schoology®

A PowerSchool Unified Classroom™ Product

The State of Digital Learning

2020

Thank You to Our Sponsors

Collecting thousands of survey responses is difficult! In the pursuit of furthering the collective digital learning knowledge-base, these sponsors helped us distribute our survey back in August 2019. We thank them for their efforts and dedication to moving edtech forward.

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A Note From Our CEO

At PowerSchool, we believe in the simple truth that every student deserves the best opportunities in life. That's why our mission is to power the education ecosystem with unified technology that helps educators and students realize their potential, in their way.

Now, nearly everyone with internet access is on at least one social media platform, new tech tools are popping up every day, and it's hard to imagine life without our devices. With our students being digital natives, it's up to us to meet them where they are. K-12 institutions across the world are investing in technology to help educators and students realize their potential.

In this research and data, you'll get a rare glimpse into the challenges, priorities, strategies, tools, and outcomes of 16,906 education professionals of all roles and backgrounds, from all over the U.S. The goal is to shed light on the current state of digital learning in K-12 education from as many diverse perspectives as possible.

As part of the research you'll see multiple data sets compared with whether or not respondents use a learning management system (LMS). We are firm believers that the LMS represents a shift in teaching and learning, and we are especially interested in tracking its use and adoption over time.

Learning management systems are transforming how students learn, how teachers teach, and how institutions as a whole access, share, and store information. As the LMS becomes more integrated with student information systems, assessment tools, and other components of the K-12 technology ecosystem, and adoption continues to grow, we'll continue to experience the possibilities of its transformative capabilities.

We extend our sincerest appreciation to everyone who participated in the third annual State of Digital Learning Survey. And thank you to everyone who helped make this survey possible through every step of the process.

As you proceed to digest the data and its implications, remember that the insights on the following pages have the power to transform the way your institution addresses teaching, learning, communicating, and collaborating for the good of everyone involved.

Hardeep Gulati
Chief Executive Officer, PowerSchool

Survey Context and Methodology

This is a comprehensive survey of digital learning in K-12 education today, conducted from August to September 2019. It considers the responses from 16,906 education professionals—96.9% coming from the U.S. and the other 3.1% from various countries around the world.

Note: 75% of participants in this study identify as teachers, while the remaining 25% are administrators. Roughly 35% of all respondents identified as using Schoology's LMS.

Why we did this survey

As the world of digital learning continues to grow, we plan to stay involved every step of the way. After all, we're pretty obsessed with edtech. And the more edtech evolves, the more there is to learn and explore. We can research digital learning strategies and follow edtech trends until we're blue in the face, but there's really nothing like gathering insights about what's really going on in education straight from the source.

Our intention is to empower you with enough data-driven information to forge ahead in the transformation of education and learning for our students.

How we did this survey

This survey was designed and executed by an expert team of former educators, former administrators, and content specialists. It took participants around 20 minutes to complete. We conducted the survey online, promoting it via email, blog posts, social promotions (gift card giveaways), and—of course—word of mouth. The data was crunched by our team internally and its story is told in the pages of this eBook.

No data was altered and it is presented in the most user-friendly manner possible, though we do take the liberty to explore deeper insights and context where appropriate or necessary.

Since not all questions applied to everyone, we used logic in our surveying to only ask questions that were relevant to the individual respondent. For example, respondents who identified as teachers were not asked about the top priorities for administrators. Similarly, if a respondent said he didn't use an LMS, he was not asked the LMS-related questions.

Top Takeaways From This Research

1. **Teachers are striving to use digital tools to increase classroom efficiency and save time**

2. **There's a critical need for relevant and effective professional development**

3. **Most schools and districts view digital learning as an integral part of their teaching and learning strategy**

4. **Districts are investing in the personnel and infrastructure required for effective digital learning**

5. **The need for required, formalized digital citizenship programs is spreading**

Top Takeaways From This Research

6 **Learning management systems have a positive impact on digital learning and, in turn, student achievement**

7 **Coding is here to stay, but robotics is on the way**

8 **Assessment management tools are proving their value for educators across the U.S.**

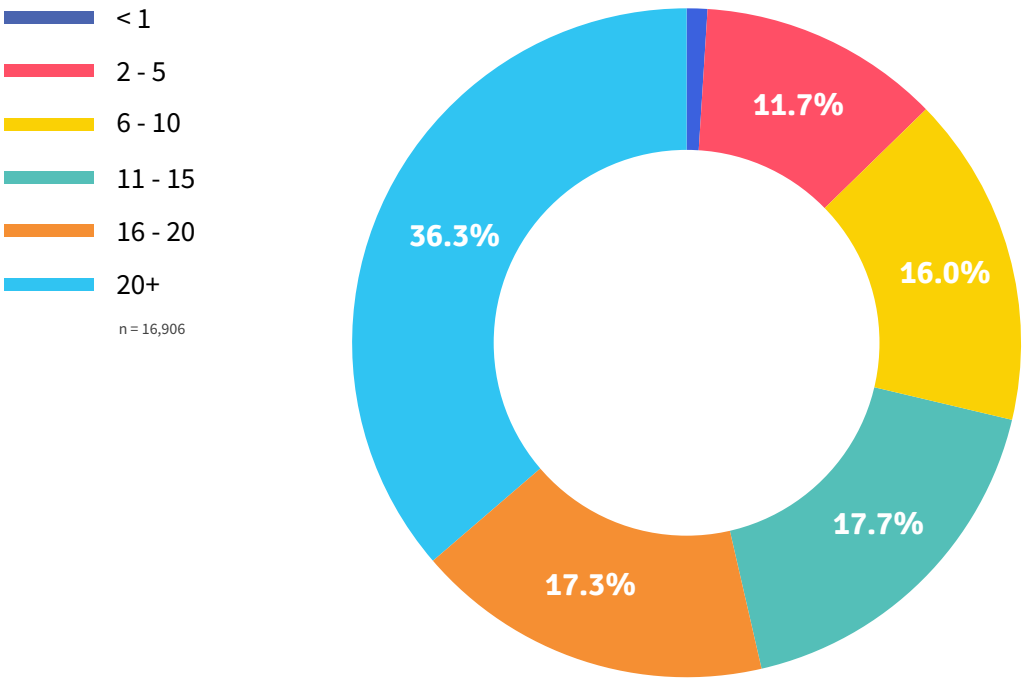
9 **Twitter is a hub for educators looking to expand their PLN and grow professionally**

10 **Lack of student access to technology at home remains a top concern for teachers, but growing 1:1 programs can help**

Survey Respondent Breakdown

Meet the Respondents

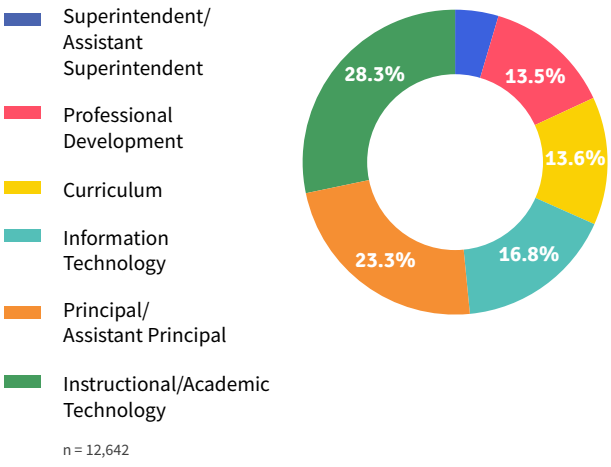
How many years have you worked in education?



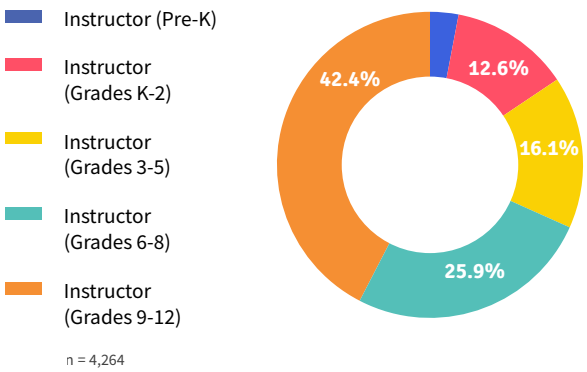
16,906 survey respondents

25.2% Administrators | 74.8% Teachers

Administrator Breakdown

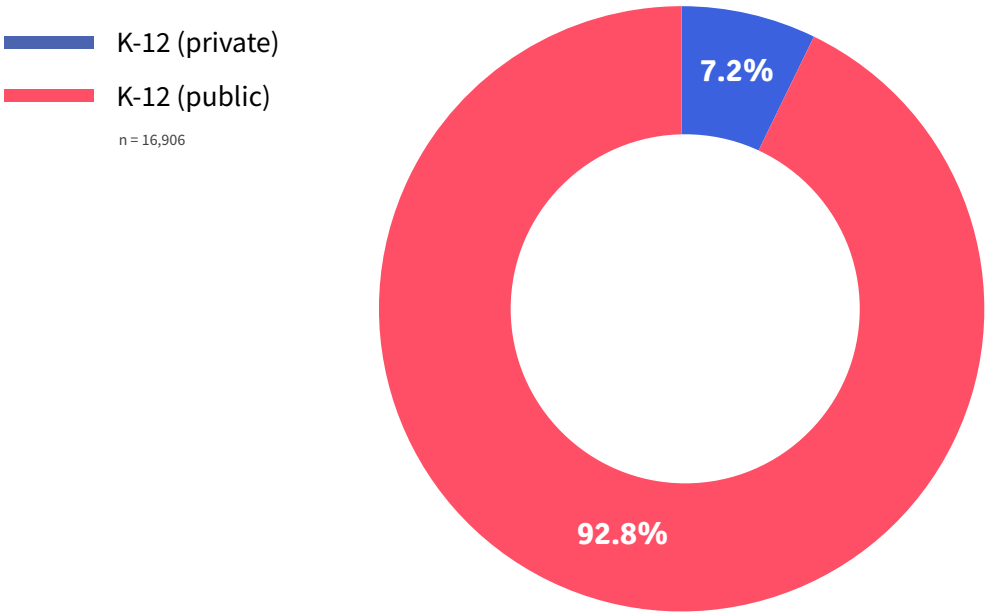


Teacher Breakdown

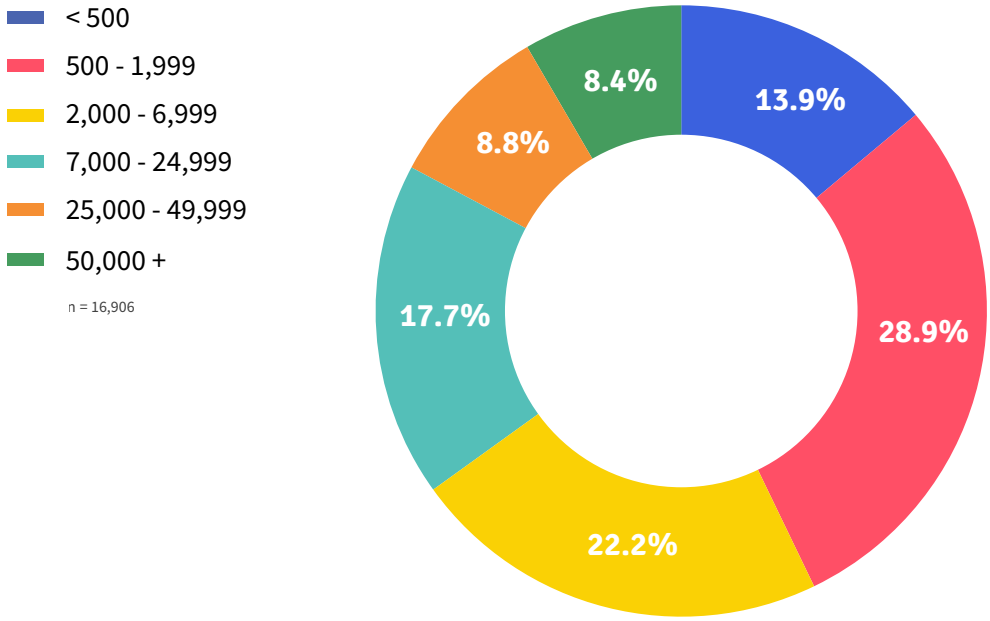


Sizing Things Up

What best describes your private school or district?



District/private school enrollment

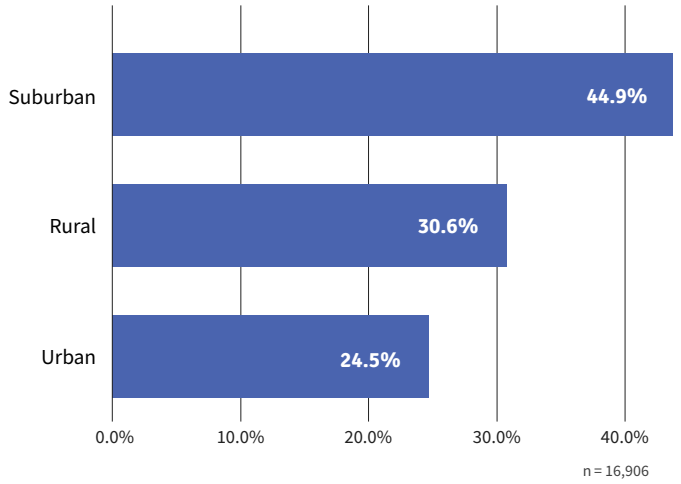


Insights from Across the U.S.

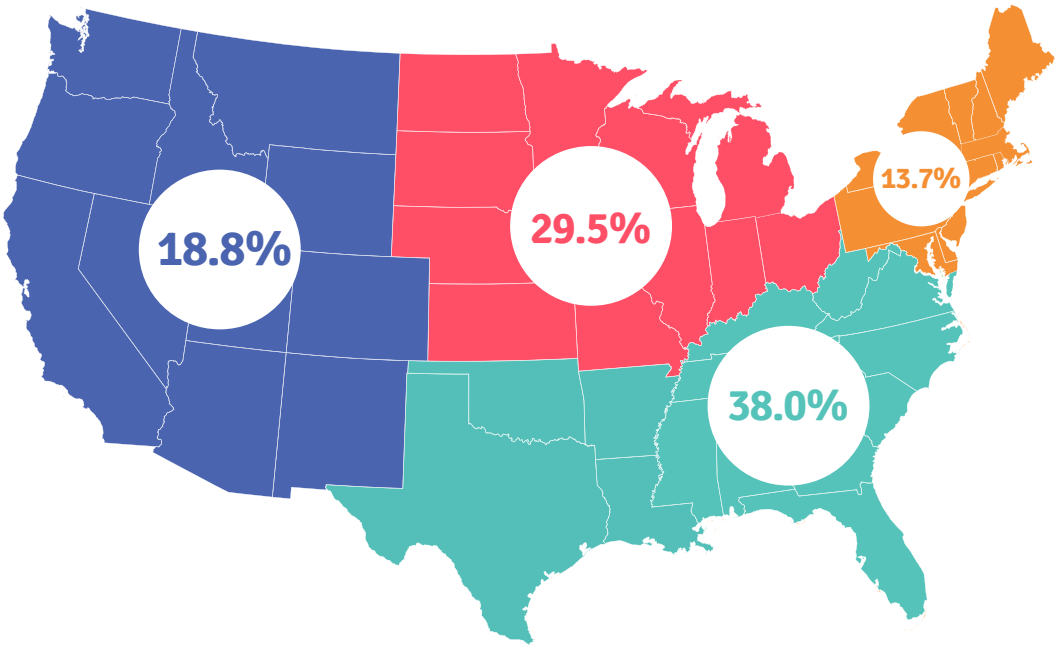
Top 10 states represented

1. Texas
2. Colorado
3. Minnesota
4. Ohio
5. Pennsylvania
6. California
7. Illinois
8. New York
9. Virginia
10. Michigan

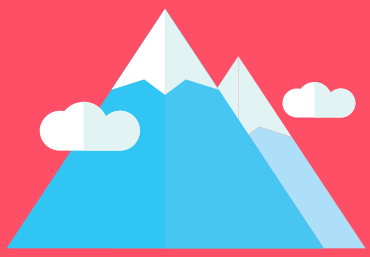
Area private school or district is located in



Representation of U.S. by regions



Note: 96.9% of all respondents were from the U.S.



