing you know more than you actually do. This has all the potential to create trust issues so avoid doing so at all costs. If you want to know what the issue or dilemma is really about, simply ask before you respond.

8. Getting frustrated when you think people are not following your directions to your level of expectation. Begin by asking yourself if you provided enough clarity. In

Let us help *your* students stay in school and succeed in life.



Communities In Schools partners with over 3,000 schools by placing knowledgeable, caring adults on site, inside schools to tackle students' nonacademic challenges. Interacting with students each day, these site coordinators give them connections and motivation – and resources such as school supplies, meals, access to technology, and more.

Working with school leaders like you, we create learning environments where all kids have an equal opportunity to succeed and are empowered to stay in school and achieve in life. Our partnership is grounded in an evidence-based model, specific to each school and community.

Learn how, together, we can make more success stories.
communitiesinschools.org/partnerships

Last year:

- **99%** of our students remained in school through the end of the school year.
- **97%** of our K-11 students were promoted to the next grade.
- **95%** of our seniors graduated or received a GED.



12 things school leaders should stop doing right now



other words, were your directions as clear as they could have been? If not, own it, regroup, and try again, this time focusing more specifically on what you want.

9. Expecting everything to go as planned. Working in schools can sometimes be unpredictable because the variables (students and teachers) are always changing. How you conduct yourself in these moments will either inspire or demoralize your team.

10. Responding to harsh and not-so-complimentary emails you receive with an email of your own. Recognize that these moments of frustration, blame or accusatory language expressed in written form by others who are not happy is often more about other external factors and have nothing to do with you. So don't assume or make it about you (see #7). Pick up the phone and call the person and ask, "What can I do to ease your frustration or disappointment?"

11. Asking your staff for feedback and then not doing anything with the feedback. If your staff gets frustrated because they don't think you did anything with the feedback and you think you did, then reflect on how you could have communicated more effectively so they would know the progress you were making with the information

they provided you. By taking action and communicating your progress, you will get people to be more invested and honest in their feedback because they believe that something positive is going to come from it.

12. Trying to manage and lead the school all by yourself. You cannot sustain this pace and do it effectively for any length of time. If you try, it will come at a heavy price—your health or your family. Both options are a losing deal for you.

There isn't a day that goes by in the work of a school or district leader that is free of challenges. The never-ending stream of problems and challenges that flows across our paths during the course of an entire school year can leave even the most positive and passionate leaders feeling exhausted and depleted. It is easy to get sucked into the daily trivialities that drain our energy and overwhelm us with a laundry list of things to do. So, what can you do to provide yourself with a little relief in order to stay fresh and energized in hopes of offering some of that positive energy to others? Maybe we are thinking about it all wrong. Rather than ask what we can start doing, perhaps a better question would be to ask, "What should I stop doing?" What thoughts do you have? I would love to hear about them. DA

Unleash your Library Superpowers

with our **FREE Back-to-School Checklist!**



Gear up for an extraordinary year ahead with our free, comprehensive Back-to-School Checklist! Designed exclusively for dedicated school library professionals, this invaluable resource equips you with the tools to conquer the busiest time of year with a triumphant start.

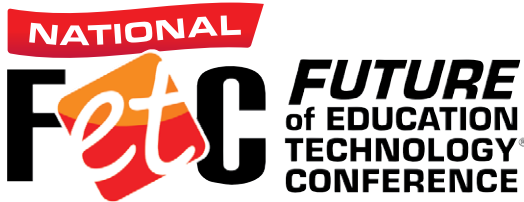
From managing your collection with lightning speed to supercharging your student resources, our checklist unlocks the secrets to unleashing your library superpowers. Embrace your role as a true hero and **claim your free copy today.**

Extraordinary libraries start with extraordinary checklists!



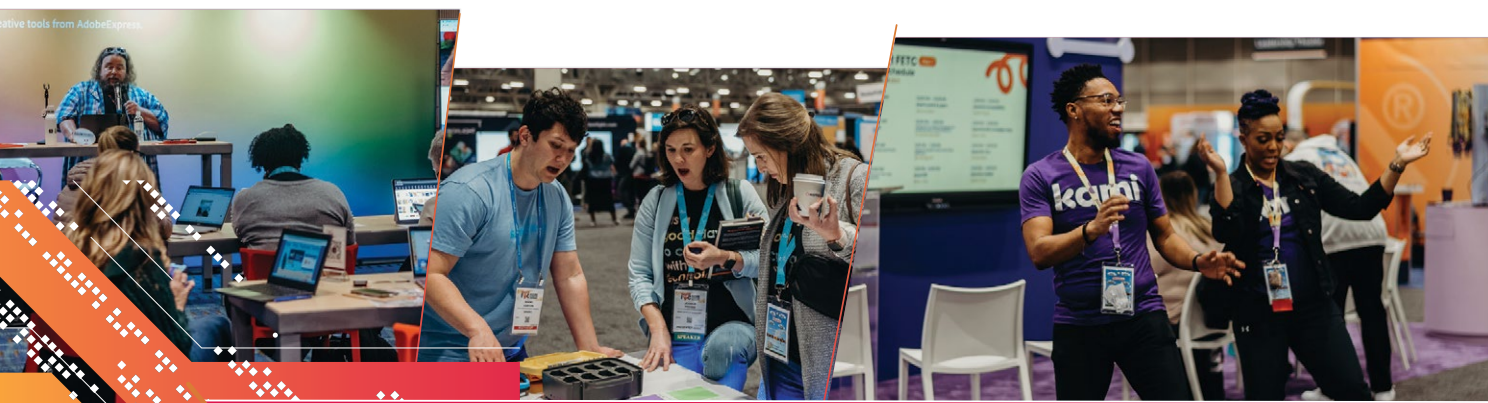
TLCdelivers.com/DA

Stability | Excellence | Unparalleled Service
800.325.7759 info@TLCdelivers.com



A DA District Administration Event

JANUARY 23 - 26, 2024
ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER
ORLANDO, FLA.
www.FETC.org



UNLOCK THE POWER OF EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY AT FETC

Future of Education Technology Conference is the premier event for education leaders and technologists. Discover emerging trends, cutting-edge solutions, and best practices to enhance your students' learning experiences.

The 2024 conference will feature thousands of opportunities to engage in thought-provoking discussions, attend interactive sessions, and explore the latest edtech solutions through our **7 conference tracks**:

- **Assistive Technology**
- **Campus Leader**
- **Coach**
- **District Administrator**
- **Educator**
- **Information Technology**
- **Library Media Specialist**

Unlock the power of education technology in your classroom, school, and district—register for FETC 2024 now.

**Register today with
Promo Code DASEPT23 to save 10%!
Visit www.FETC.org today!**



Reduce Device Downtime for Students

SMART LOCKERS POWERED BY
lockncharge cloud

FUYL Tower Smart Lockers give students, teachers, substitute teachers and others convenient and quick access to loaner or replacement devices.



24/7/365 Access to Devices

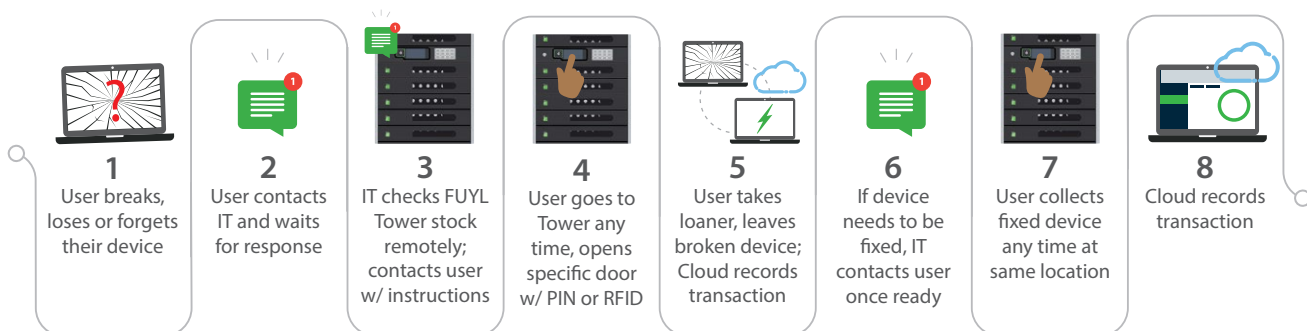
Device Accountability

Contactless Self Service

Device and Data Protection

IT Help Desk Ticketing System Integrations

The fastest way to get students a loaner device:



To learn more about LocknCharge Smart Lockers, Charging Carts or Stations, schedule a demo today.
www.lockncharge.com







K12's current partisan divide

These 7 defining studies shed light on what's behind all the points of contention in education today.