Challenges & Priorities

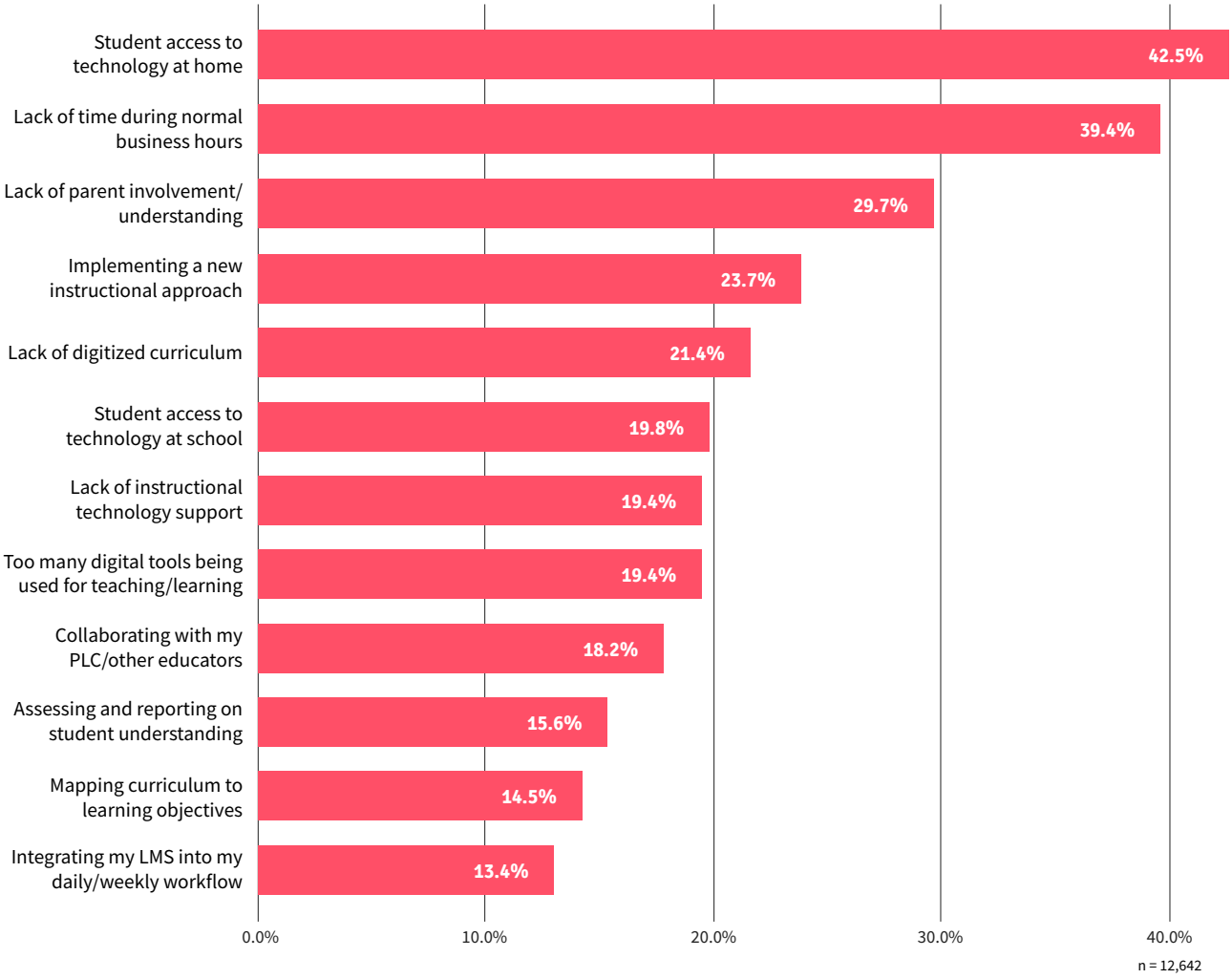
Top Challenges Teachers Faced in 2018-19

With so much on their plates, we know the challenges teachers face can range from one end of the spectrum to the other. In the 2018-19 school year, the top two challenges teachers faced were a lack of students' access to technology at home and a lack of time during normal business hours.

Compared to last year, the number of teachers who report a lack of parental involvement or understanding as a challenge has jumped from the #7 challenge all the way to #3. It may be interesting to explore the notion that teachers are noticing a greater lack of parental involvement as teaching and learning take on a greater digital focus throughout education.

What were your digital learning challenges in 2018-19?

(answered by K-12 teachers – respondents could choose multiple answers)



Challenges Teachers Faced in 2018-19

(broken down by grade level)

Rank	Instructor (Pre-K)	Instructor (K-2)	Instructor (Grades 3-5)	Instructor (Grades 6-8)	Instructor (Grades 9-12)
1	Lack of time during normal business hours 33.1%	Student access to technology at home 39.3%	Student access to technology at home 46.7%	Student access to technology at home 44.9%	Student access to technology at home 41.1%
2	Student access to technology at home 32.5%	Lack of time during normal business hours 37.3%	Lack of time during normal business hours 39.7%	Lack of time during normal business hours 39.1%	Lack of time during normal business hours 40.5%
3	Lack of parent involvement/ understanding 27.0%	Student access to technology at school 25.3%	Lack of parent involvement/ understanding 28.8%	Lack of parent involvement/ understanding 34.2%	Lack of parent involvement/ understanding 28.9%
4	Student access to technology at school 25.7%	Lack of parent involvement/ understanding 25.1%	Implementing a new instructional approach 22.6%	Implementing a new instructional approach 24.3%	Implementing a new instructional approach 25.0%
5	Lack of digitized curriculum 19.4%	Implementing a new instructional approach 20.2%	Lack of digitized curriculum 22.5%	Lack of digitized curriculum 21.2%	Implementing a new edtech platform 22.0%
6	Implementing a new instructional approach 19.4%	Lack of instructional technology support 19.9%	Student access to technology at school 20.0%	Too many digital tools being used for teaching/learning 20.7%	Too many digital tools being used for teaching/learning 21.4%
7	Lack of instructional technology support 18.4%	Lack of digitized curriculum 19.0%	Lack of instructional technology support 20.0%	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 19.2%	Lack of instructional technology support 19.6%
8	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 16.8%	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 15.4%	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 18.2%	Lack of instructional technology support 18.5%	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 18.5%
9	Too many digital tools being used for teaching/learning 12.6%	Too many digital tools being used for teaching/learning 14.2%	Too many digital tools being used for teaching/learning 17.2%	Student access to technology at school 18.3%	Student access to technology at school 18.2%
10	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 11.0%	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 13.1%	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 15.8%	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 16.8%	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 16.0%
11	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 10.8%	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 12.9%	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 15.3%	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 15.8%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 14.4%
12	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 8.9%	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 11.0%	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 12.9%	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 13.6%	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 14.0%

n = 12,642

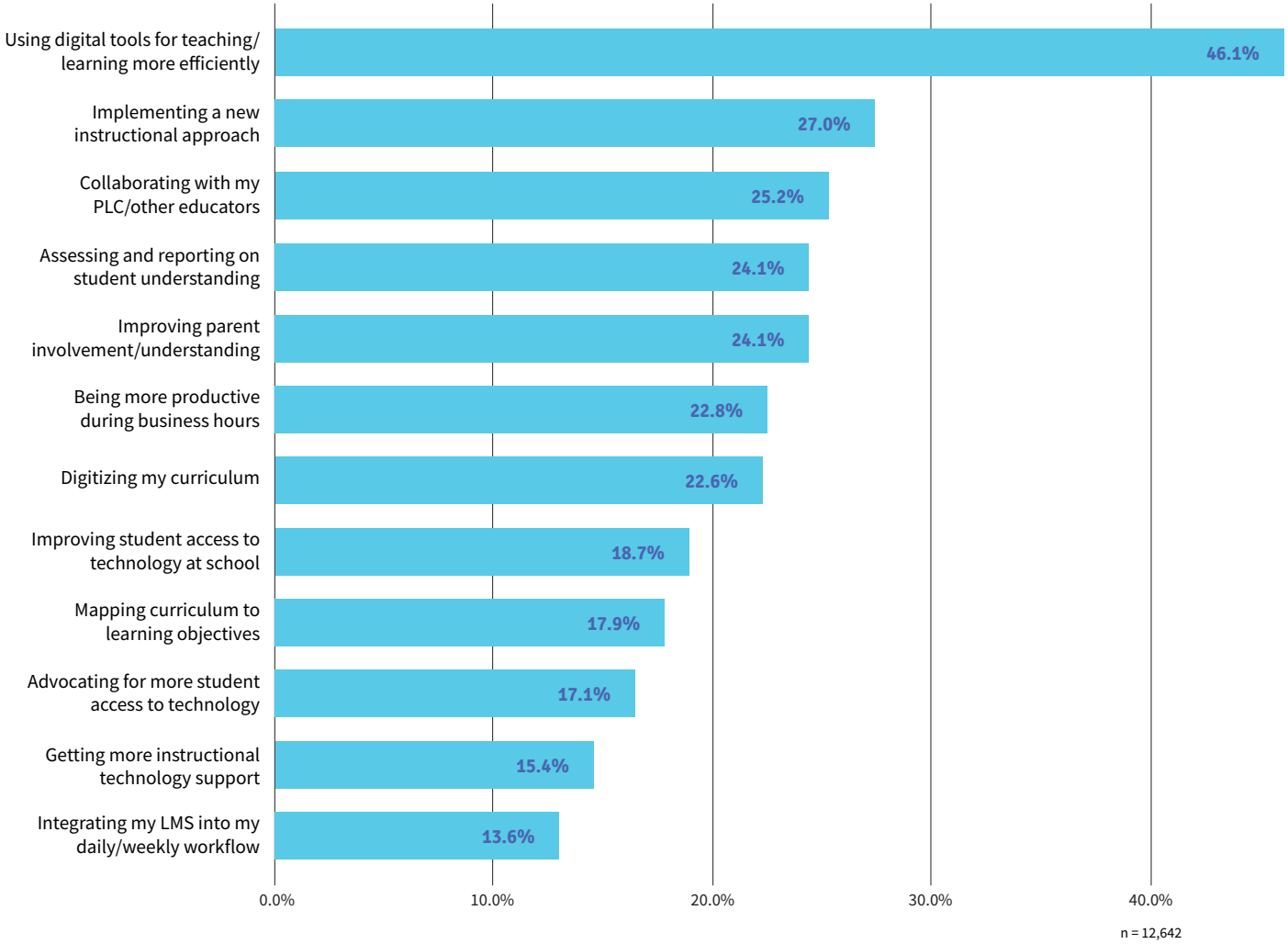
Top Priorities for Teachers in 2019-20

The top priority for teachers in the coming year is using digital tools for teaching and learning more efficiently. Last year, teachers cited implementing new edtech tools into the classroom as their top priority. We definitely see a trend here, and it's headed in the right direction as we move from focusing on simply integrating new digital tools to using them efficiently.

It's also interesting to note that the difference between the top priority and the next highest priority is nearly 20%, whereas the previous year's top two priorities were separated by a mere 4%.

What are your digital learning priorities for 2019-20?

(answered by K-12 teachers – respondents could choose multiple answers)



Priorities for Teachers in 2019-20

(broken down by grade level)

Rank	Instructor (Pre-K)	Instructor (K-2)	Instructor (Grades 3-5)	Instructor (Grades 6-8)	Instructor (Grades 9-12)
1	Using digital tools for teaching/ learning more efficiently 33.6%	Using digital tools for teaching/ learning more efficiently 42.8%	Using digital tools for teaching/ learning more efficiently 46.6%	Using digital tools for teaching/ learning more efficiently 46.6%	Using digital tools for teaching/ learning more efficiently 47.4%
2	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 26.5%	Improving student access to technology at school 26.6%	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 26.6%	Implementing a new instructional approach 29.2%	Implementing a new instructional approach 27.5%
3	Improving parent involvement/understanding 26.0%	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 25.6%	Implementing a new instructional approach 26.6%	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 26.5%	Digitizing my curriculum 25.9%
4	Being more productive during business hours 22.6%	Improving parent involvement/understanding 23.7%	Improving parent involvement/understanding 26.4%	Improving parent involvement/understanding 26.2%	Being more productive during business hours 24.6%
5	Advocating for more student access to technology 20.7%	Implementing a new instructional approach 22.5%	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 25.1%	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 26.0%	Collaborating with my PLC/ other educators 24.0%
6	Improving student access to technology at school 20.7%	Advocating for more student access to technology 21.1%	Being more productive during business hours 22.6%	Digitizing my curriculum 25.0%	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 23.9%
7	Implementing a new instructional approach 20.7%	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 20.3%	Improving student access to technology at school 20.8%	Being more productive during business hours 22.8%	Improving parent involvement/understanding 21.8%
8	Getting more instructional technology support 17.8%	Being more productive during business hours 16.9%	Advocating for more student access to technology 20.0%	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 19.1%	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 17.7%
9	Digitizing my curriculum 17.1%	Getting more instructional technology support 15.4%	Digitizing my curriculum 19.6%	Improving student access to technology at school 16.7%	Improving student access to technology at school 16.5%
10	Assessing and reporting on student understanding 16.3%	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 15.2%	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 18.8%	Advocating for more student access to technology 16.0%	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 15.3%
11	Mapping curriculum to learning objectives 15.7%	Digitizing my curriculum 12.3%	Getting more instructional technology support 16.2%	Getting more instructional technology support 14.9%	Advocating for more student access to technology 15.2%
12	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 6.8%	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 9.7%	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 12.1%	Integrating my LMS into my daily/weekly workflow 14.6%	Getting more instructional technology support 15.2%

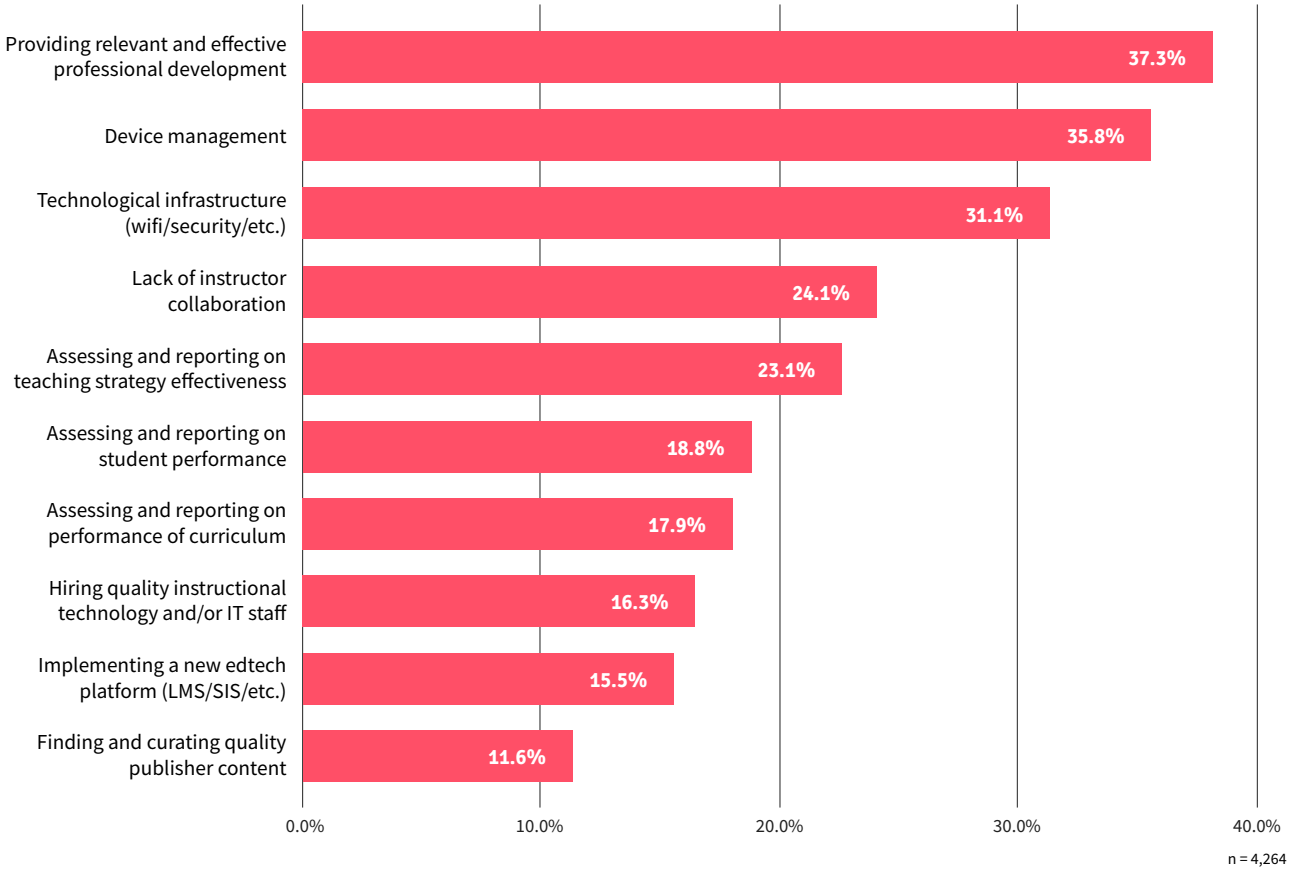
n = 12,642

Top Challenges Administrators Faced in 2018-19

Administrators are still burdened by the desire to provide more relevant and effective professional development. It's been their top challenge for the past three years, with technical infrastructure and device management continuing to hold the second and third positions as top challenges. Continual learning and development is a crucial element of the education profession, and the fact that administrators believe that PD isn't up to par is not something we should ignore. This is more than a cry for help, it's a call to action: Provide our teachers with the relevant and effective professional development they require.

What were your digital learning challenges in 2018-19?

(answered by K-12 administrators – respondents could choose multiple answers)



Challenges Administrators Faced in 2018-19

(broken down by administrative function)

Rank	Curriculum	Information Technology	Instructional/ Academic Technology	Principal/ Assistant Principal	Professional Development	Superintendent/ Asst. Superintendent
1	Providing relevant and effective professional development 38.2%	Device management 43.9%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 39.5%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 40.7%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 33.9%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 45.1%
2	Device management 28.8%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 41.1%	Device management 37.8%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 35.4%	Device management 31.0%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 33.8%
3	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 28.5%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 29.0%	Lack of instructor collaboration 30.7%	Device management 34.8%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 21.2%	Device management 32.8%
4	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 27.3%	Lack of instructor collaboration 28.8%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 28.0%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 27.1%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 20.7%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 32.3%
5	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 25.4%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 17.6%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 23.0%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 20.9%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 17.9%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 30.8%
6	Lack of instructor collaboration 24.9%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 16.9%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 18.4%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 19.4%	Lack of instructor collaboration 17.4%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 24.6%
7	Assessing and reporting on student performance 23.7%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 15.4%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 17.6%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 19.2%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 11.5%	Lack of instructor collaboration 23.6%
8	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 17.8%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 14.5%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 16.3%	Lack of instructor collaboration 16.1%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 11.1%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 22.6%
9	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 16.4%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 13.3%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 12.9%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 13.1%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 10.4%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 14.4%
10	Finding and curating quality publisher content 15.0%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 12.0%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 11.8%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 9.7%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 7.7%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 12.3%

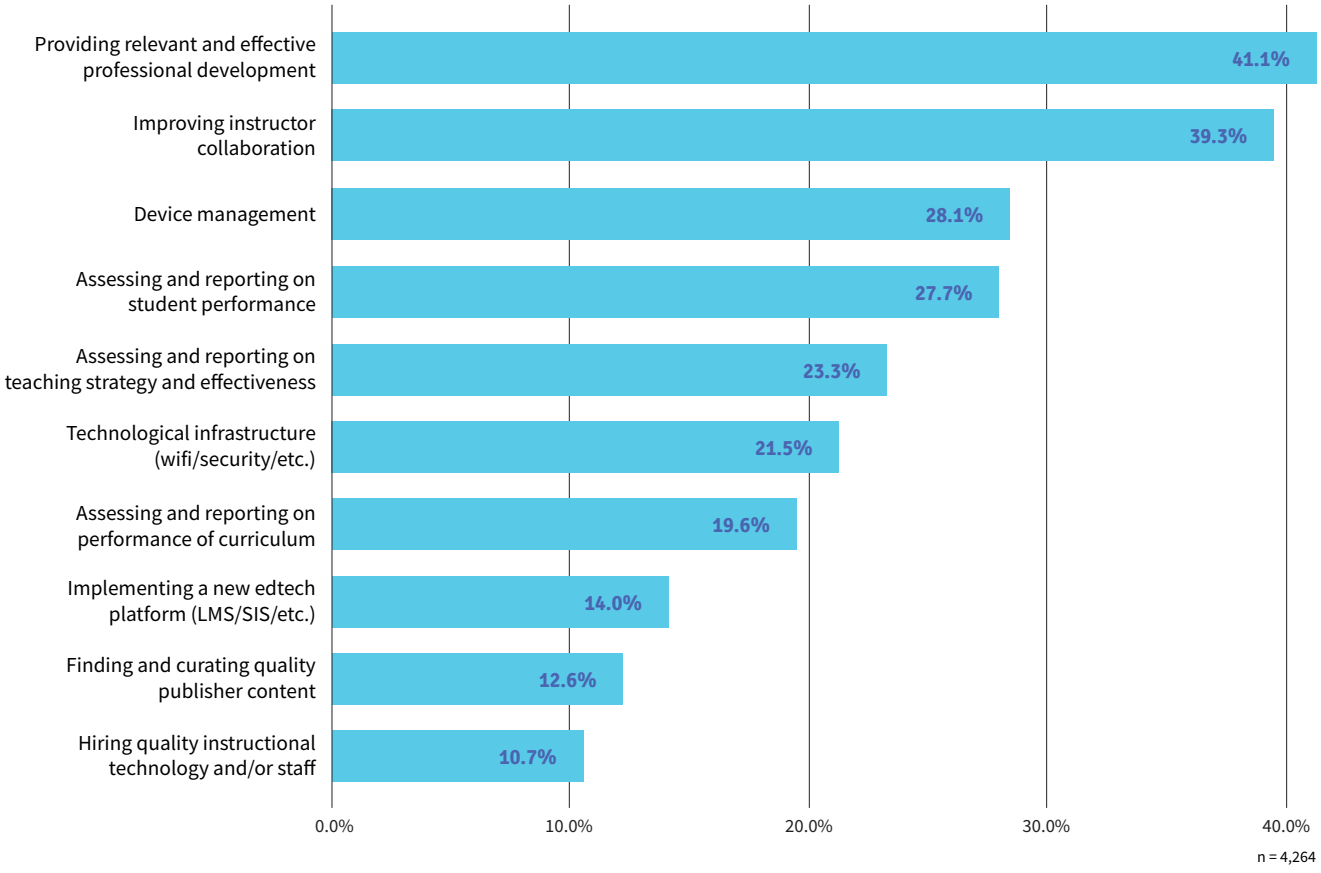
n = 4,264

Top Priorities for Administrators in 2019-20

Providing effective and relevant professional development remains the top priority for administrators, which comes as no surprise seeing that it's also their biggest challenge. Improving teacher collaboration is still the #2 priority, followed by device management at #3. Notably, last year's #3 priority was rolling out new devices or device strategy. Again, we see the evolution from roll out to management and can appreciate the fact that administrators are moving in the right direction for digital learning.

What are your digital learning priorities for 2019-20?

(answered by K-12 administrators – respondents could choose multiple answers)



Priorities for Administrators in 2019-20

(broken down by administrative function)

Rank	Curriculum	Information Technology	Instructional/ Academic Technology	Principal/ Assistant Principal	Professional Development	Superintendent/ Asst. Superintendent
1	Providing relevant and effective professional development 42.3%	Device management 39.0%	Improving instructor collaboration 48.7%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 41.5%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 39.3%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 45.6%
2	Improving instructor collaboration 38.3%	Improving instructor collaboration 37.8%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 45.2%	Improving instructor collaboration 35.3%	Improving instructor collaboration 30.1%	Improving instructor collaboration 36.9%
3	Assessing and reporting on student performance 33.2%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 33.7%	Device management 30.6%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 31.5%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 25.6%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 31.8%
4	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 27.1%	Providing relevant and effective professional development 32.9%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 27.3%	Device management 28.3%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 21.7%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 28.7%
5	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 24.2%	Assessing and reporting on student performance 20.6%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 23.4%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 27.7%	Device management 20.7%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 27.2%
6	Device management 17.4%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 16.5%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 18.8%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 24.9%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 15.5%	Device management 26.2%
7	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 16.8%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 16.4%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 17.4%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 22.1%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 13.6%	Technological infrastructure (wifi/security/etc.) 23.1%
8	Finding and curating quality publisher content 15.9%	Assessing and reporting on teaching strategy effectiveness 15.1%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 16.2%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 11.9%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 10.1%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 21.5%
9	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 12.8%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 12.7%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 14.8%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 11.2%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 9.6%	Implementing a new edtech platform (LMS/SIS/etc.) 15.9%
10	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 11.1%	Assessing and reporting on performance of curriculum 12.4%	Hiring quality instructional technology and/or IT staff 7.8%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 7.3%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 8.9%	Finding and curating quality publisher content 13.3%

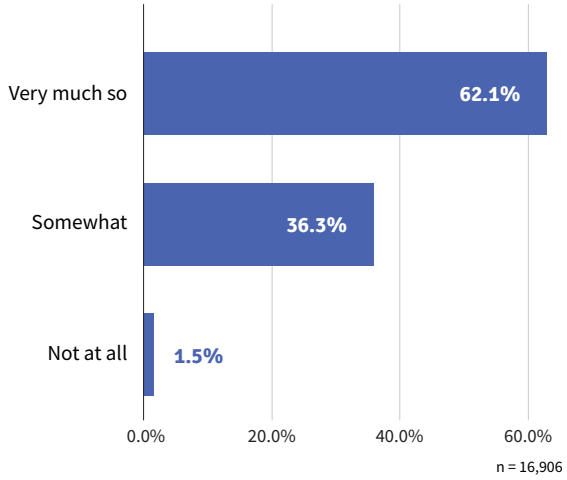
n = 4,264

Digital Learning Strategy & Resources

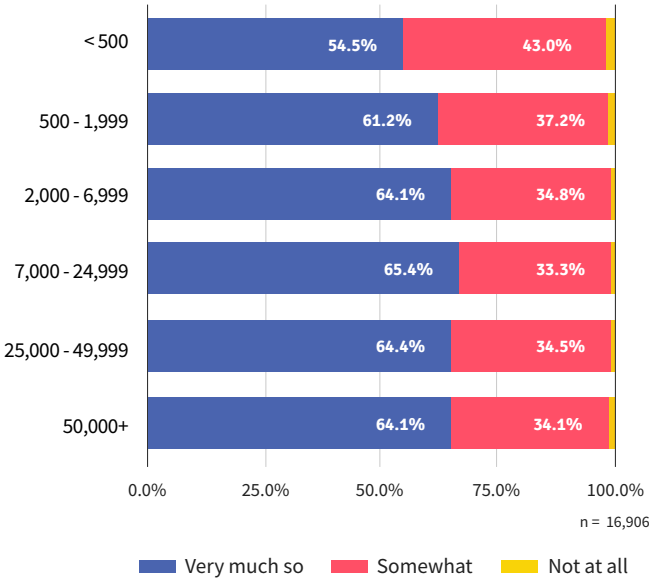
Digital Learning as a District Strategy

By now, most educators understand the value of digital learning. It's no secret that edtech is here to stay. In fact, 62% of respondents say digital learning is an integral part of their district or private school's overall teaching and learning strategy. It's also worthwhile to note that the population of the institution nor its geographic location seem to have a notable impact on this percentage.

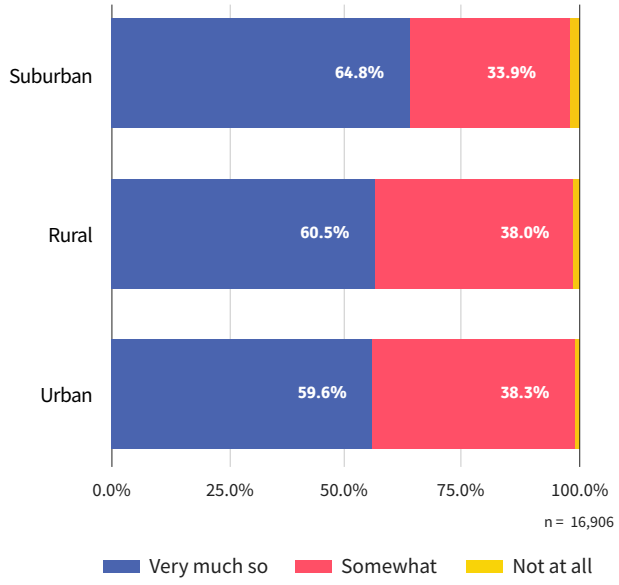
To what degree is digital learning an integral part of your district or private school's overall teaching and learning strategy?



To what degree is digital learning an integral part of your district or private school's overall teaching and learning strategy?
(broken down by enrollment)



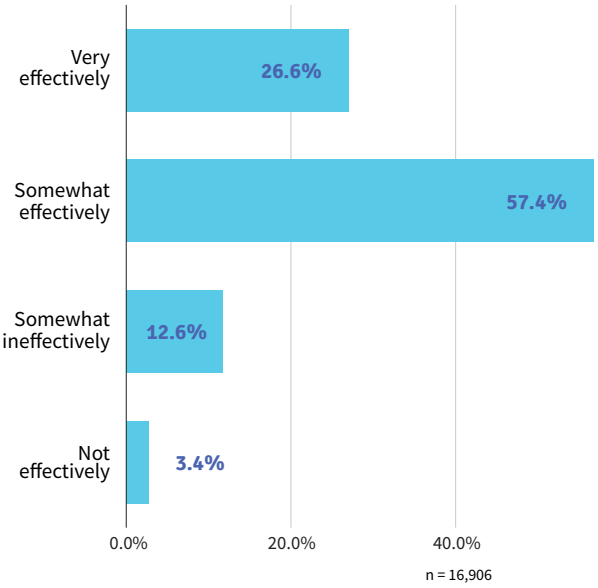
To what degree is digital learning an integral part of your district or private school's overall teaching and learning strategy?
(broken down by area type)



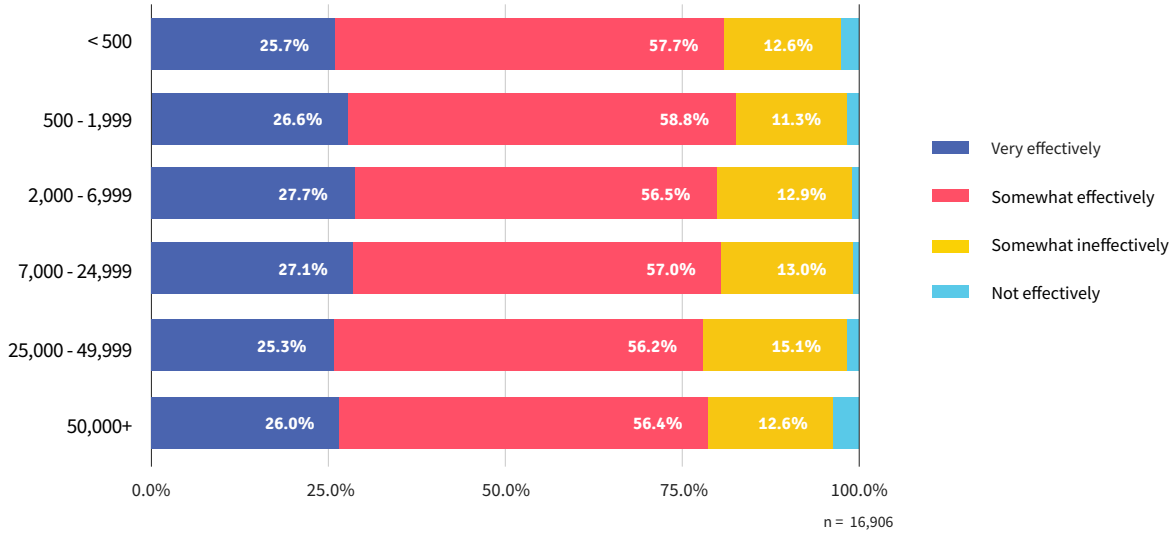
The Role of Leadership

84% of respondents believe that leadership at their district or school effectively models and focuses on digital learning practices. The largest (50,000+ students) and second largest (25,000 - 49,999 students) schools and districts report having the least effective leadership for digital learning practices.

How effectively does leadership at the district or school level model and focus on digital learning practices?