BY MICAH WARD

K12 education has undergone significant change over the past several years. One primary driver of this change is the continued and sometimes overreaching presence of politics in the classroom, an issue that has driven both teachers and education leaders away from the profession for good.

Over the years, extensive research has uncovered the pandemic's impact on student learning, the teaching profession and other important aspects that make up K12 education. One area of study in particular delves into the partisan nature of education today.

From controversies surrounding sensitive topics in the classroom to school safety reform, the points of contention are seemingly endless.

But how did this divide transpire? Last month, the Pew Research Center compiled a list of recent surveys and analyses from 2021-2023 that offer some insight into how K12 education reached its current state, specifically how it resulted in several partisan divides. Here's a look at the data it gathered:

Bipartisan split surrounding K12 education and its impact (October 2022)

In this survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, nearly seven in 10 Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents said that public schools had a positive effect on the "way things were going" across the nation. Conversely, 61% of Republicans and GOP-leaning respondents said they believed they were having a negative effect.

Perceptions of the U.S. Department of Education (March 2023)

Similar to the previous survey, most Democrats (62%) hold positive views toward the Education Department,

VAMOUSSE®



EFFECTIVE AGAINST SUPER LICE



PESTICIDE-FREE



NO PRESCRIPTION NEEDED

Stay Vigilant in the Fight Against Head Lice Outbreaks

Head lice often cause great stress and anxiety for school nurses, teachers, and parents when school is in session.

TREAT, DEFEND, and PREVENT lice, super lice and eggs with **Vamousse!**

Effective and reliable solutions for parents designed to help them successfully take control of lice and get kids back to school quickly.



TREAT

Clinically proven to KILL super lice and eggs BEFORE you comb with easy to apply foaming mousse.

- Pesticide-free **Lice Treatment Mousse** ends an infestation with 1 treatment.¹
- **Lice Treatment Complete Kit** includes treatment mousse and lice defense daily shampoo for ongoing lice defense.

¹Clinical trial conducted at Lice Source Services, Plantation, FL, Dec. 2015

DEFEND + PREVENT

For use by the whole family following lice exposure or for daily use even BEFORE an outbreak occurs.

- Pesticide-free **Lice Defense Daily Shampoo** kills recently contracted super lice² before detection.
- **Lice Repellent Leave-In Spray** repels super lice from hair at school and in every social situation.

²As shown in lab studies

VAMOUSSE®

For additional lice information and coupon visit Vamousse.com

From
 **ALLIANCE**
Alliance Pharma Inc

K12's current partisan divide

whereas 65% of Republicans reported “unfavorable” views toward it.

Where parties seek reform

Soon after the survey was conducted, Republican lawmakers criticized the Department’s priorities during a House Committee on Education and the Workforce hearing, according to the Pew Research Center. They confronted U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona about several prominent issues, including topics such as transgender students’ participation in K12 sports and instruction surrounding race-related topics. Democratic lawmakers, on the other hand, heavily focused on school shootings and school safety issues.

Thoughts and perceptions of K12 principals (December 2021)

More than three-fourths of Democrats showed a “fair amount” of confidence in their K12 principals and their efforts to act in the best interest of the community.

On the other hand, just over half (52%) of Republicans shared this feeling. Additionally, 47% of them reported having not too much or no confidence at all in principals, compared to just one-fourth of Democrats.

Where parties seek reform

Several prominent issues point to this lack of trust in America’s principals, recent surveys suggest, including topics like:

- Pandemic-related policy reform
- School curriculums
- School closures during the pandemic

Who should control the curriculum? (Fall 2022)

Classroom discussion has become a hot-button issue among education leaders and teachers alike, in addition to another important stakeholder: parents. In this survey, the researchers found that Republican and Democratic parents disagree over how great a role governments and school boards should

have on what public schools teach.

According to the data, 52% of Republican parents said they think the federal government has “too much” influence in what their child’s school is teaching, compared to merely 20% of Democratic parents. Similarly, 41% of Republicans said their state governments and local school board (30%) play too much of a role, compared to their respective counterparts (28% and 17%).

The survey found Republican and Democratic parents disagree over how great a role governments and school boards should have in what public schools teach.

Where parties seek reform

While opinions vary, much of the conversation stems from whether parents or teachers deserve to have the final say in what’s being taught in the classroom. For instance:

- 44% of Republican parents said they don’t have enough control over what’s being taught, compared to 23% of Democrats.
- 35% of Democrats believe teachers deserve more control, compared to 25% of Republicans.

Deciding which topics are relevant to the curriculum (Fall 2022)

Similar to the previous survey, respondents were asked to provide their opinions on which sensitive topics they believe are a crucial component of their child’s curriculum. For instance, nearly nine in 10 parents overall believed that their children should be taught about slavery. However, nearly 66% of Republican parents would rather their children under-

stand that slavery is in fact a part of American history, however, it doesn’t affect the current situation of Black people in society today.

Religion in public schools (October 2022)

Religion in K12 schools has been a point of contingency for years. According to this study, the majority (59%) of Republican parents believe it has a place in public schools. For instance, they believe teachers should be allowed to lead students in Christian prayers. On the other hand, 63% of Democratic parents disagreed.

Where parties seek reform

Several Republican-led efforts have already begun to ensure religion maintains a role in K12 education. For instance, in June 2022, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of a football coach who prayed with players after games. Texas lawmakers also implemented several bills this last legislative session that would allow for an increased presence of religion in public schools across the state.

School mission statements lack mentions of diversity and SEL in Republican areas (April 2023)

This survey sought to uncover the political nature of public schools themselves as evident in their mission statements. According to the data, Democratic-leaning areas (defined as areas where the majority of residents voted Democratic in the 2020 election) were at least twice as likely than Republican areas to include words like “diversity,” “equity” and “inclusion” in their mission statements.

Where parties agree

However, there were several instances where mission statements were quite similar, regardless of where the school was located. In both Democratic and Republic areas, mentions of students’ future readiness, parent involvement and fostering a safe and healthy school culture were apparent. DA



Alberto Carvalho:

“We’re in a new age of the superintendency”

“Be so bold in your approach to work that you actually invite termination for being so passionate,” says the superintendent of the second-largest district in the country.

BY MICAH WARD

At a time when superintendent turnover continues to reach unprecedented levels, leaders must ask themselves, “What does it take to be successful in 2023?”

Alberto Carvalho, superintendent of the second-largest school district in the country, Los Angeles Unified, would tell you to serve so aggressively, so boldly, that you might anticipate being fired. While it may sound outrageous, the reality is that if you can’t produce meaningful results within your first year as a superintendent, “the train will leave you at the station.”

Carvalho, who has led school districts with student enrollments exceeding 300,000 for the entirety of his career, says much of his decision-making is built upon a make-it-or-break-it mentality.

“Be so bold in your approach to work that you actually invite termination for being so passionate,” Carvalho says. He would frequently tell his boards at both Miami-Dade, where he previously served, and L.A. Unified, that he “was going to try every single year to get fired on the basis of doing something that is so strangely good for kids.”

However, you shouldn’t overestimate your reform efforts.

“You’re not going to have 10 years. I’m an anomaly,” he says. “You’re not going to last 10 years if you cannot prove compelling results within the first year and then augment them within the second and third years.”

This is the message Carvalho delivered to members at the District Administration Leadership Institute’s Executive Cabinet Retreat in Cambridge, MD, in July, as well as what he believes are the top leadership traits emerging superintendents must grasp in order to succeed in what he refers to as the new age of the superintendency. Above all, he values being a data-driven instructional leader.

“Don’t subscribe to the fact that you can easily delegate impactful, systemic, global instructional decisions,” he

says. “I don’t delegate those.”