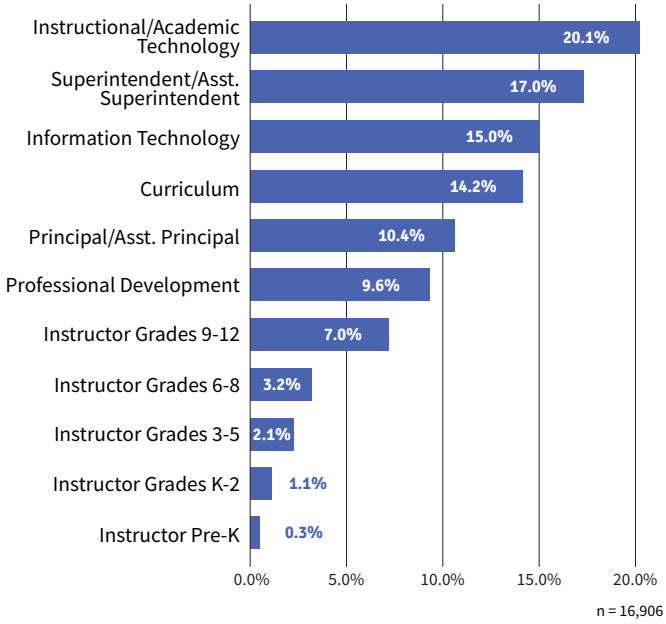
How effectively does leadership at the district or school level model and focus on digital learning practices? (broken down by enrollment)



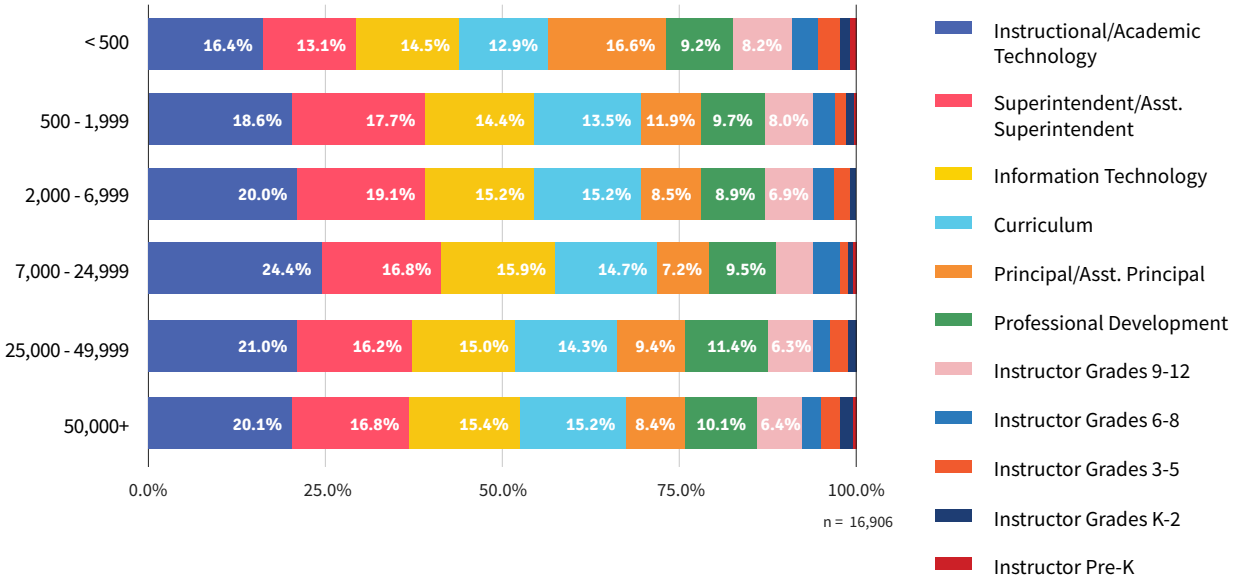
Job Functions Driving Digital Learning

Educators in instructional technology roles, along with superintendents are viewed as the driving forces behind digital learning in their schools and districts, followed closely by those in information technology and curriculum related roles.

If you had to choose one, which job function has been the driving force behind digital learning at your district or private school?



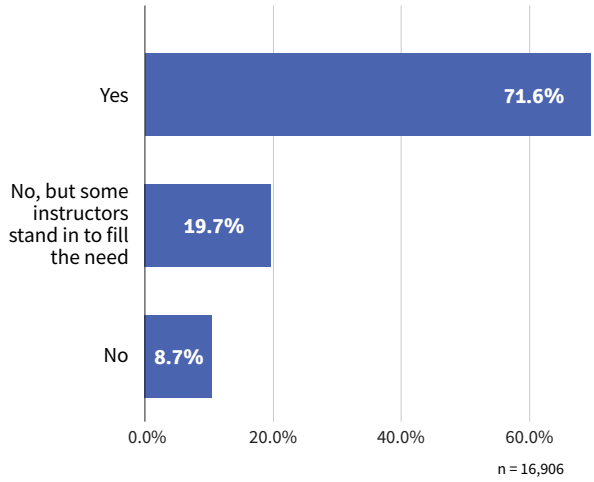
If you had to choose one, which job function has been the driving force behind digital learning at your district or private school? (broken down by enrollment)



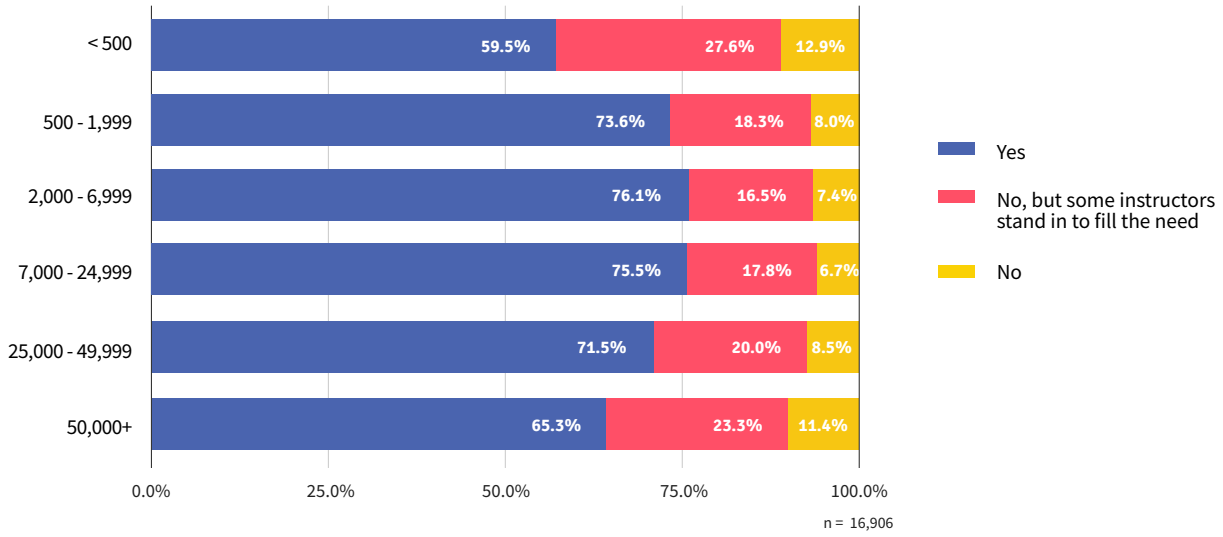
Digital Learning Personnel

Luckily, more than 90% of respondents report having someone—either in a dedicated role or a volunteer—who serves as a coordinator of instructional technology for their institution. Schools and districts with very small populations are least likely to have dedicated instructional support personnel, likely due to smaller staffs and less resources.

Does your institution have dedicated instructional technologists/technology coordinators on your staff?



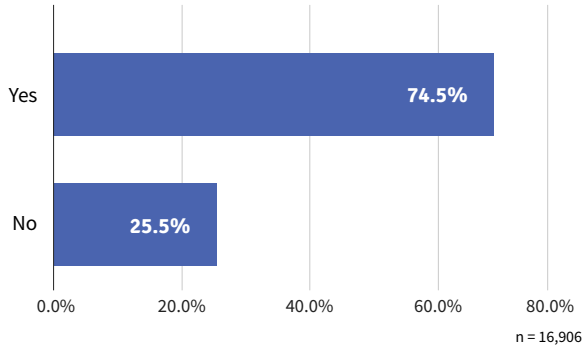
Does your institution have dedicated instructional technologists/technology coordinators on your staff? (broken down by enrollment)



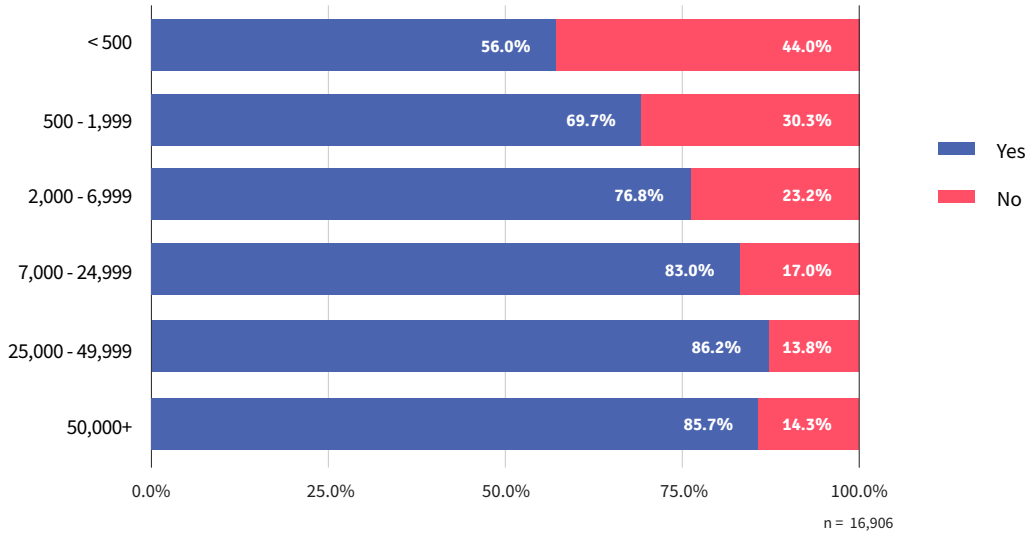
Digital Learning Departments

More and more institutions are discovering the value of dedicated instructional technology personnel and resources. In fact, 76% of respondents report having an instructional technology department at their school or district—the larger the school district, the more likely they were to have an entire department dedicated to instructional technology.

Does your district or private school have an instructional technology department?



Does your district or private school have an instructional technology department?
(broken down by enrollment)

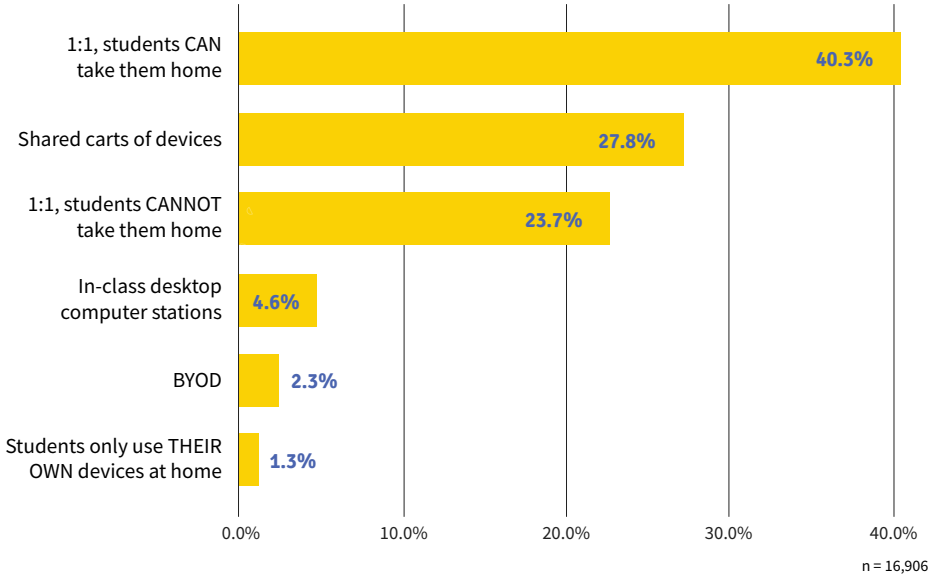


The Role of Technology

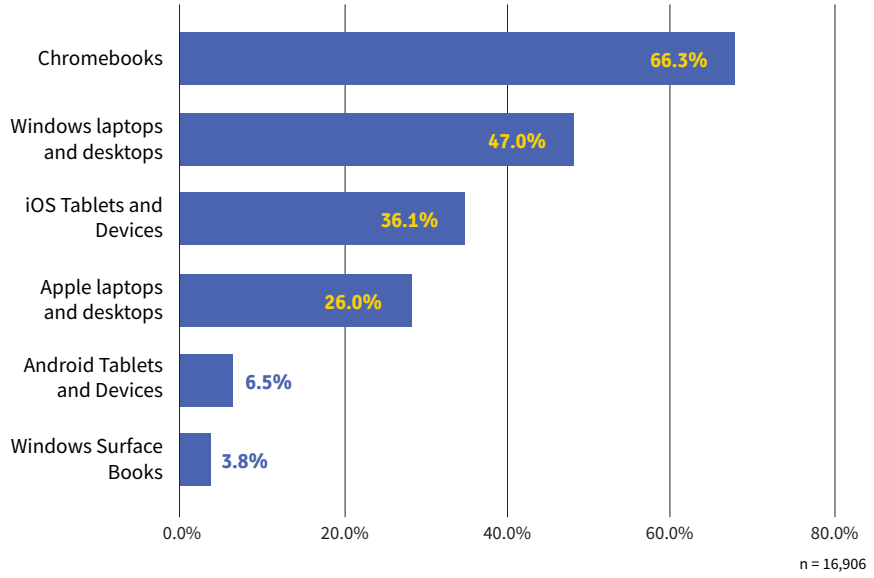
Hardware Structure & Devices

Up from last year, 40% of respondents have 1:1 devices students can take home, while only 27% report using shared carts of devices. We're excited to see more students with greater access at home, and look forward to seeing how the increase impacts what teachers have cited as the top challenge: lack of student access at home.

What does your school/institution's hardware structure look like?



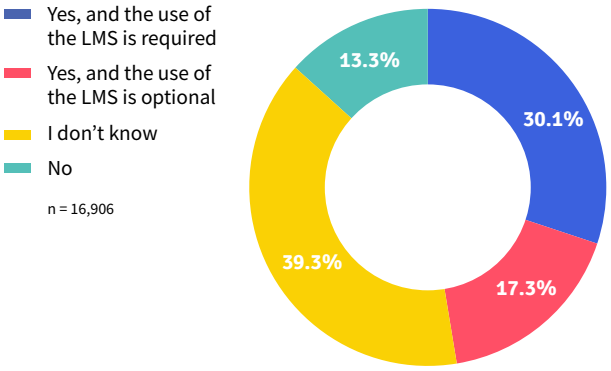
What kind of hardware does your school/institution currently use? (respondents could choose multiple answers)



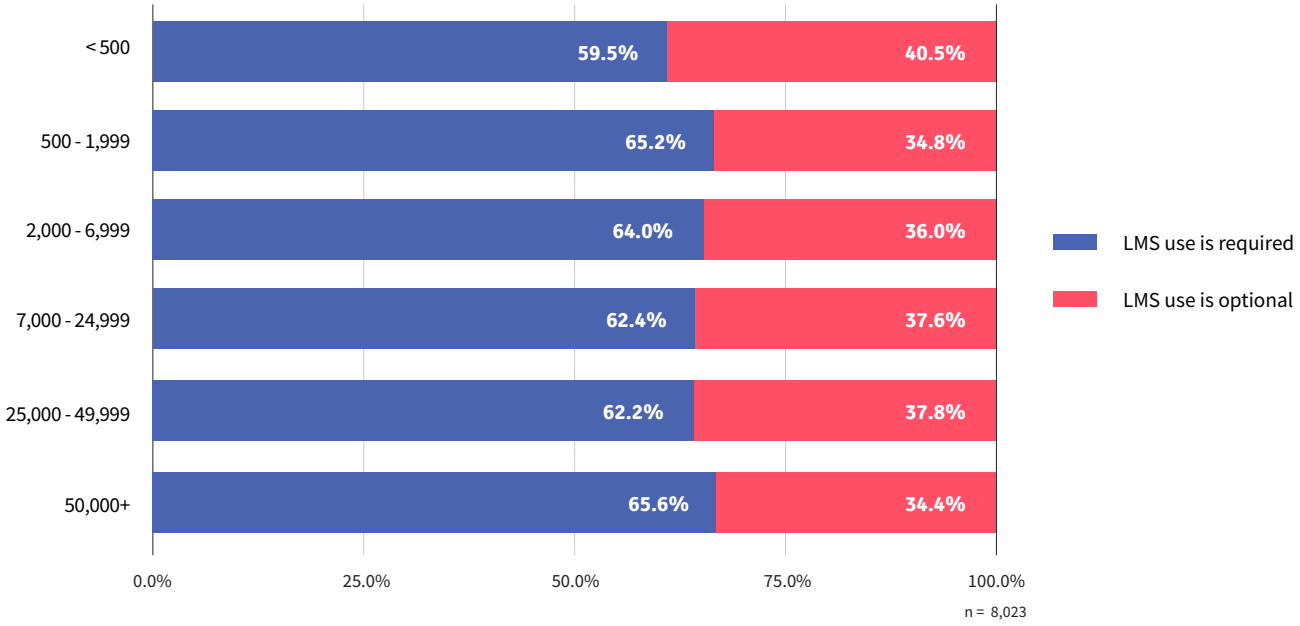
Learning Management System Adoption

The LMS serves as a central hub that connects people, tools, and ideas. It's a curriculum repository, a grading and reporting tool—even a PD resource. Most importantly, the LMS is a collaborative digital space where blended learning can thrive. Just under 50% of schools and districts report using an LMS, but this percentage is likely much higher, considering the 40% of respondents who are unsure whether or not they use one at all.

Do you as an instructor or the instructors at your institution use a learning management system (LMS)?



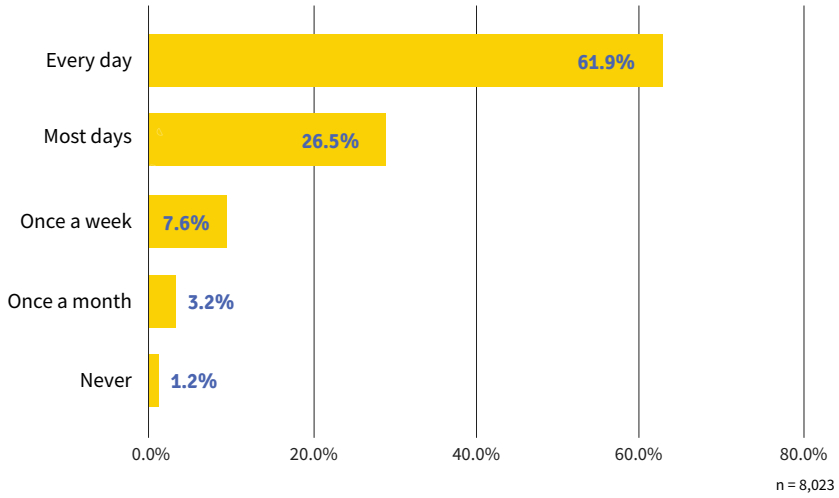
Optional vs. Required LMS Use
(broken down by enrollment)



Frequency of LMS Use

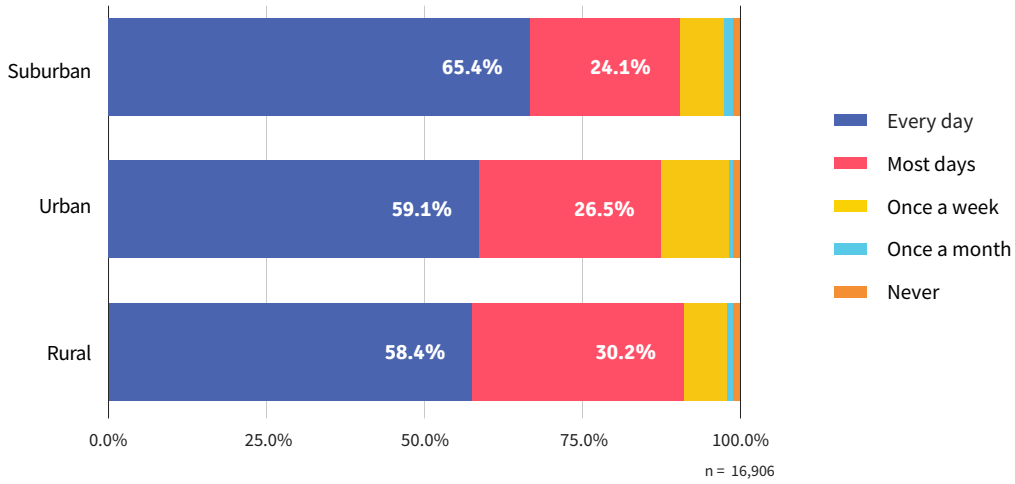
For those schools and districts who use an LMS, 62% use it every day, while another 27% use it most days of the week. High adoption levels like these—nearly 90%—are crucial for the LMS to have a transformative impact on student learning.

How often do you as an instructor or the instructors at your institution use your LMS?



Frequency of LMS use is generally the same across suburban, urban, and rural schools and districts. Suburban schools and districts lead the pack by about 5%, possibly due in part to the fact that respondents who identify with this category also place more importance on digital learning as an integral part of their school's teaching and learning strategy overall.

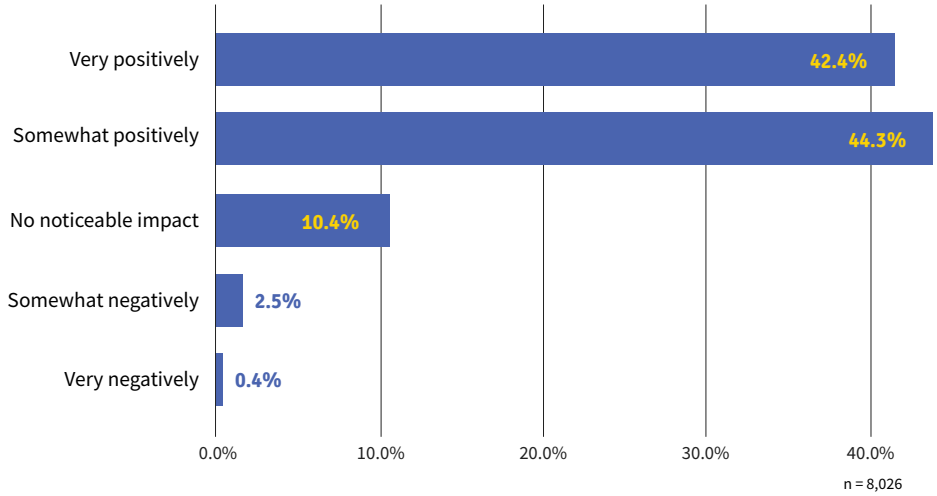
How often do you as an instructor or the instructors at your institution use your LMS? (broken down by area type)



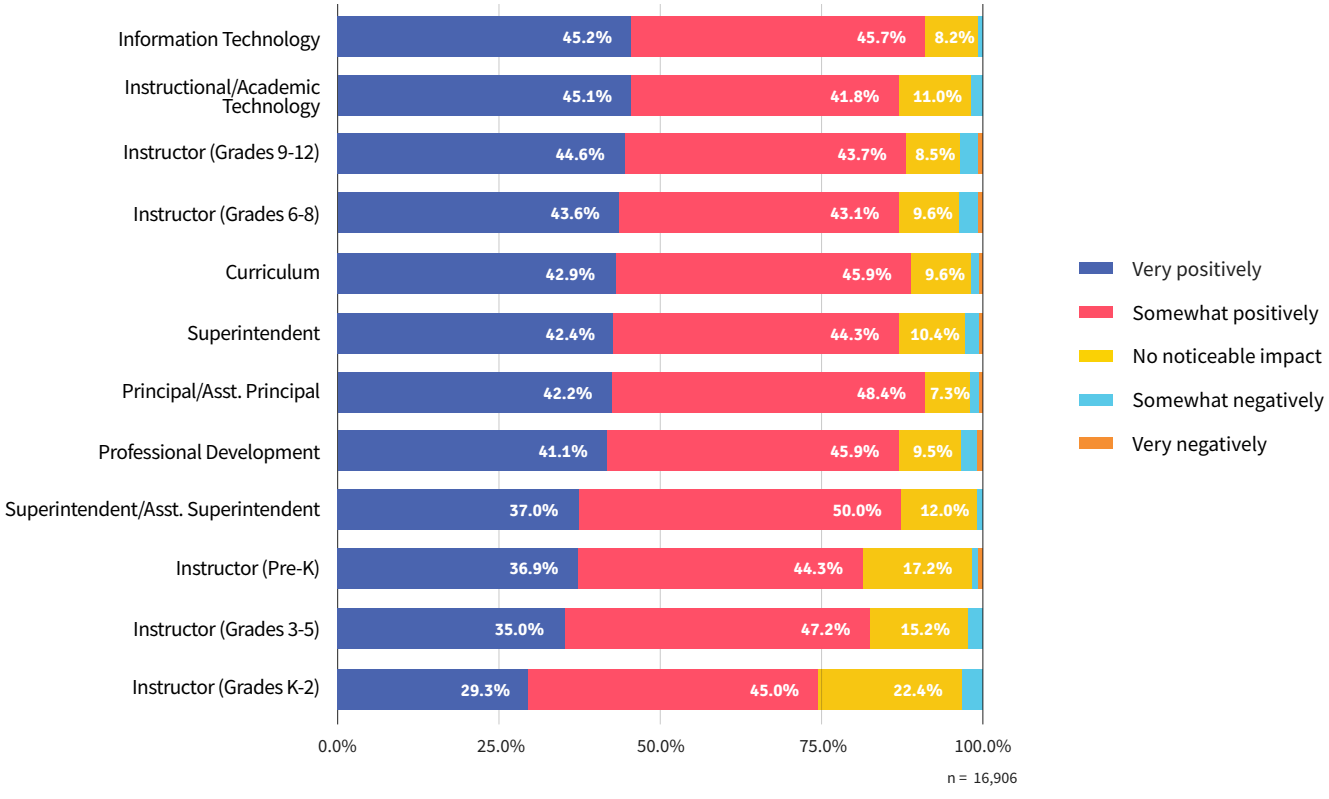
Perceived Impact of LMS

More than 86% of respondents agree that the use of an LMS has had a positive impact. Shown below, respondents with jobs in instructional technology and curriculum, as well as classroom instructors in middle and high school perceive the greatest impact of LMS.

In your opinion, how positively or negatively has your LMS impacted the teaching and learning process?



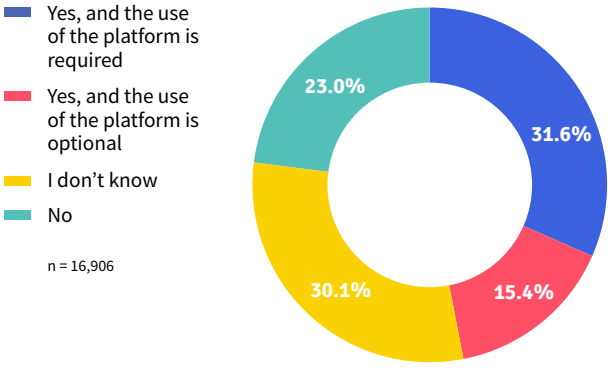
View of LMS Impact on Learning Process (broken down by job function)



Assessment Tool Adoption

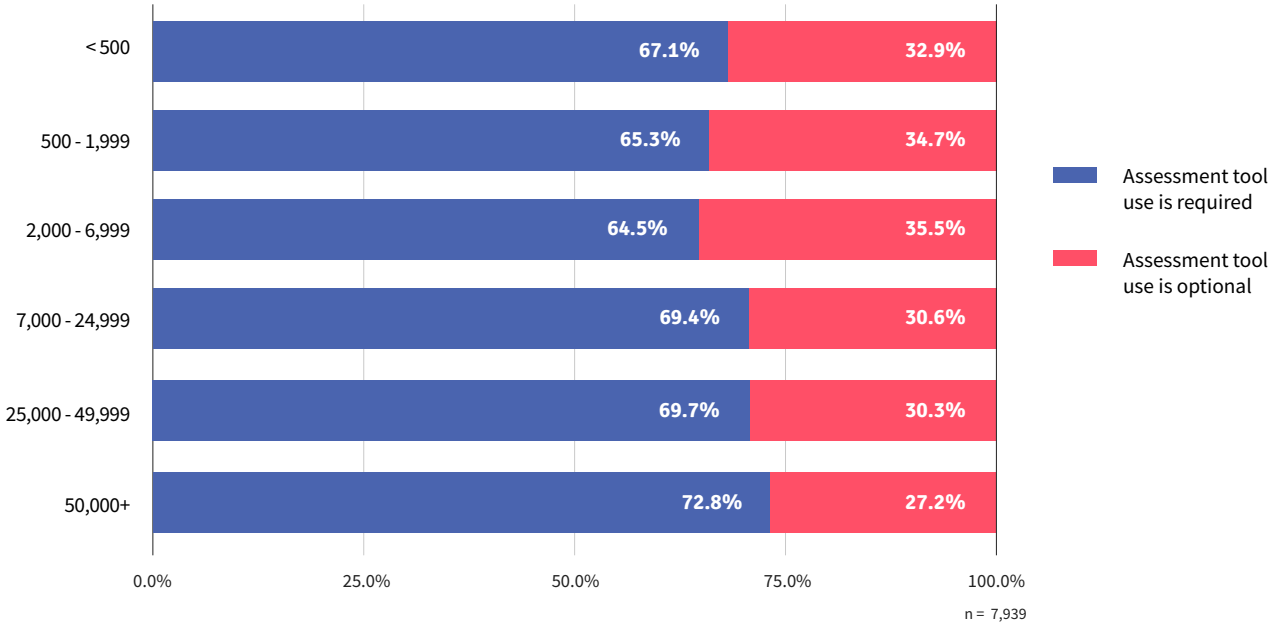
Assessment management tools provide insight into student progress and growth throughout the learning cycle. 55% of respondents work at an institution where the use of an assessment management tool is either mandatory or optional. Keeping in mind that another 30% of respondents don't know whether or not their school or district uses an assessment management tool means this number could possibly be significantly higher.

Do you as an instructor or the instructors at your institution use an assessment management platform?



Larger schools and districts are more likely to have mandatory assessment management tool usage, potentially due to the need to manage the creation, administration, and results of more student assessments.

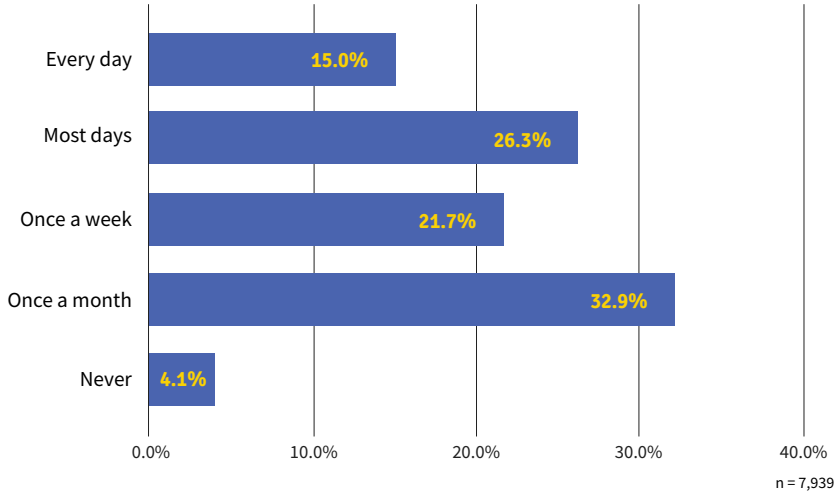
Optional vs. Required Assessment Management Tool Use
(broken down by enrollment)



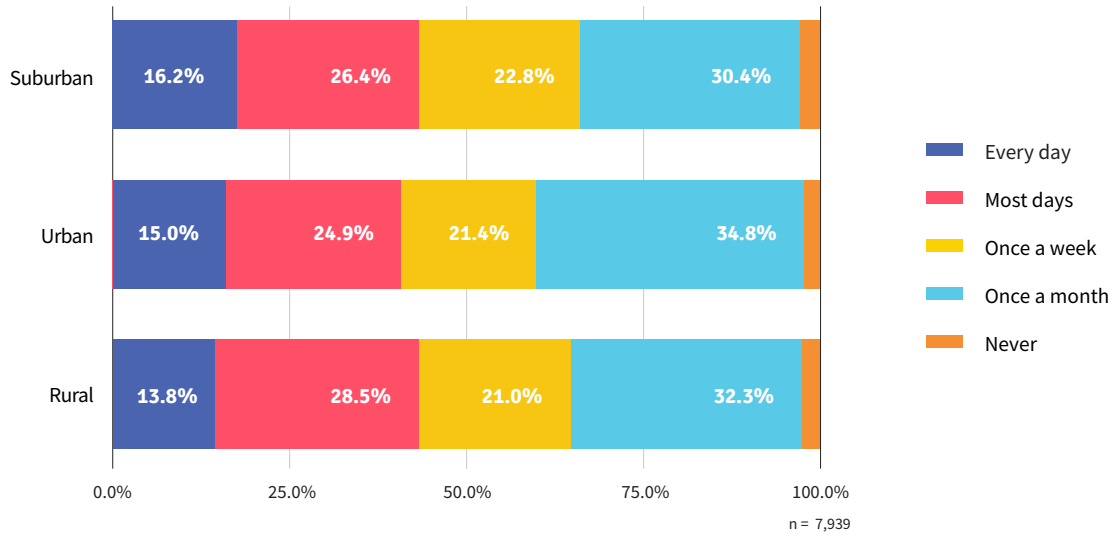
Frequency of Assessment Tool Use

According to those respondents who use an assessment management tool, 33% use it only once a month, while only about 15% use it daily. Depending on how the tool is used—for formative or summative assessments, common assessments or end-of-course assessments, etc.—frequency of use may vary within reason.

How often do you as an instructor or the instructors at your institution use your assessment management platform?