Instead, use data in a way that “forces, invites and stimulates” your district into bringing research-based best practice ideas that have been implemented successfully in other districts.

In addition to these critical leadership skills he believes superintendents must learn, he says there are five principles he constantly offers to leaders that are proven to help them turn their school systems around.

1. Don’t treat everyone the same

“Develop a budget and school management protocol that differentiates investment, oversight and accountability on the basis of performance,” he says.

2. Tie funding to reality

“Develop strategic investments within necessary accountability where you’re not treating all schools, all students the same,” he says. “You need to provide additional resources in exchange for additional accountability driven by fair progress monitoring tools.”

3. Stop debating choice

“Choice has come. It’s here,” he argues. “That tsunami is already known. You cannot duck under it, you cannot outswim it, you cannot outrun it. You’ll die. How about this? Ride the top. Outcompete. Outperform. That’s how you win the battle.”

4. Reward teachers

Set fair demands as far as performance is concerned. For instance, in both Miami and Los Angeles, Carvalho won 21% increases in teacher salaries. Doing so will ensure your teachers are motivated while feeling respected by their district’s leadership.

5. Share your story

“Tell your story,” Carvalho says. “But don’t tell your story before you have results.”

“We as school leaders are not very good at telling our story,” he adds. “Rebrand your district, refashion your district and re-message your district.”

Finally, for those who are just entering the superinten-

See every student



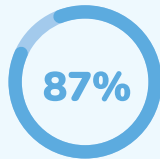
Nearpod provides instructional platforms that bring together the best of technology, pedagogy, and content so teachers can see and support every student. Nearpod is focused on empowering teachers, because teachers know their students best. Here's what Nearpod's 1.2 million educator community says about Nearpod's impact on teaching and learning:*

“Nearpod has elevated the way we teach. We have seen growth in student achievement on challenging skills.”

LaTonya Martin, Technology Director



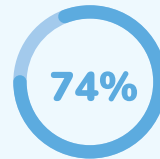
Improves student engagement



Improves the in-person instructional experience



Helps students connect to the learning material



Reduces the number of tech tools

Empower every student to learn and participate and every teacher to adapt and support:

- ✓ Tools to make any presentation, PDF, or video **interactive**
- ✓ 22,000+ vetted, **standards-aligned** resources
- ✓ 20+ **formative assessments** and dynamic media
- ✓ **Real-time insights** into student understanding



As part of **the Renaissance Ecosystem** Nearpod and Flocabulary deliver engaging instruction to accelerate growth and ensure every student builds the skills needed to succeed.

**Based on the results of a 2023 Nearpod conducted survey of 1,025 responses from teachers and education leaders.*

Alberto Carvalho: “We’re in a new age of the superintendency”

gency or maybe transitioning districts in the coming months, Carvalho recommends that you don’t let yourself be intimidated by the size or the scope of the district. Instead, do your homework ahead of time. Understand the needs and the critical areas your community is relying on you to address and develop a game plan early.

When asked what his preparation and mindset looked like to begin a career of leading school districts with student enrollments in the hundreds of thousands from day one, here’s what he had to say:

“The preparation—I go back to the things I value the most. Improving the skillset that you have as a leader going into the job is important. I don’t believe in this concept, ‘If I’m hired as CEO, there will be a runway for me to use in terms of perfecting my skillset to effectuate rapid change.’ That’s why ensuring your critical sets match

the ‘need’ set is important.

“I deliberated that particularly as I was making the decision about coming to Los Angeles. I knew what the finances were. I knew what the educational profile was. I knew who the advocacy voices were. So how do you prepare? It’s as much about having the knowledge of strategy and the skillset for the work as it is about having strategic understanding and tools in the toolbox and actions to deal with the condition that you’re going to be facing.

“Then, there’s this element that cannot be taught. I’m lucky that I have it, which is a huge personal chip on your shoulder that’s driven by a lived experience. No mistake about it. The fact that I was raised by a third-grade-educated father and mother, custodian and seamstress, that I grew up in abject poverty with six kids and was the only one who graduated high

school, immigrated after working in really difficult conditions to this country, was unaccompanied in this country, was homeless sleeping under the bridge blocks away from the office where I became superintendent. Not everybody has that. To me, that is a huge source of energy to do the work I do, because so many kids around us actually live that experience 40 years after I lived it, which I find unacceptable and inexplicable.

“When you have all that knowledge about effective leadership there to push yourself to format your general knowledge of pedagogy, budget, law, operations, human resources and technology in such a specific manner that is so relevant to the issues you’re going to inherit as superintendent, by the time you land, you’re already running at the pace needed, rather than asking, ‘How fast do I need to go?’” DA



Technology Leadership Academy

Virtual Cohort begins September 26, 2023

Learn how high-performance technology districts:

- Address digital transformation, safety, governance, and project management
- Develop effective cross-functioning leadership practices with key stakeholders
- Help prepare all students to be global digital

Space is limited, APPLY TODAY

www.DALeadershipinstitute.com | [@DALeadershipinstitute](https://twitter.com/DALeadershipinstitute) | [DALeadershipinstitute@etcnetwork.com](https://www.facebook.com/DALeadershipinstitute)

(561) 622-0352   



High
Reliability
Schools™

COACHING
ACADEMY

Achieve the Highest Levels of School Effectiveness

Lead significant, lasting change with the High Reliability School Coaching Academy. This customized professional learning format is **specifically designed for highly motivated school leadership teams** committed to fulfilling their school's greatest potential.

 **I would like to learn more**
MarzanoResources.com/MyHRS

 **MARZANO** Resources



Hung up on cellphones

Here's why regulating them in schools is both an administrative and a tech issue.

BY MICAH WARD

Since the pandemic, technology has proven instrumental in supporting academic instruction for students and teachers alike. But not all technology. Some are downright distracting, creating a variety of challenges for educators trying to keep their students engaged. That's why many leaders are cracking down on cellphone use this school year, including one organization that's recommending a global ban unless the devices are clearly being used for learning.

Last week, UNESCO, the United Nations' education, science and culture agency, published a more than 400-page report discussing some of the major flaws of technology in education, including how cellphones disrupt student learning. For instance, the report cites research that suggests a negative link between excessive and or inappropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT) and student performance.

"Mere proximity to a mobile device was found to distract students and to have a negative impact on learning in 14 countries, yet less than one in four have banned smartphone use in schools," the report reads.

As a result, they're arguing that smartphones should be banned in all schools to mitigate disruption because technology should never come first in education.

"The digital revolution holds immeasurable potential, but, just as warnings have been voiced for how it should be regulated in society, similar attention must be paid to the way it is used in education," UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay said in a statement. "Its use must be for enhanced learning experiences and for the well-being of students and teachers, not to their detriment. Keep the needs of the learner first and support teachers. Online connections are no substitute for human interaction."

Phones are "a distraction"

Some school districts across the U.S. have already enacted restrictive policies ahead of the upcoming school year, including Hamilton County Schools in Tennessee. The district's Superintendent Justin Robertson says it's been a

A large, stylized white number '8' is centered on a solid red background. The number is composed of two thick, rounded strokes that meet at the top and bottom, creating a classic, bold font. The red background is a vibrant, slightly darker shade of red.

Great minds think unalike.

Renaissance provides the right digital tools and insights to unlock the potential within every child.

Renaissance

See Every Student.

Learn more at www.renaissance.com

©Copyright 2023
Renaissance Learning, Inc.
All rights reserved.
619206 0723

Hung up on cellphones

long time in the making.

“Over time, we have seen the disruption caused by cell phones increase in our schools as more students have access to them,” he says. “In response, the call to address these disruptions from our teachers and administrators has increased as well.”

In July, the Board approved a new policy that prohibits students from being allowed to take photos or record videos of any kind while on school property, Local 3 News reports. Additionally, students in grades K-5 won't be allowed to use their phones during school hours and operations. Students in grades 6-12 can only access their phones with approval from their teachers.

“Until the approval of our new policy, principals in Hamilton County were responsible for establishing cell phone guidelines on a school-by-school basis,” Robertson says. “In the spring of this year, the Board of Education initiated the development of a district-wide policy to bring consistency across the district.”