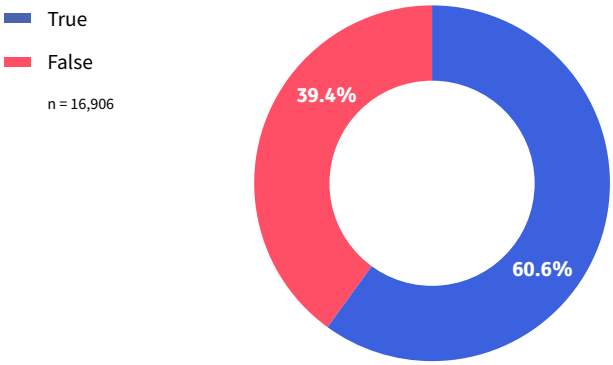
How often do you as an instructor or the instructors at your institution use your assessment management platform? (broken down by area type)



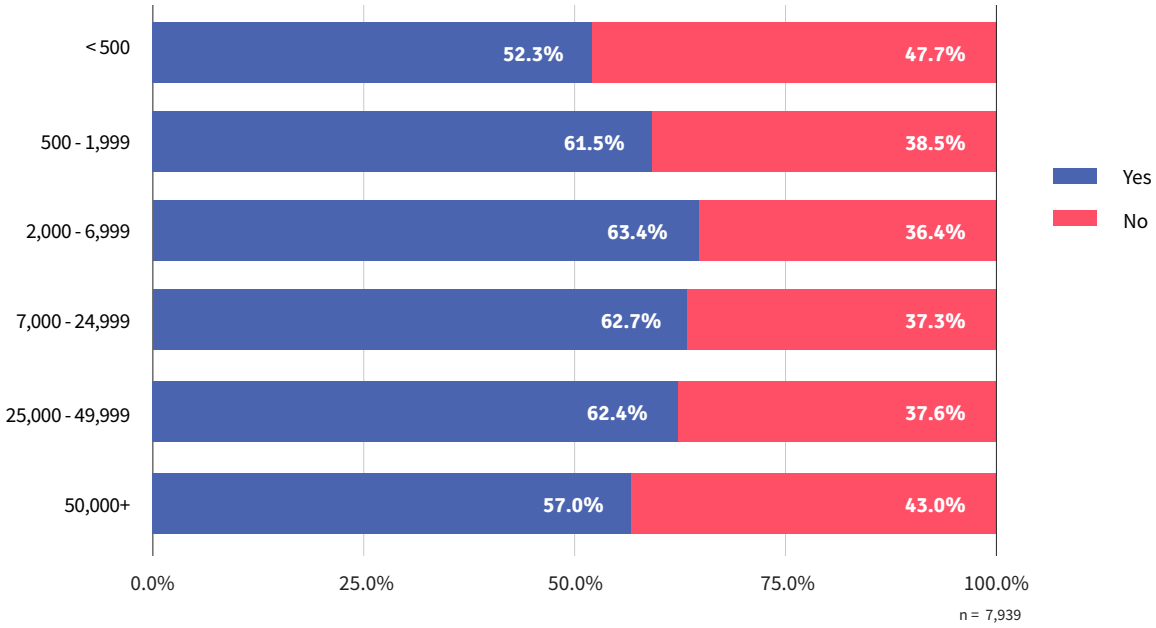
Student Integrity Applications

Accidental or intentional plagiarism is a serious offense. Luckily, there are digital tools that help educators identify plagiarized content and even lock down browsers during assessments. More than 60% of respondents report using anti-plagiarism services. This number remains relatively consistent across schools and districts of all enrollment sizes with the exception of schools and districts with enrollments of less than 500 that lag nearly 10% behind.

Does your institution use third-party applications to ensure student integrity, such as anti-plagiarism services for papers, or lockdown browsers for online exams?



Does your institution use third-party applications to ensure student integrity?
(broken down by enrollment)

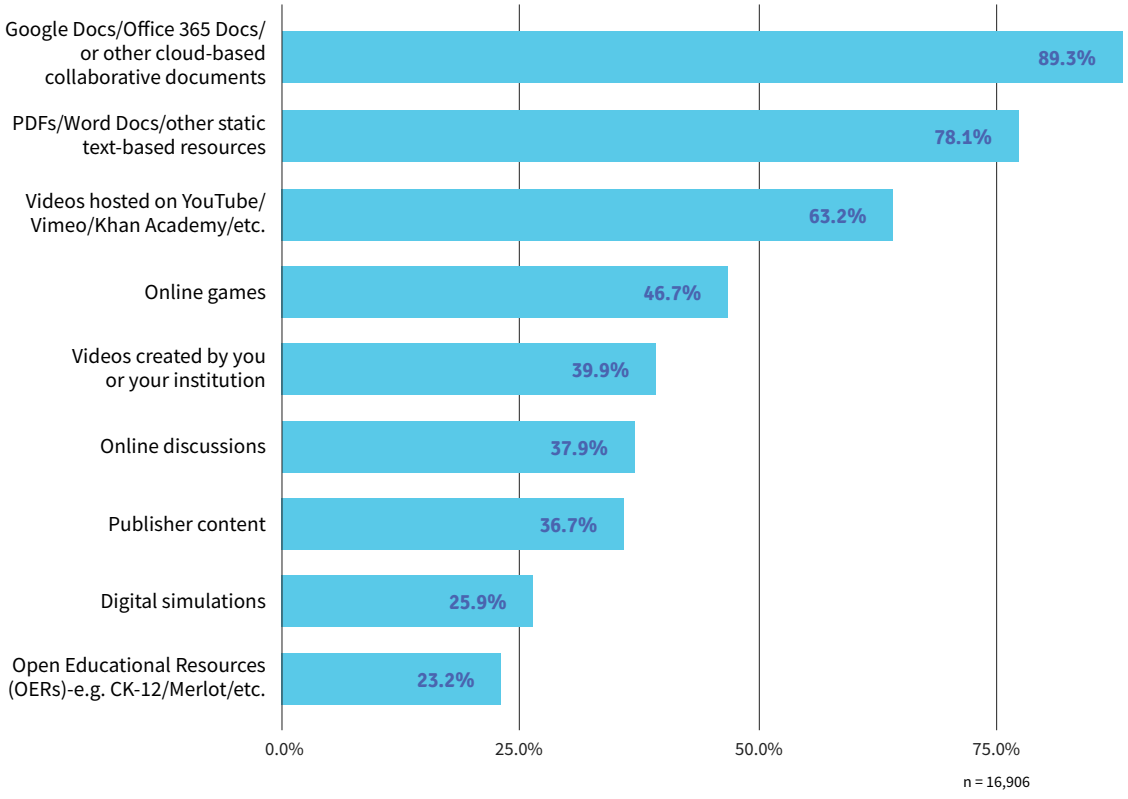


Types of Digital Content Used for Instruction

The ability to collaborate in real time via the cloud is a major component of blended learning. It makes perfect sense that the most common types of digital resources used by 90% of respondents are cloud-based collaborative docs, like Google Docs. For a second year in a row, static resources— e.g., PDFs and Word Docs—are the second most common types of resources, which is interesting to note since nearly two-thirds of respondents state digital learning as an integral part of their teaching and learning strategy. Hopefully, as this percentage grows, we will see a rise in other digital resources, like online discussions and digital simulations.

What types of digital content do instructors at your district or private school use for digital instruction?

(respondents could choose multiple answers)

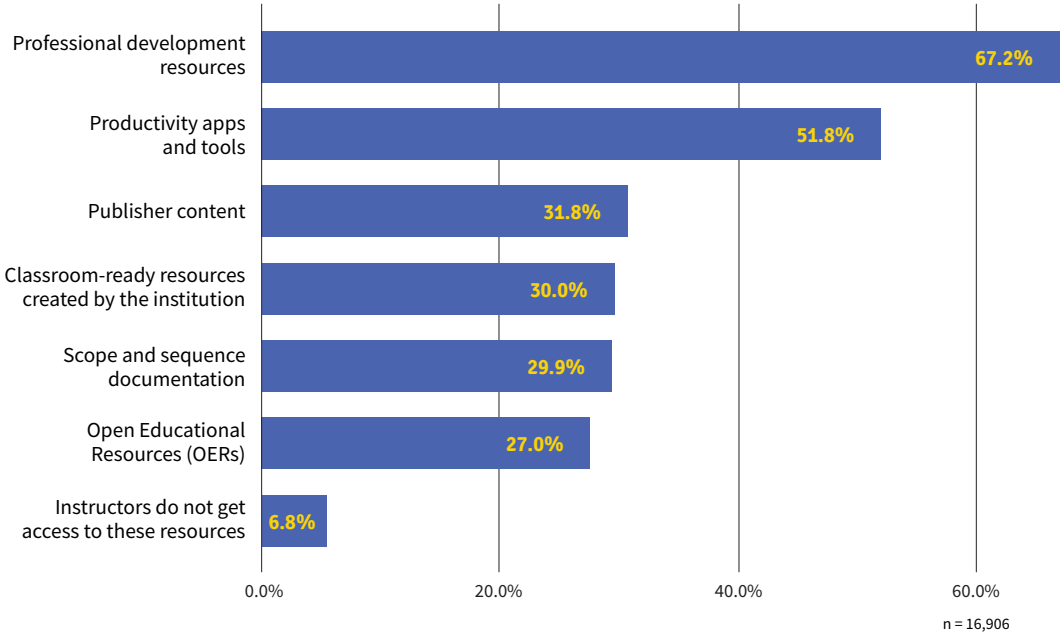


Digital Educational Resources Provided by the School & District

Nearly 70% of respondents provide professional development resources—a growing number that is up more than 10% from last year. It's also notable that while last year 15% of respondents said their district or private school didn't provide any access to resources at all, only 7% reported no access this year.

What types of digital educational resources does your district or private school provide to instructors?

(respondents could choose multiple answers)



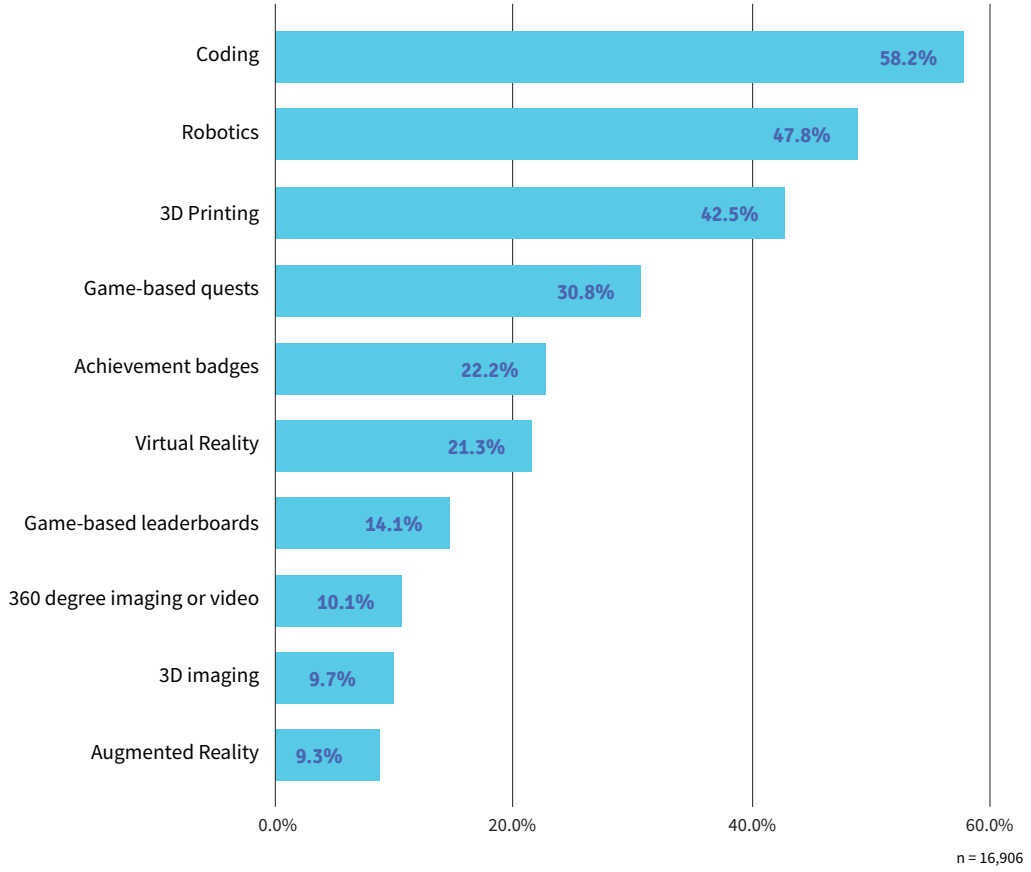
Emerging Tech & Trends in the Classroom

The top three emerging tech trends are coding, robotics, and 3D printing.

Technology is evolving quickly and schools are keeping up with the trends. Nearly 60% of respondents are using coding in the classroom, making it the most popular emerging tech trend for a second year. This year robotics saw a 15% increase and assumed the #2 spot on the list, followed by 3D printing at #3.

Which emerging education technologies/trends are instructors using in the classroom at your district or private school?

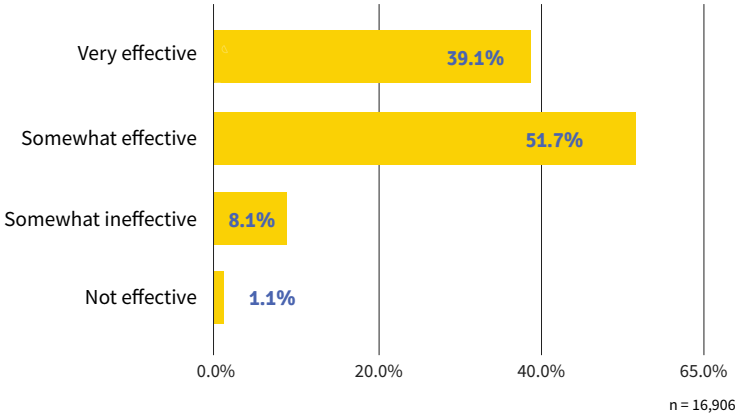
(respondents could choose multiple answers)



Communicating with Parents

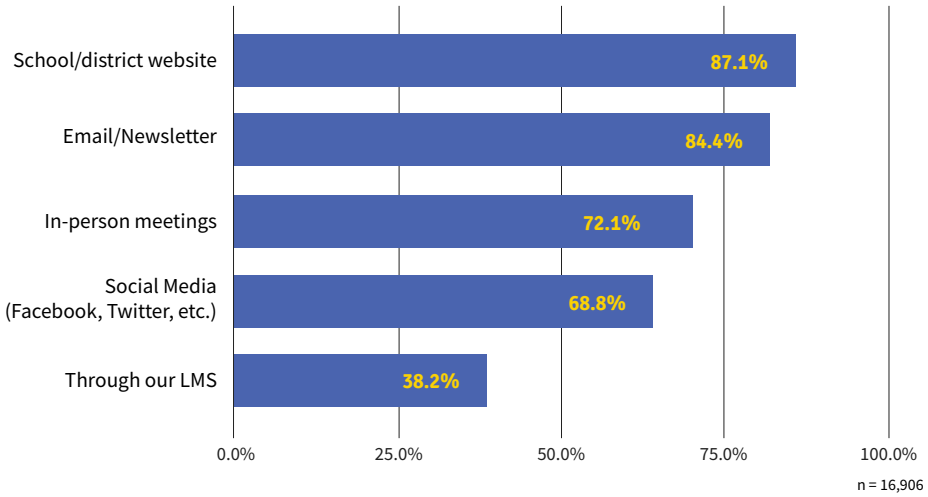
Positive and consistent communication between schools and families is crucial and a best practice for facilitating student learning and growth. More than 90% of respondents believe their school or district is effective at communicating with parents.

How effective is your school or district at communicating with parents?



87% of respondents use the school or district website to communicate with parents, followed closely by 84% who use emails and newsletters. Only 38% of respondents communicate with parents through their LMS. In theory, as more schools and districts begin to adopt and leverage all the features of the LMS, this number will grow significantly. After all, the learning management system is an ideal communication platform, especially since parents are able to keep track of student progress, grades, and assignments.

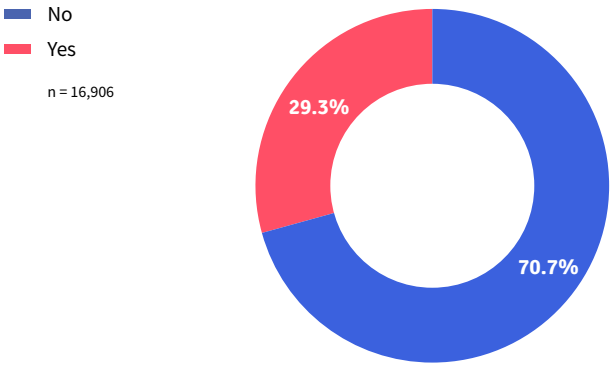
How does your institution communicate with parents?
(respondents could choose multiple answers)



Digital Learning Days or Snow Days

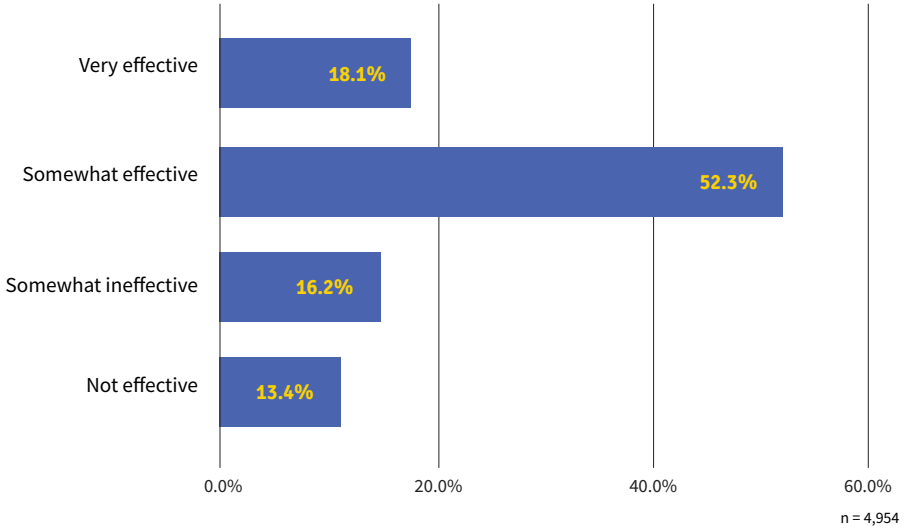
More than 70% of respondents report that their state allows for digital learning days in place of snow days. With eight out of the top ten states that are represented in this report likely to receive moderate to heavy snowfall, it's great to know that schools and districts are flexible and willing to allow students to make the most of their snow days.

Does your state allow for digital learning days or online learning days in place of snow days?



70% of respondents say digital learning days have had a positive impact on teaching and learning. The other 30% may feel it's been ineffective due to the lack of student access to technology at home—teachers' top challenge this year.

How effective have digital learning days been to positively impacting teaching and learning?

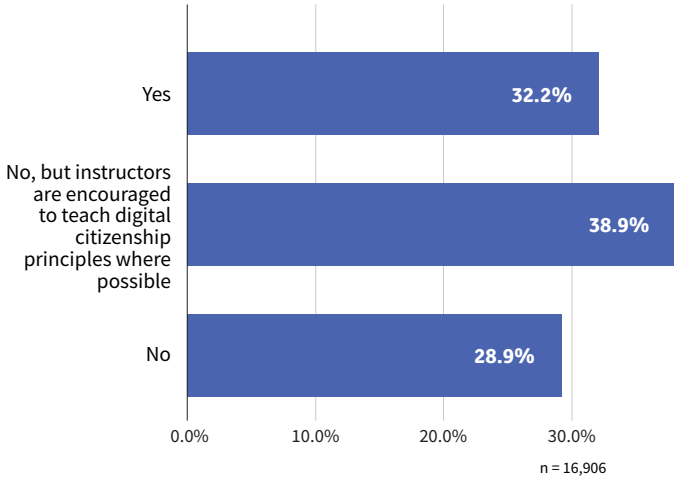


Digital Citizenship & Social Media

Digital Citizenship Programs

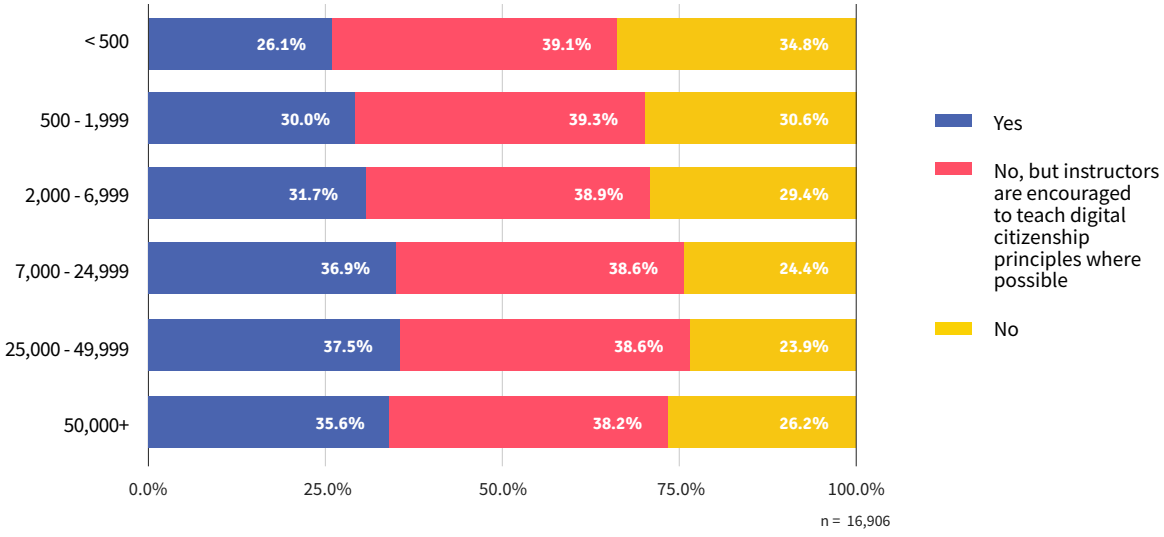
In our modern society, teaching students how to be a good digital citizen is arguably as important as teaching them to be a good citizen in general. Students need to know how to interact with others on the internet in a responsible and productive manner.

Does your institution have a digital citizenship program that students are required to complete?



More than 30% of schools and districts require students to complete a digital citizenship program, and another 40% encourage teachers to weave in digital citizenship principles where possible. Larger institutions are more likely to enforce a required program. We understand that the difference likely lies in the availability of resources.

Does your institution have a digital citizenship program that students are required to complete?
(broken down by enrollment)

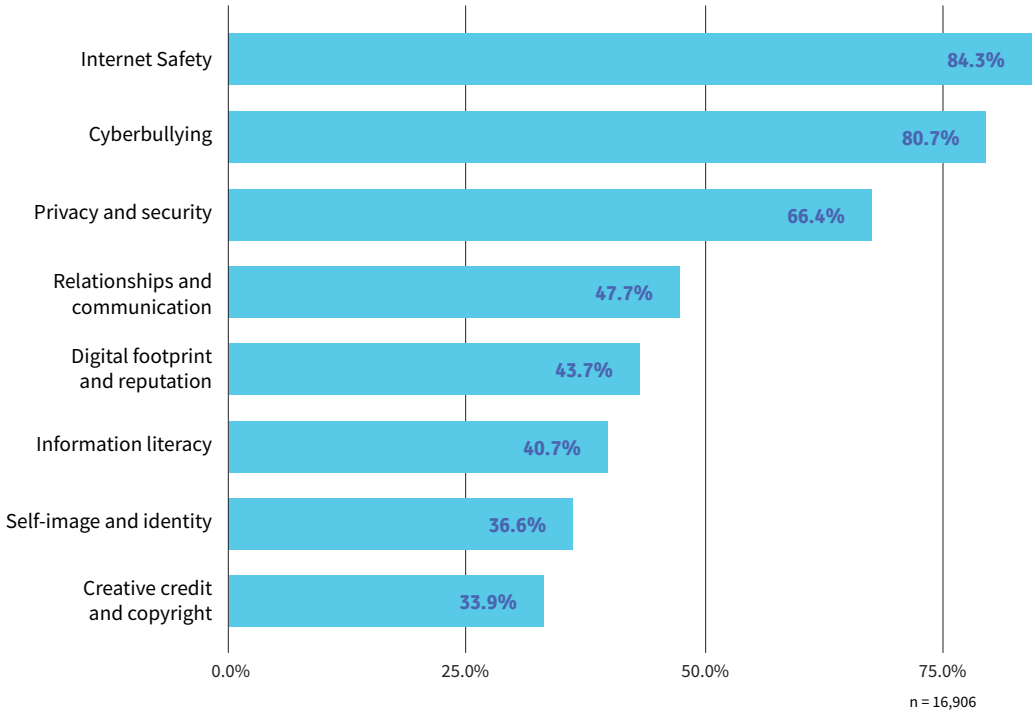


Digital Citizenship Concerns

Internet safety and cyberbullying are by far the top concerns regarding students' digital citizenship. Keeping students safe—and ensuring they're equipped to make informed decisions—must be a top priority for educators as teaching and learning continue to transition into the digital space.

Which areas of digital citizenship are your district or private school most concerned with?

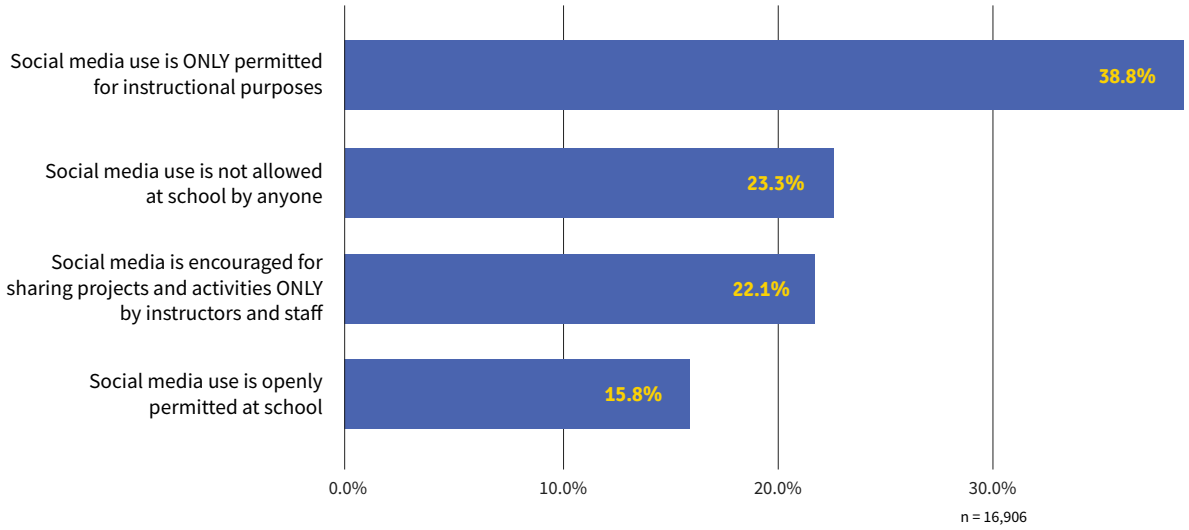
(respondents could choose multiple answers)



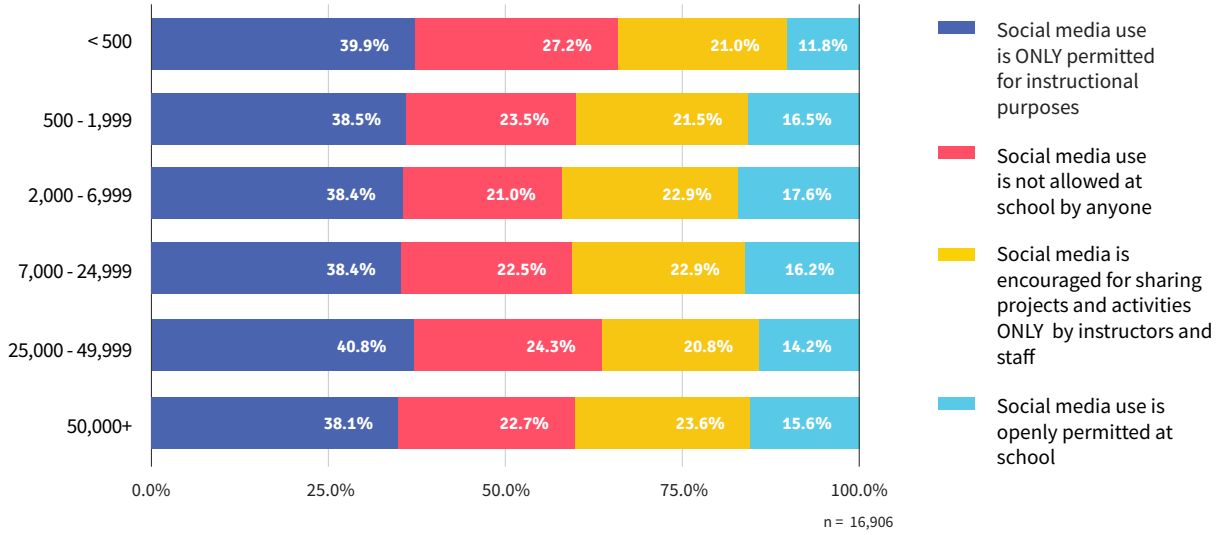
Social Media Use in Schools

Social media can be an effective teaching tool for learning, networking, and communicating. Around 40% of schools and districts allow students to use social media for instructional purposes only, while another 16% permit open social media use at school. 23% still don't allow any social media use.

What best describes your institution's social media policy?



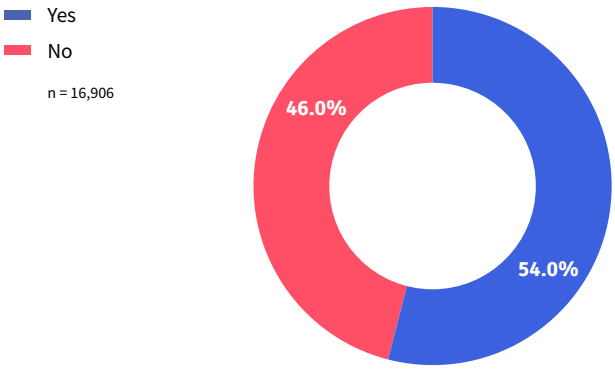
What best describes your institution's social media policy?
(broken down by enrollment)



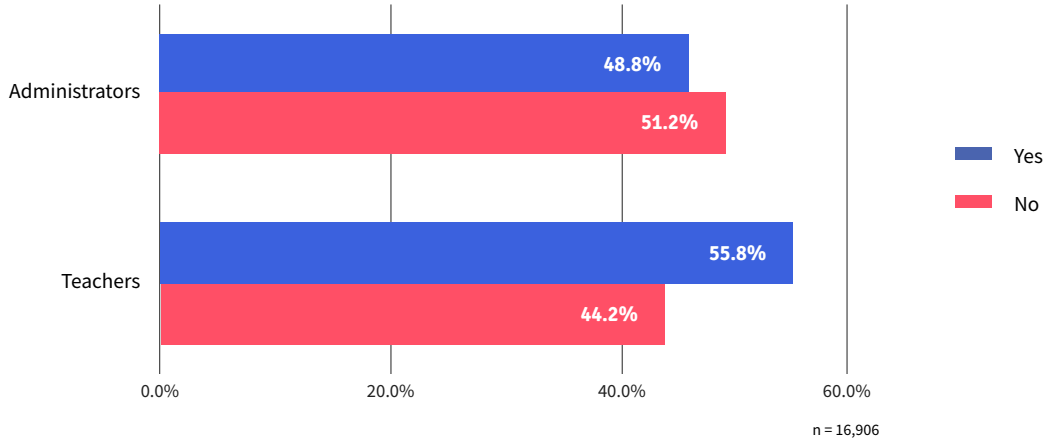
Social Media Concerns

While using social media at school can have a positive impact on teaching and learning when best practices are applied, there are still real and relevant concerns about its misuse. 54% of respondents say social media is a problem at their school or district. Interestingly, 48% of administrators report social media as a problem, as opposed to nearly 56% of teachers. The difference may relate to the "front-line" role of teachers, who interact much more closely with students in their classrooms each day.

Would you say social media is a problem at your district or private school?



Would you say social media is a problem at your district or private school?
(broken down by admin vs. teacher)



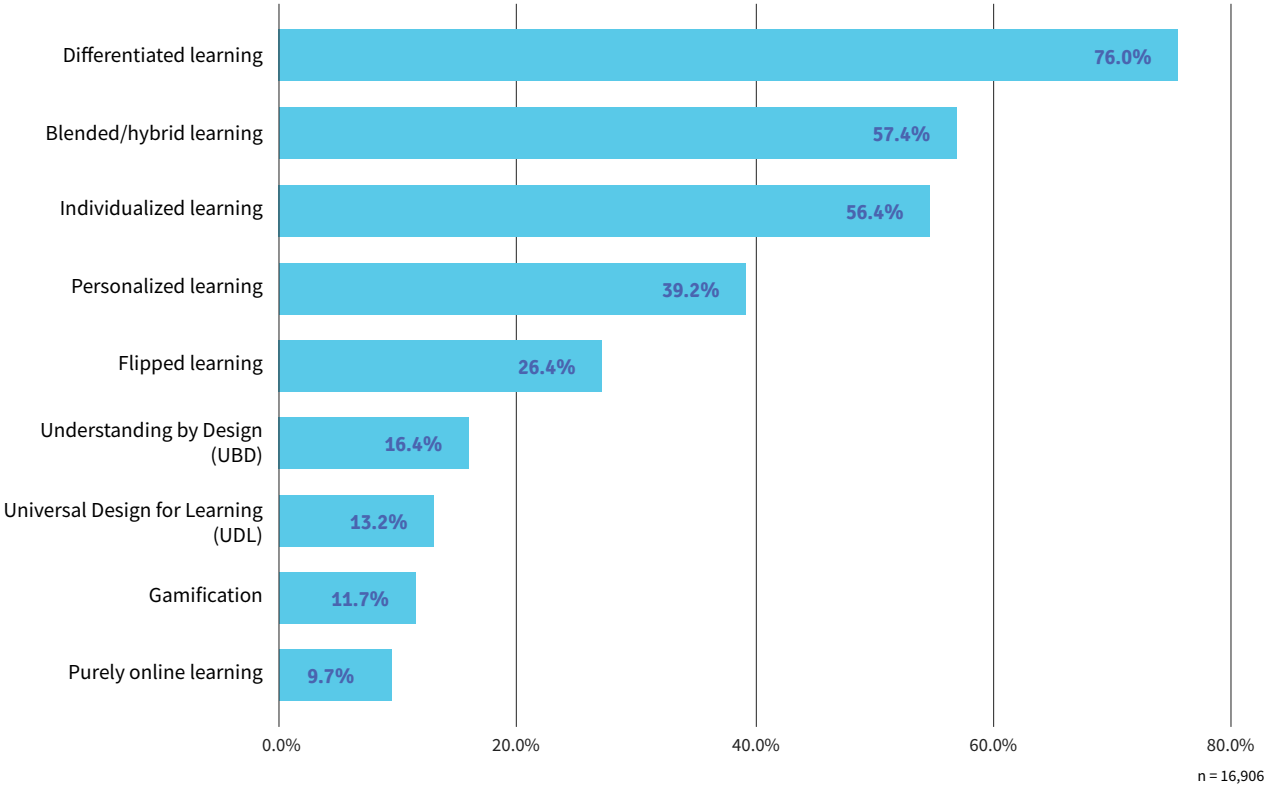
Instructional Approaches

Use of Different Instructional Approaches

Keeping in mind that 98% of respondents find digital learning an integral part of their school or district's teaching and learning strategy, it's no surprise that 76% of respondents stated they or the instructors on their campus utilize differentiated learning—which has many definitions and interpretations, and can often be used as an umbrella term for many of the other instructional approaches listed below. After all, digital tools and resources help to facilitate these instructional approaches. Blended/hybrid learning and individualized learning remain the next two most popular instructional approaches, though individualized learning has grown in popularity.