Throughout the developmental process, he says district leadership reached out to principals for their input on what the policy should look like based on their experiences.

“We heard that student use of cell phones during class was a distraction,” he says.

As with any of the district's disciplinary policies, students who violate this new policy will be addressed in accordance with the district's acceptable behavior code to ensure that educators and administrators receive sufficient support in regulating smartphone use among students.

“Consequences increase for repeated violations,” Robertson explains. “For a simple violation of the policy, consequences could range from a teacher correcting the student to device confiscation and a family conference. Additional consequences could be added if the use of the device violates other guidelines in the Code of Acceptable Behavior. In worst-case situations, where persistent violations occur, consequences could include in-school and out-of-school suspensions.”

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the policy falls on building administrators and staff, he adds. But since its approval, he says leadership has taken the necessary steps to ensure everyone is up to speed ahead of the school year.

“It has already been discussed with all of our principals and assistant principals so everyone is on the same page with how the policy should be enforced,” he says.

Is it an issue for tech leaders?

Similar policies are used and regulated among educators

“Apps are designed to be distracting and addictive, and kids do become genuinely addicted to them.”

at the Princeton Day School in Princeton, New Jersey. Not only have cellphones become more distracting among students, says Jon Ostendorf, CIO at PDS, but so too have their school-issued devices.

“In our lower (elementary) school there are no phones allowed,” he explains. “In our

middle school, any phones must remain in lockers throughout the school day. In the upper (high) school, it is primarily up to teachers as to what is permitted in the classroom.”

There are several cases in which high school students can use their phones, he explains. But their uses are rather limited; for instance, taking a picture or scanning a QR code. Simply put, they're not a necessity for instruction.

“Of course, we have acceptable use and other policies that cover the use of phones,” he adds. “As far as what I hear from teachers, phones are a definite distraction. Even our school-issued, remotely managed iPads in the middle school have become more of a distraction. This seems to have gotten worse since COVID, perhaps due to the increased use of these devices by many for basic social interactions during much of that time.”

As a tech leader at PDS, Ostendorf says he has to be in the loop when decisions surrounding student devices and cell phones are made.

“Leadership in each of our divisions makes decisions regarding cell phone use,” he says. “Our academic technology team and I play a key role in helping inform those decisions. We also ensure that our ‘Acceptable Use Policy’ encourages appropriate use, and covers issues that may arise.”

Both their middle and elementary schools operate 1:1 with iPads, thus reducing the need for cellphones to be leveraged by students for instructional activities. Ostendorf says nowadays it's difficult to argue a case for allowing smartphones in the classroom.

“Apps are designed to be distracting and addictive, and kids do become genuinely addicted to them,” he explains. “Even the most benign notifications become irresistible distractions. In addition, they detract from the genuine social interactions that are vital for students in their development, particularly adolescents.”

“I know that people may argue for students to have phones from a safety perspective, but there are other ways to achieve safety goals,” he adds. “Of course, these issues exist for other devices as well. By managing the apps on our school-issued iPads and monitoring how they are used, we try to minimize these issues and optimize the benefits of technology in our classrooms.” DA



**ACCESS CONTROL
SOLUTIONS
IN A CLASS OF
THEIR OWN.**

In schools and on campuses across the country, safety and budget are the highest priorities—SALTO Systems access control solutions deliver on both.

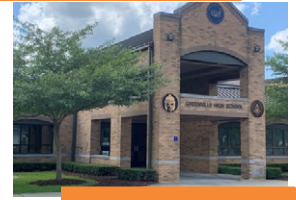
Learn more at salto.us

SALTO
inspired **access**



Pennsylvania district improves efficiency and staff productivity by modernizing transportation

Greenville Area School District seeing a variety of benefits from partnership with Transfinder



Finding ways to identify and reduce hidden costs through improved efficiency is a priority for most districts, but the task has a higher level of urgency for small school systems operating on budgets with thin margins. This was the case for the Greenville Area School District in Greenville, Pennsylvania, a rural community with an enrollment of about 1,200 students.

Identifying areas in need of improvement

Brandon Mirizio had been a certified public accountant when he was hired as the Business Manager for the school district in 2018. Right from the start, Mirizio says one of his top priorities was to find ways to improve efficiency, reduce costs and modernize processes anywhere possible.

“One of the areas we looked at was transportation, and we found that everything was still being done with paper and pencil,” he says. “From mapping out bus routes, to manually inputting student information, it was all done by hand. It was tedious and time consuming, and we knew there had to be a better way to do things.”

Mirizio says he was still researching his options when the pandemic hit in early 2020. When the district would later return to in-person schooling, the need for modernization was made even more clear. “The pandemic exacerbated the problems with our transportation system, because of all the additional things we had to do quickly,” he says. “We had to space kids out on the bus, send homework home, and create an alternating bus schedule. All of it was made much slower and more difficult because we had to do it manually.”

“We had been facing significant increases in transportation costs, and this made a big difference in keeping those costs down.”

Taking advantage of an unprecedented opportunity

Funding provided by the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund of 2020 presented an opportunity for Greenville to make some long-overdue changes. “One of the ways we used those pandemic relief funds was to purchase and implement the bus routing and logistics software from Transfinder,” Mirizio says.

Transfinder provides a variety of intelligent routing, scheduling and fleet maintenance solutions that optimize school transportation logistics. Districts can select which solutions they use based on their needs. Greenville uses Routefinder PLUS for routing and Viewfinder to monitor the bus fleet in real time.

“It has been fantastic,” Mirizio says. “It was a slow process at first, but only because we went from essentially having nothing to having a fully digital transportation and routing database. Using Transfinder has saved us a huge amount of time.”

Taking it to the next level

After the initial implementation, Mirizio says the goal was to go a step further to increase efficiency. “This year, by using Transfinder we were able to reduce our total routes by two, and eliminate the need for two buses, just by improving the efficiency of our existing routes,” he says. “We had been facing significant increases in transportation costs, and this made a big difference in keeping those costs down. In addition, we’ve been able to reduce some of our ride times, so our students don’t ride for as long, and drivers don’t have to drive for as long. That makes it better for everyone.”

Seeing a variety of benefits

Mirizio says the impacts have been wide ranging. “Our staff members’ time is so much better spent now, everyone is more productive, and all our data is easier to understand and evaluate,” he says. “In the past we would have to manually input bus numbers, routes and stop times into a document, to be printed out and mailed. Now, we can just run a report in Transfinder in a few minutes.”

“This is just the start, it’s an ongoing process to improve efficiency,” he continues. “There’s no way we could do any of this without Transfinder, and there are additional features and modules available in the platform that we want to explore. Transfinder has been wonderful to work with. They have exceeded our expectations.”

transfinder

To learn more, go to Transfinder.com/routefinderplus, email getplus@transfinder.com or call 800-373-3609



School behavior breakdowns

Why more leaders are turning away from restorative discipline and getting tougher again.

BY MATT ZALAZNICK

The pre-pandemic shift from zero tolerance to restorative discipline is buckling across K12, even years after the return to in-person learning, as educators continue to grapple with a surge of misbehavior in all grade levels.

Leaders in district after district, sometimes with prodding from state legislators, are now rolling back more lenient policies and relying again on suspensions and other measures to prevent disruptive behavior. The backlash is taking place even as data continues to show that Black students and other groups of children continue to face discipline that's disproportionately more severe.

A restorative discipline dilemma?

This summer, the Prince William County school board in Maryland revised the district's discipline policies to remove restorative-based conferences or circles as methods that educators can use for handling more serious misbehavior, WTOP reported. Those aspects of restorative discipline function more effectively as preventative measures, meaning Prince William County educators may rely on suspensions when responding to severe misconduct, district officials told WTOP.

Next door in Delaware, data show that discipline remains an area of glaring inequality in K12 schools. In 2021, 7% of the state's students were suspended but Black students accounted for more than 12% of those suspensions (compared to about 4% for white students). Black students represent a notably smaller portion of Delaware's

K12 enrollment, according to data cited by the *Delaware News Journal*.

A just-published analysis of a large urban district in California found that a small number of teachers are themselves disproportionately skewing discipline rates. The top 5% of teachers who most often refer students to the principal's office do so "at such an outsized rate that they effectively double the racial gaps in such referrals," an American Educational Research Association study finds.

"The positive takeaway was that the group of top referrers in our study represented a relatively manageable number of educators, who could be targeted with interventions and other supports," says one of the study's authors, Jing Liu, an assistant professor in education policy at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Where the law is changing

School districts in Nevada are no longer required to have a restorative discipline plan under a new law that also allows administrators to suspend or expel students without first trying restorative practices. The law lowers the age limit for suspension and expulsion from 11 to 6, the *Las Vegas Sun* reported.

And a new law in Kentucky requires school boards to expel for at least 12 months any students who threaten or pose a danger to classmates or staff. Schools can also suspend disruptive students who are removed from class three times in a 30-day period. Principals can transfer disruptive students to alternative education programs. DA



How much ESSER funding do you have left?

On average, states have spent only 54.5% of their ESSER dollars, according to a new analysis from Georgetown University’s FutureEd that breaks down COVID relief spending by state.

BY MICAH WARD

Federal COVID relief funds have proven themselves instrumental in ensuring the sustainability of K12 school districts across the country. But the question remains: Is every dollar being used?

FutureEd, an independent think tank at Georgetown University’s McCourt School of Public Policy, recently published an analysis breaking down COVID relief spending in each state. According to their data, spending has only slowed down over time.

Overall, more than 99% of the ESSER I funding allocated through the CARES Act has been spent. Seventy-eight percent of ESSER II has been spent. And as for the third round of funding, which expires in September 2024, only 39% has been spent.

The data also suggest that spending is quite uneven. Eight states in particular—Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas and Washington—have spent more than three-fifths of their allotment. States like Wisconsin, however, have only spent just over one-third of their total allotment.

On average, states have spent just 54.5% of their federal aid. But some states have far exceeded the national average.

According to FutureEd analysis, this is the latest snapshot representing each state’s progress in spending their K12 COVID aid across three rounds of ESSER funds (Note: the data do not reflect committed spending; for instance, long-term projects):

Spending progress in each state

- Iowa (73.8%)
- Arkansas (71.6%)
- Oklahoma (68%)
- Washington (66.7%)
- Georgia (62.9%)
- North Carolina (61.1%)
- Hawaii (60.6%)
- Texas (60.4%)
- Kentucky (59.6%)
- Delaware (59.2%)
- Illinois (59%)
- Idaho (58.8%)
- Ohio (58.1%)
- Kansas (58.1%)
- California (58%)
- Alaska (57.9%)
- Pennsylvania (57.7%)
- Florida (57.5%)
- North Dakota (57.4%)
- Nevada (57.2%)
- Missouri (56.1%)
- Michigan (55.8%)
- Utah (55.4%)
- South Carolina (55.2%)
- Colorado (54.8%)
- Tennessee (53.1%)
- Arizona (53.1%)
- Minnesota (52.7%)
- Connecticut (51.8%)
- Virginia (51.2%)
- Indiana (51.1%)
- Montana (49.9%)
- West Virginia (49.5%)
- South Dakota (48.3%)
- New Jersey (47.8%)
- Massachusetts (46.5%)
- Oregon (46.4%)
- New York (46.1%)
- Louisiana (45.7%)
- Maryland (45.6%)
- Maine (45%)
- Wyoming (44.8%)
- New Hampshire (44.7%)
- Mississippi (44.5%)
- Alabama (42.7%)
- Rhode Island (41.5%)
- Nebraska (40.7%)
- New Mexico (40.5%)
- Vermont (40.1%)
- Wisconsin (34.2%) **DA**

TEACHER ASSIGNED

Flexible tutoring controlled by teachers.

When students start to fall behind in class, Teacher Assigned tutoring empowers the educators who know them best to schedule face-to-face personalized instruction from high-quality, consistent tutors. Teachers get an extra set of hands while every student receives the support they need to close learning gaps and return to class more confident and engaged.



Teacher Portal

A one-stop hub for teachers to seamlessly connect with single sign-on and access their student roster, tutor request form, tutor messaging, collaborative tools, and progress reporting.



Face-to-Face Instruction

Using live video and a shared workspace, students and tutors stay engaged, use interactive tools, and collaborate online more effectively than ever before. Using live video and a shared workspace, students and tutors stay engaged, use interactive tools, and collaborate online more effectively than ever before.



Flexible Scheduling

Teachers are in the driver's seat. They can easily update students' tutoring schedule, the subject, and their learning goals. Teachers may also provide additional content and materials for tutors to use during sessions.



Progress Reporting

Teachers can choose to receive an exit ticket detailing skill mastery after every tutoring session. They'll find these and other data in easy-to-use dashboards.



On Demand Support

Students can seek help from expert tutors through our 24/7 live chat across core K-12 subjects. This also includes access to self-study resources, daily drop-in live classes, live StarCourses, and star-taught on-demand lessons.





Making the grade

Can districts get fully staffed before the new school year begins?

BY MATT ZALAZNICK

There are just more than 260,000 students in Broward County, Florida, and about 1,300 public school jobs available there as the 2023-2024 school year approaches. The School District of Philadelphia, with less than half that number of students, has almost as many vacancies. Metro Nashville Public Schools, with about 86,000 students, has 900 open school jobs.

Broward County is recruiting teachers, bus drivers, counselors, custodians and many of the other K12 positions that have been hit by shortages. Principals and other staff are hiring candidates on-the-spot at the district's summer job fairs. In Philadelphia, more than 300 candidates attended the district's first job fair earlier this summer, which was geared toward teacher and support staff positions.

Philadelphia administrators hope to hire about 300 new teachers before the first day of school, WHYY reported. "We are set up to be able to get them to apply, to complete their testing, complete interviewing, get them on the path so they can start getting processed for hiring," Terri Rita, Philadelphia's deputy chief of talent, told WHYY. The district has about 95% of the teaching staff it needs, 95% of the secretaries and 96% of the cleaners, Rita added.

Metro Nashville Public Schools still needs around 400 teachers for the first day of school, with the biggest shortages in special education, English learners, math and science, News Channel 5 reports. The district recently saw record attendance at one of its job fairs, with some candidates "coming from as far away as New York," Brigitte Tubbs-Jones, Metro Nashville's director of talent acquisition, told the station.

Favorable school jobs forecast?

As superintendents and their teams know all too well, the pandemic only worsened K12's labor shortages, from classrooms to cafeterias to central office. "A year ago, I told my team, 'It's scary to think about what staffing is going to look like a year from now,'" Matthew Gutierrez, superintendent of Seguin ISD in Texas told *District Administration*. "It's even scarier to think about what staffing is going to look like a year from now."

But there are signs of hope this summer. The first day of school at Tuloso Midway ISD near Corpus Christi, Texas, was Monday and leaders there told KIII.tv.com that "this year has been the best hiring season since the COVID-19 pandemic."

Education officials in Kansas are looking on the bright side of the state's record number of open teaching positions. This spring's 1,634 vacancies are indeed the highest ever but—after a few years of sharp increases in shortages—aren't much higher than fall 2022's 1,628 vacancies, the *Topeka Capital-Journal* points out.

"I'm going to choose to be positive about this because this has really been the first time that we've kind of balanced," Shane Carter, director of the state's licensure division, said, according to the *Capital-Journal*. "We didn't have a huge increase, so I hope this indicates that we've reached our ceiling for vacancies."

Still, half of the state's vacancies represent positions that administrators filled with candidates who aren't fully qualified for the classroom, the *Capital-Journal* explains. DA



We are your partners in educator development!

This has been a challenging season in school systems. Our team has lived it too, so we know what it takes to offer meaningful, relevant, and enduring professional learning.

And when we say partner, we mean it! All our offerings include follow-up implementation coaching, technical assistance, or a strategic planning document to make the learning last!

Here's some of what we've done in schools...

- Trauma-Responsive Habits and Structures
- SEL - It's not just for students!
- Brain Science 101 - How a little bit of brain science can go a long way in teaching, learning, and managing classrooms.
- We know we need to build relationships - but HOW?!
- Making Strategic Shifts - Leveraging what we can to achieve the results we want and students need!

...what might we construct with you?



Looking for another way to support teachers?

Check out our Daily Decompress Journal, a tool designed to help staff plan, reflect, and decompress at the end of each day to cultivate wellbeing and relieve stress!

View it on our website or search for it on Amazon!

Visit www.constructedfirm.co to schedule a free consultation!

3 tips for K12 leaders from a data scientist

This is how administrators develop communication strategies to address individual student needs and empower parents as active stakeholders in their child's educational journey.

BY JOY SMITHSON

According to research, superintendents are eager to have more information to make data-informed decisions and ensure the success of the students in their districts. A survey conducted in 2022 by the Data Quality Campaign and The School Superintendents Association revealed that 98% of respondents believed that “better access to data would help them be more confident in their ability to make informed decisions for their districts.”

How can superintendents establish systems and processes that help them use data efficiently and provide better support to students? As a data scientist, I collaborate with districts, schools and administrators across the country, assisting them in extracting actionable insights from their data to enhance communication and pave the way for improved student outcomes.

Below are three tips for K12 schools and districts on effectively using data to support student success:

Use data to enhance communication with families

Leveraging student data to improve communication with parents is a powerful strategy for educators seeking to cultivate stronger relationships and enhance student outcomes. Caregivers are allies in understanding students' home life and extending opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

Student data can also provide valuable insights into communication

gaps between teachers and parents. By analyzing parent-teacher engagements, administrators can identify families who haven't been contacted for the year, determine whether or not communication is shared, and track methods of engagement. Understanding these trends enables administrators to tailor communication strategies to individual needs to support more meaningful conversations between their schools and families.

Consolidate data to get the whole picture

Every school district has various sources of student and school data—from grades and attendance to state assessments, benchmarks, and discipline logs—often stored on different platforms and even in manually updated spreadsheets. Big-picture trends and areas that need attention are easily overlooked when data lives in separate silos. Adopting school analytics and communications platforms that integrate with existing district systems and data sources enables educators to view all this information in a unified, live dashboard and do more with the data the district is already investing in.

Having data all in one place paints a more complete picture of students' and schools' educational standing. When a single platform displays exam and attendance data together, for instance, administrators can identify chronically absent students and simultaneously see the impact of these absences on academic out-

comes. At-risk profiles can become more nuanced, to include more than one criterion, and the relationships between variables can be explored and revealed.

Promote data literacy and transparency

How administrators communicate with parents and families about data matters. Many parents may feel overwhelmed by complex educational terminology or struggle to interpret student data. To build trust and encourage effective collaboration, district administrators should try to share data with parents and caregivers in a clear and accessible manner, focusing on what the data means for their children.

When reviewing a student's record with a caregiver, it is crucial to explain any key terms or metrics and provide guidance on how they can use this information to support their child's learning.

Moreover, communicating with caregivers about student data in their native language is critical. Communication platforms with built-in translation capabilities can ensure more meaningful and clear communication with all student families.

With data-driven communication strategies, district administrators can effectively address individual student needs, share progress updates and empower parents as active stakeholders in their child's educational journey. **DA**



Joy Smithson is a data scientist at The SchoolStatus Group, where she works with districts all over the country to help educators use data to inform decisions and support student success.



**SCHOOL
OUTFITTERS®**

1-800-260-2776

| www.SchoolOutfitters.com



Create spaces that support learning recovery

We'll help turn your ESSER funds into engaging spaces

At School Outfitters, our project experts are ready to help your school make the most of its ESSER funds.

We'll work closely with you to outfit school spaces that address the unique needs of your students and staff.

And with our ready-to-ship inventory, you can be sure your ESSER funds project will get done on time and on budget.



Building a CTE space?

Scan now to see our new vocational product assortment.

What makes us different



Purchasing compliance

Easily navigate your state's ESSER purchasing requirements with our expert guidance.



Ready-to-ship inventory

Find the products you need, in stock and ready to ship.



Objective-driven space planning

Plan your spaces around your specific educational goals.



Multi-phase project management

Work with experts who know how to manage large, complex projects.



Hassle-free installation

Tap into our network of reliable installers for customized installation.

Are there more risks or rewards for K12?

With AI like ChatGPT, teachers can cut down the hours they spend creating lessons and ensure those lessons accommodate the diversity of their students.

BY AARON RAFFERTY

With every new technological advancement, there is controversy in the classroom—once, it was the introduction of calculators; now, it's AI and education. Decades ago, teachers would tell their students things like, “You will not have access to a calculator whenever you need it.” But then smartphones came along.

With the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, many education professionals are leery of incorporating artificial intelligence in the classroom. Yet, many others are embracing this new technology and encouraging their peers to teach students to use it responsibly and ethically, just as they had to with the calculator.

The good: Inclusion, diversity, and equity

Teachers hold many jobs as the lead in their classrooms. Not only do they create lesson plans, grade assessments and provide feedback on those assessments, but they must also continuously build rapport with their students (and students' parents), administrators and fellow teachers. They are also tasked with incorporating accommodations for their students and preparing them for standardized testing—all while teaching them life skills for when they leave the classroom.

This is just the tip of the iceberg of what teachers do. With AI like ChatGPT, teachers can cut down the

hours they spend creating lessons and ensure those lessons accommodate the diversity of their students. For instance, AI can help teachers write one version of a lesson and revise it for students in need of custom accommodations, such as those who are learning English as a second language or who have specific learning disabilities.

Sometimes, the different levels of accommodation—i.e., “below grade level,” “at grade level,” and “above grade level”—can be difficult and too broad for some students to understand how they compare academically to their peers. AI can enhance educational equity by offering learning experiences personalized to each student. This approach can help bridge the gap for students who may have faced disadvantages due to their specific learning needs or background.

For example, students with hearing impairments can benefit from the AI's ability to generate real-time transcriptions of classroom discussions, ensuring they can access essential information. Similarly, non-native English speakers can receive translations and language support from AI, allowing them to actively participate in classroom activities without feeling excluded or overwhelmed.

Additionally, because AI like ChatGPT is free to use, it can be utilized by school districts that lack proper funding or resources to provide their students with a high-quality education. This can help narrow de-

mographic gaps in education, such as those between urban and rural districts, or between developed and developing nations.

The bad: Everything used with bad intentions becomes bad

Due to technological advancements throughout the past two decades, students are able to learn more, and far more rapidly than before. And thanks to extensive research on best practices in pedagogy, education has become accessible to students with different abilities from different backgrounds.

However, when any tool like AI is used in excess or without the proper learning, it can quickly become a detriment instead of an advantage. As such, AI should not be used as a replacement for teachers or classroom education. Rather, teachers must take the time to teach how AI can be used in their classrooms to ensure their students know how to use it properly and what to look for when it isn't.

Of course, another issue some educators are currently grappling with is the use of AI to write essays and papers. While not every student is innately gifted as a writer or will need advanced writing skills in their career, teaching students how to write using AI offers a lesson in drafting, proofreading, editing and understanding that the writing process is not one-and-done or copy-and-paste. Moreover, teaching students to use AI will help them learn how to become better writers.

Nevertheless, it's important to recognize the potential risks and challenges when integrating AI in the classroom, such as data privacy, algorithm bias and the potential for ethically misusing AI. Educators and AI developers must collaborate and communicate to establish guidelines and best practices for AI in the classroom. **DA**

ACE[®]

ABA Software System

PUBLIC SCHOOL BCBAs

PROVEN PROGRESS

PROVEN CURRICULUM

ACE Software Subscription Includes

Training and Support from BCBA
and BCBA-D Specialists
Assessment and Teaching Materials
Unlimited Storage
Ongoing Feature Development
Discounted RBT Training

ACE Software Features A Complete Solution

Assessments
Curriculum
Data Collection
Graphing and Reporting

www.acenecc.org

A product of



The New England Center
for Children[®]
Autism Education and Research

**All proceeds go
to autism treatment
and research**

The Behavior Analyst Certification Board
("BACB") does not sponsor, approve or
endorse ACE, the materials, information
or sessions identified herein

5 keys to equity leadership for today's K12 decision-makers

Equity in education is every school and district leader's job. Yet, too often definitions are buzzy and lack practical application.

BY JUDONN DESHIELDS

The work of equity leadership is to ensure that race and socioeconomic status are not predictive of a student's success in life. A leader I admire says, "Absent equity work, it is too easy to predict a young person's life trajectory and outcomes based on their skin color or zip code in which they were raised."

Equity in education is every school and district leader's job. Yet, too often definitions are buzzy and lack practical application. If we struggle to define equity, how then can we operationalize it, especially as leaders?

1. Define equity by identifying inequity

Leaders often struggle to define equity beyond "giving students what they need to succeed." It may sound contradictory, but an equity leader is adept at identifying examples of inequity in their community. Doing so allows leaders and their teams to co-create specific strategies to dismantle these inequities and reverse their impact on student success.

School-level outcomes, broken down by student subgroups, are a powerful starting point. Equity leaders know and own their school's most alarming data points. They can not only articulate which student groups are in the most urgent need but also the school-wide strategies in place to support them.

2. Co-create your "why" with your community

All too often, the broader community is excluded from the process of defining and participating in equity work. This is more than a missed opportunity; communities beyond the four walls of schools and district offices must shape and carry the water of equity work.

To develop a clear understanding of who students are and what they need in the classroom, leaders need to first listen. Go into the community to conduct listening tours and empathy interviews. Home visits, while usually conducted by teachers and social workers, are incredibly illuminating for principals and district leaders, too. Being present with the community, in the community, ensures that leaders tap into the vast cultural capital necessary to capture the hopes, dreams, needs and priorities of the communities and students they serve.

When a community is denied a seat at the table, we create inequity in real time. Equity leaders communicate, "If we're going to do this, you have to be at the table with us. You have to have a voice and you have to be meaningfully included in the work." While it might slow the process, an inclusive approach to equity work ensures that it goes further and deeper.

3. Ensure cohesion and coherence

Where disparities exist between Black and brown students and their white peers, equity leaders mobilize

their teams around the "why" to identify root causes and what's in the locus of control for the school community to address.

Equity is not the work of one individual nor is it a singular initiative. Strategies should stretch from family engagement to curriculum design to mentorship and how schools handle student conduct.

4. Create a system of collective ownership

Equity work doesn't happen overnight. It also doesn't happen with one team or department.

Without collective ownership, equity strategy is relegated to minimally impactful initiatives serving as a Band-Aid for much deeper-rooted and far-reaching problems.

The same is true at the organizational level. Increasingly, school districts are moving away from a singular office of equity to an approach that uses an equity framework or policy to delineate specific commitments across the organization. Equity work has to live and breathe in curriculum and instruction, food service, and, most especially, in the superintendent's cabinet.

5. Strengthen your sustainability

The good news is that there is funding available to help with equity advancement in the classroom. Districts just need to know how to find it. Many districts source grants at the organizational philanthropic level.

District leaders can consult the U.S. Department of Education Equity Action Plan, but it takes time and energy to chase down these grants and steward them. It's more than finding funding: it's finding funding that aligns with your strategy. Finding and winning large philanthropic grants is competitive but as with equity work itself, it's absolutely worth the effort. DA



Serving schools like the future depends on it. Because it does.

We support student outcomes through more effective, comfortable, and sustainable learning environments.

By combining energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy programs with experiential learning opportunities, ***we help district leaders develop future climate leaders*** while achieving their building goals within their budgets.

Explore More at
trane.com/energyservices

TRANE
TECHNOLOGIES



TRANE[®]

To recruit and retain teachers, prioritize their safety

Four states have now passed “Alyssa’s Law,” which requires districts to equip schools with panic buttons and other silent alert systems.

BY RODERICK SAMS

In May, Texas and Tennessee became the third and fourth states to pass “Alyssa’s Law,” which requires all public school districts to equip schools with silent alert systems, such as panic buttons. The law was named for a victim of the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and was championed by education groups including Alyssa’s own parents. Lawmakers in five other states, including Oregon and Michigan, are considering similar legislation.

Since the return to in-person instruction, schools have grappled with an increase in behavioral issues—everything from a child disrupting a math lesson to potentially life-threatening instances of students fighting or bringing weapons to campus.

The issue has become so critical that schools of education across the country are now making safety protocols—such as active-shooter drills and trauma response—part of the curriculum.

Meanwhile, district leaders are continuing to grapple with unprecedented staffing shortages. Not only are fewer people entering the education profession, but teachers in many states also say they’re planning to retire or quit sooner than they’d originally planned.

To be clear, these two issues—school safety and school staffing—are intrinsically linked. A recent survey found that four out of 10 educators feel less safe in their classrooms than they did five years ago. Additionally,

a study conducted by researchers at Brown University found that a school’s climate, including its leaders’ commitment to safety, has a significant impact on teacher retention. It also found that “the degree to which students and teachers feel their school is a safe, orderly learning environment is of central importance for student achievement.”

A report from a commission in Virginia found that increased behavioral and mental health challenges among students contributed to lower job satisfaction for teachers. And Dr. James J. Fedderman, president of the Virginia Education Association, professed that the state’s teachers “aren’t given the resources they need most” to serve students like this.

Amid the bustle of an already busy school day, teachers in these situations need to be able to request and receive immediate support. If teachers feel safe and understand that they will receive support in an emergency, job satisfaction increases.

Solutions championed by Alyssa’s Law

As districts consider every possible way to make teaching jobs less stressful and more rewarding, many are considering investing in strategies that make their campuses safer. In some communities, that means turning to the same methods they’ve used for decades: hiring more school resource officers, deploying metal detectors or building fences around

their schools. While these solutions may make schools safer, they don’t equip teachers with the resources in hand to feel safer or, more importantly, to actually be safer.

Solutions championed by Alyssa’s Law—such as wearable panic buttons—not only empower teachers, but they’re also appropriate for quickly alerting authorities to a range of situations, from a student medical emergency to an unauthorized visitor on campus.

As staffing shortages continue in districts across the country, districts should consider making safety measures like silent alert badges a cornerstone of their recruiting efforts—to the point of discussing it during interviews. They should also take steps to make existing staffers feel equipped to handle emergencies in the safest and most efficient way possible. After all, teachers who feel safe and supported by administrators can focus their efforts on effective teaching, making them less likely to seek employment elsewhere.

As more states consider passing legislation like Alyssa’s Law, district leaders should ask themselves whether their schools are supportive, inclusive and safe for teachers and staff. Providing educators with an extra layer of security is a critical first step in creating an environment where they feel nurtured and protected enough to keep returning each day.

And that, in turn, creates the best environment for students to learn and thrive. **DA**



Roderick Sams, a former high school principal, is the chief development officer at

CENTEGIX, a provider of incident response solutions.

Seesaw



All-In-One Platform

Seesaw's All-In-One PreK-6 Platform inspires a love of learning by engaging all types of learners to show what they know and provide visibility into their progress.

Trusted and used by 10 million students, families, teachers, and school leaders worldwide.

- ✓ Multimodal instructional tools bring learning to life through interactive lessons
- ✓ Formative portfolio-based assessments capture student learning to showcase growth
- ✓ Inclusive communication features support home-to-school visibility and participation

Learn More



web.seesaw.me

Seesaw  Keeps everyone in the learning loop

How to ensure each student believes they are a math person

All students are powerful mathematical thinkers, but they need to believe they are capable to succeed.

BY AMBER GARDNER

We live in a country with many people who say, “I’m not a math person.” This is a myth we tell ourselves—we are all math people; we may just not have had the opportunity to learn math in school the way our brain is naturally designed to learn. The human brain innately thinks of math at high levels, and children are born naturally curious, powerful mathematical thinkers.

Unfortunately, some teachers unintentionally condition that natural curiosity out of students. For example, when my elementary-aged daughter was trying to make sense of multiplication she experienced confusion—not knowing that it is a natural part of being curious and a necessary condition for learning. This was a great opportunity for her teacher to harness her curiosity and increase her depth of understanding of what is happening when we think multiplicatively with pictures, words, numbers and symbols.

Unfortunately, her teacher stopped her curiosity and told her it was OK to find it hard and confusing because “Girls are usually better at reading and writing and boys are usually better at math.” That kind of message reinforces the myth that math is for some people, but not everyone. It halted her desire to wonder and make sense of the math.

A positive math identity supports more than just math skills. When stu-

dents believe they are math people, they become confident risk-takers. Embracing an identity as a powerful math thinker helps students develop the ability to problem-solve, think critically and make sense of their world—things all brains and all people can do.

Building a positive math identity in the classroom

If you have experienced trauma or anxiety around math yourself, name it, recognize it and lean into the discomfort of learning and healing to expand your conceptual understanding of mathematics. Math is so much more than calculations. Play around with math concepts, including thinking about what pictures you could draw to show why calculations work (i.e., why do we copy dot flip when multiplying fractions?) Playing with pictures to make sense of math turns the activity into a puzzle or riddle, rather than a “problem” to be solved.

Check your beliefs: do you really think that some kids can’t do math? If so, find out where that’s coming from and do the work required to get to the point where you believe what the research tells us to be true: that all brains are capable of learning, doing and making sense of high-level math, even our own.

The way you believe informs how you speak, which informs how you act. While the way you speak can be enough to plant seeds of doubt in stu-

dents about their own abilities, it takes more than telling them they are good at math to help them build a strong math identity. Instead, students need opportunities to understand and connect with math, which starts with the adults in their life truly believing they can.

Building a positive math identity at home

Just like teachers, parents can support the development of a positive math identity by believing that everyone, including themselves, is capable of learning math. Tune in to the ways in which you think mathematically every day and remember math thinking is far more than computation and arithmetic. Whenever you are thinking critically, designing, puzzling or creating a system to make meaning to make decisions, you are thinking mathematically. You can also look for resources, such as MathMINDS created by MIND Research Institute, that involve the family or community in positive math identity development.

Families can also build their children’s math identities by experiencing the joy of math together. Math is not just timed tests and flashcards. Families can play with building blocks, mazes and puzzles or build a fort outside; talk about the shapes and other visual-spatial attributes of the environment around them; and delight in what amazing engineers and mathematicians they are together. They can play board games to develop a love of math just as they would read a book to inspire lifelong reading.

Believing that everyone is a powerful mathematical thinker is a necessary first step, no matter what your connection to young math learners is. From there, get into the world, experience math thinking together, work to make sense of the world and embrace the joy of being curious mathematicians as a family and classroom community. **DA**

Addressing the exodus

3 ways to retain and support school leaders.

BY ROBIN WINDER

Over the past several years, the teacher exodus has posed a significant challenge for school administrators. However, recent data highlights the need for our concern to extend and encompass other crucial positions within the K12 workforce. Specifically, the roles of principals and school leaders. A recent research brief from RAND Corporation reveals that during the 2021-22 school year, a notable 16% of principals opted to depart from their schools.

This growing wave of departures among school leaders calls for our attention and a deeper examination of how we can retain a passionate and dedicated workforce. As a former principal, I understand how difficult it can be to navigate that position when the right systems of support are not in place. Now, as the senior director of instruction at FlexPoint Education Cloud and Florida Virtual School, I strive to create a culture of growth that sets clear expectations for our school leaders. Here are three strategies school and district administrators can use to effectively maintain a motivated school leadership team:

1. Deliver thorough training when onboarding.

The first step in retaining school leadership starts on their very first day with rigorous onboarding. In fact, in a recent onboarding survey, Glassdoor found that employees who rated their onboarding experience

as “highly effective” were 18 times more likely to feel highly committed to their organization.

This is why it’s important that your onboarding is intentional and covers key aspects such as familiarizing participants with your school’s culture, establishing effective teacher relationships and providing training on the systems utilized for teaching, data monitoring and student communication.

Following the initial onboarding, continue to provide training to new principals and instructional leaders during their first month. Focus on instructing them on which data to analyze, including classroom monitoring and individual student reports. Offer intentional coaching to the leaders, setting clear expectations for their accomplishments within the first 30, 60 and 90 days. The objective is to gradually integrate new leaders into the work environment by giving them ample time to seek guidance, receive feedback, and thrive with the necessary support.

2. Offer deliberate and meaningful professional development opportunities.

Professional learning should not happen one day of the year—it should be continuous and intentional so that your school leaders continue to grow and learn. One way to do this is by meeting face-to-face several times throughout the year to allow your school leaders to collaborate and present best practices. When they can hear what their peers

are doing, it can create innovation and excitement.

I would also recommend providing opportunities for your school leaders to hear from expert guest speakers that cover the latest trends and best practices in K12 education. Getting a third-party perspective can enhance the work they are already doing.

3. Establish a mentorship program.

Ensuring your school leadership team has a space to create connections with their peers is an essential aspect of ensuring they feel supported. When I first started as an instructional leader, I remember looking at my peers and thinking, “How do they do that?” This is why pairing experienced and new principals and instructional leaders will be a win for your school or district. This gives the new employees an opportunity to exchange ideas, observe work, receive feedback, and ask clarifying questions—not only when they first start the job, but throughout their career.

No matter how you go about developing a strong school leadership team, you must remember the most important aspect: make sure they feel supported. Your retention rates will naturally increase when you create an environment where school leaders feel like they are part of a community with a common mission in mind—to meet every student where they are so they reach success. DA

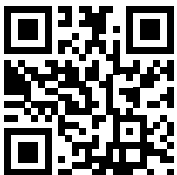


Robin Winder is the senior director of instruction for FlexPoint Education Cloud and Florida Virtual School.



Build the Back-to-School Momentum That Lasts All Year

By focusing on improvements educators say are essential for learning success, *i-Ready* is ready to help you transform your upcoming school year. From inspiring instruction and resources that accelerate learning to enhanced support for every student, we're always improving *i-Ready* to meet today's classroom demands. Discover what's new for you and your students.



Explore [i-Ready](#) with Our Extraordinary Educators and Experts.

Curriculum Associates



New Help to Secure Our Schools Today:

NAPCO School-Safe Now P.L.A.N.™ (Pay Later Act Now)



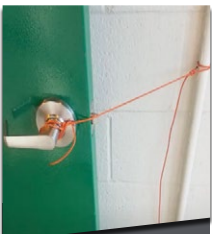
LockDown™ Locking

Retrofit Classroom Locks w/ Safer Inner Key & Lockdown Indicator



Door Access Inside & Out

Global Lockdown in Seconds Networked Locks with PIN, ID, Keyfob or App



Door Propping Alarms

Avoid unauthorized people & contraband gaining access thru opened doors



Alarms

Advanced Burglary and Fire Alarm Systems & Sensors



Enterprise Access Control & Video

Control Video, Alarms & Locking plus Visitor & Threat-Level Management



Speed First Response & Save Operating Costs

Update Any Alarms' Landlines to Cellular: Save Time, Lives & \$1000's/Year

Sadly, school tragedies have become an epidemic in America. But, instead of becoming numb to this 24-hour news cycle, as security pros, let's team up and do something about it.

NAPCO provides solutions for controlling access, managing visitors, threat-levels, and lock-down by door, classroom, or across a campus, in as little as a few seconds. We have a range of door-locking solutions, for easy installation, unmatched durability, vandal-resistance and, even those with lifetime warranties. We offer as life safety code-compliant security and fire alarm systems and security-system-reporting, that replaces obsolete, expensive phone land lines, with faster cellular/IP solutions, to speed

first response and potentially save lives, while saving schools thousands of dollars annually. And our enterprise security management systems can integrate it ALL, incorporating many existing systems &/or cameras, onsite or remotely from an App or web browser – inclusive of video, physical security, access control and lockdown by area, school or campus; + muster list accounting of those still inside.

»» To be sure school solutions can be implemented asap, we created the **NAPCO School-Safe Now P.L.A.N.™**, a pilot program, enabling schools to get the security they want now, but pay later when budgets allow**. For more info contact our local sales rep. or distributor.

If You Want to Help Us Help Secure Schools, Let Us Know
(scan QR code or call)



Alarm Lock | Continental Access Pro | Marks USA | Napco



1.800.645.9445 | salesinfo@napcosecurity.com
www.savischool.com



NAPCO School-Safe Now P.L.A.N.™ is a trademark of NAPCO. **Payment Terms & Max. Duration Period apply (9mos.). Ask For Details & Special Purchase Plan Agreement available at point of sale and/or from select dist. May not be applicable in all school districts/regions. This Napco Promotional PLAN/Program subject to change or discontinuance w/o prior notice.