Which of the following instructional approaches do you as an instructor or the instructors at your district or private school use?

(respondents could choose multiple answers)



Use of Different Instructional Approaches

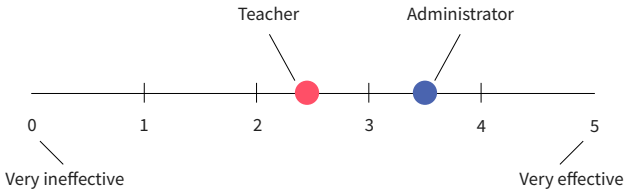
(broken down by grade level)

Rank	Instructor (Pre-K)	Instructor (K-2)	Instructor (Grades 3-5)	Instructor (Grades 6-8)	Instructor (Grades 9-12)
1	Differentiated learning 66.7%	Differentiated learning 79.6%	Differentiated learning 83.2%	Differentiated learning 80.3%	Differentiated learning 73.6%
2	Individualized learning 60.1%	Individualized learning 58.5%	Individualized learning 59.9%	Individualized learning 57.6%	Blended/hybrid learning 64.2%
3	Personalized learning 40.4%	Blended/hybrid learning 37.7%	Blended/hybrid learning 47.8%	Blended/hybrid learning 57.4%	Individualized learning 52.2%
4	Blended/hybrid learning 37.0%	Personalized learning 35.6%	Personalized learning 41.2%	Personalized learning 37.9%	Personalized learning 36.4%
5	Flipped learning 13.6%	Flipped learning 12.2%	Flipped learning 17.2%	Flipped learning 26.4%	Flipped learning 31.8%
6	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 11.8%	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 12.0%	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 12.9%	Understanding by Design (UBD) 17.5%	Understanding by Design (UBD) 18.2%
7	Gamification 8.4%	Understanding by Design (UBD) 10.8%	Understanding by Design (UBD) 12.2%	Gamification 13.2%	Purely online learning 12.6%
8	Purely online learning 7.1%	Gamification 7.7%	Gamification 10.9%	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 13.2%	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 11.3%
9	Understanding by Design (UBD) 5.5%	Purely online learning 3.7%	Purely online learning 3.3%	Purely online learning 5.8%	Gamification 11.0%

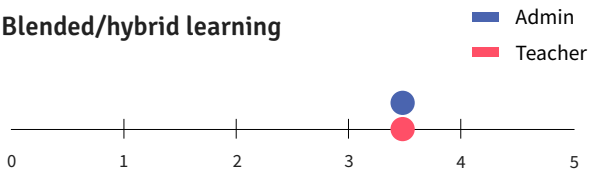
n = 12,642

Effectiveness of Different Instructional Approaches

The respondents were also asked to rate on a scale, with 0 being very ineffective and 5 being very effective, how effective instructional practices are. Administrators rated differentiated learning, individualized learning, and personalized learning all at 3.9. Using the same scale, teachers also rated differentiated learning the highest at 4.0, individualized learning at 3.9, and personalized learning at 3.8. Both administrators and teachers scored purely online learning the least effective at 2.3 and 2.0, respectively.



Blended/hybrid learning

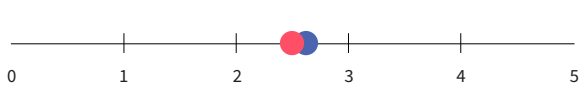


Flipped learning

Differentiated learning

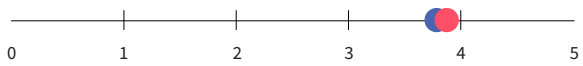
Individualized learning

Gamification



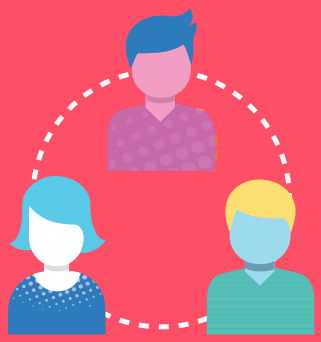
Purely online learning

Personalized learning



Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Understanding by Design (UBD)



Professional Development & Collaboration

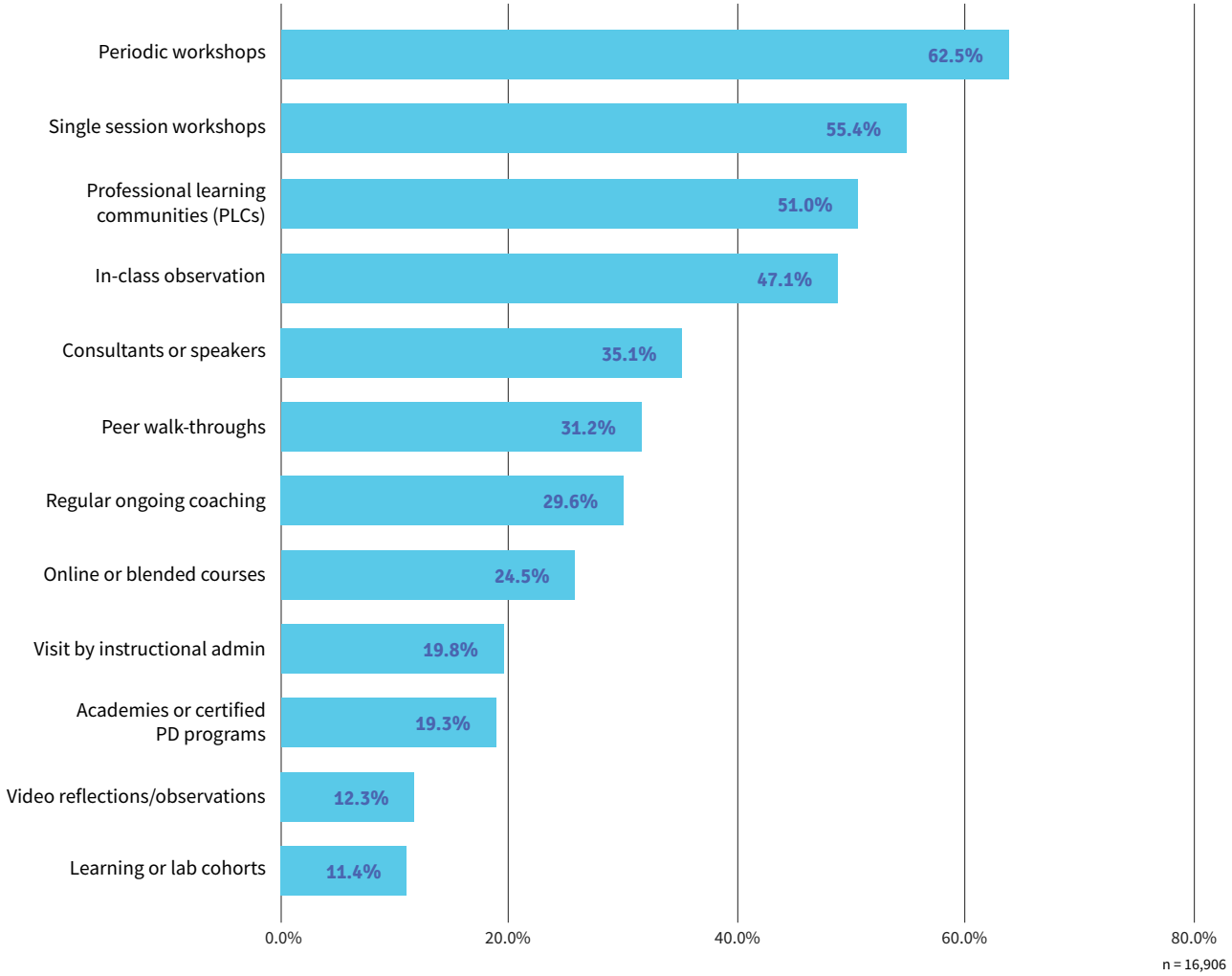
Types of PD Provided to Faculty

With providing relevant and effective professional development (PD) coming in as both the top challenge and top priority for administrators for the second year in a row, it's interesting to note that the most popular form of PD are still periodic and single session workshops.

Last year, we predicted that PLCs and coaching would grow in popularity and adoption over time. We're glad to see that 51% of respondents are part of an active PLC, compared to 41% last year. Coaching also grew from 24% to 30% this year.

What kinds of professional development are provided to instructors at your district or private school?

(respondents could choose multiple answers)



Types of PD Provided to Faculty (broken down by enrollment)

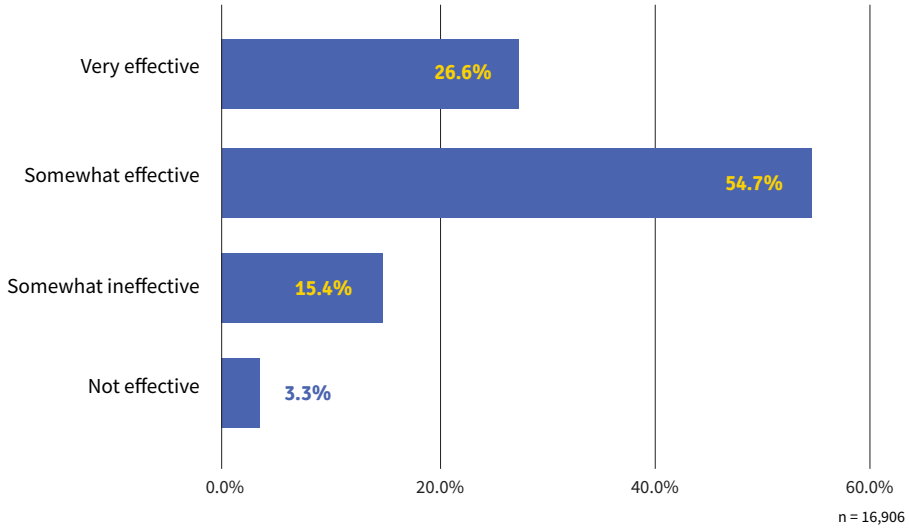
Rank	< 500	500 - 1,999	2,000 - 6,999	7,000 - 24,999	25,000 - 49,999	50,000+
1	Periodic workshops 59.3%	Periodic workshops 61.9%	Periodic workshops 63.6%	Periodic workshops 64.6%	Periodic workshops 62.6%	Periodic workshops 62.5%
2	Single session workshop 50.6%	Single session workshop 55.1%	Single session workshop 58.2%	Single session workshop 58.8%	Professional learning communities (PLCs) 58.0%	Professional learning communities (PLCs) 58.6%
3	In-class observation 46.9%	Professional learning communities (PLCs) 47.3%	Professional learning communities (PLCs) 52.9%	Professional learning communities (PLCs) 57.1%	Single session workshop 53.7%	Single session workshop 51.3%
4	Professional learning communities (PLCs) 38.6%	In-class observation 46.9%	In-class observation 47.2%	In-class observation 46.5%	In-class observation 47.2%	In-class observation 49.3%
5	Consultants or speakers 34.9%	Consultants or speakers 36.9%	Consultants or speakers 36.0%	Consultants or speakers 34.7%	Consultants or speakers 32.5%	Peer walk-throughs 35.1%
6	Peer walk-throughs 29.2%	Peer walk-throughs 30.4%	Peer walk-throughs 31.5%	Regular ongoing coaching 33.3%	Regular ongoing coaching 31.8%	Online or blended courses 32.7%
7	Regular ongoing coaching 25.4%	Regular ongoing coaching 27.3%	Regular ongoing coaching 30.8%	Peer walk-throughs 32.2%	Peer walk-throughs 30.9%	Regular ongoing coaching 31.5%
8	Online or blended courses 20.9%	Online or blended courses 21.2%	Online or blended courses 23.5%	Online or blended courses 28.3%	Online or blended courses 28.2%	Consultants or speakers 31.0%
9	Academies or certified PD programs 18.4%	Visit by institutional admin 19.0%	Visit by institutional admin 19.5%	Visit by institutional admin 21.8%	Visit by institutional admin 22.9%	Academies or certified PD programs 22.5%
10	Visit by institutional admin 18.0%	Academies or certified PD programs 18.4%	Academies or certified PD programs 18.7%	Academies or certified PD programs 19.3%	Academies or certified PD programs 21.8%	Visit by institutional admin 19.6%
11	Video reflections/ observations 10.4%	Video reflections/ observations 11.9%	Video reflections/ observations 12.3%	Learning or lab cohorts 13.6%	Learning or lab cohorts 13.4%	Video reflections/ observations 15.2%
12	Learning or lab cohorts 8.1%	Learning or lab cohorts 10.0%	Learning or lab cohorts 11.5%	Video reflections/ observations 12.6%	Video reflections/ observations 12.9%	Learning or lab cohorts 14.9%

n = 16,906

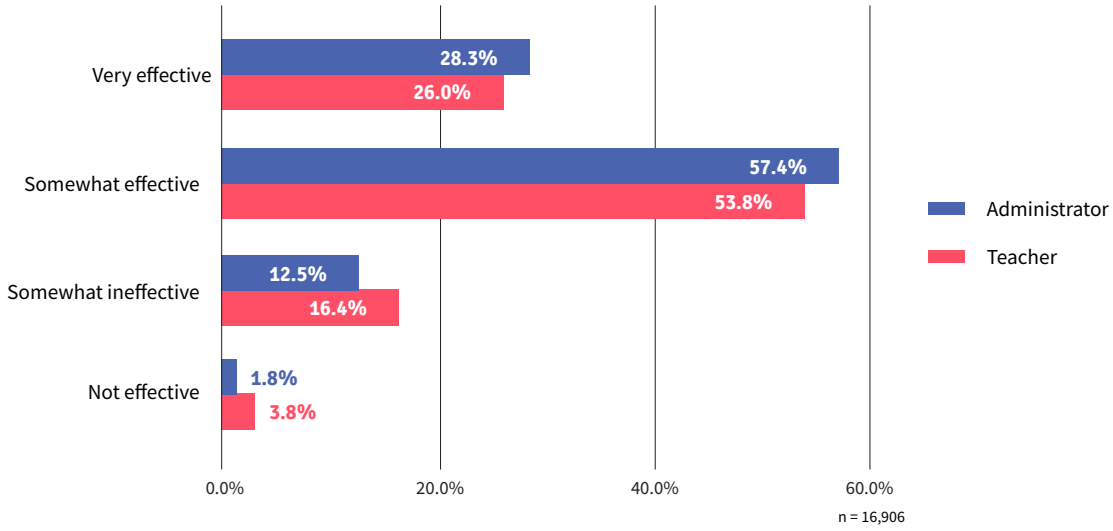
Professional Development Support

In line with last year's results, administrators still think more highly of their effectiveness than the teachers they support. Seeing this response for a second year prompts us to encourage administrators to tap into the needs of your specific staff, listen to collective and individual voices, and remember that whatever is agreed upon should ultimately have a positive impact on students learning and the instructors' professional growth.

How effective is your institution at supporting instructors to be successful in teaching and learning?



How effective is your institution at supporting instructors to be successful in teaching and learning?
(broken down by admin vs. teacher)

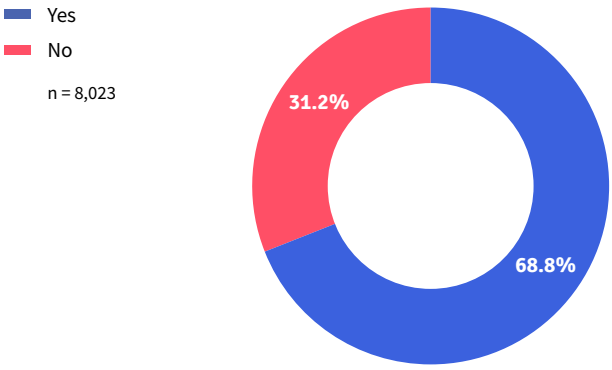


Professional Development & the LMS

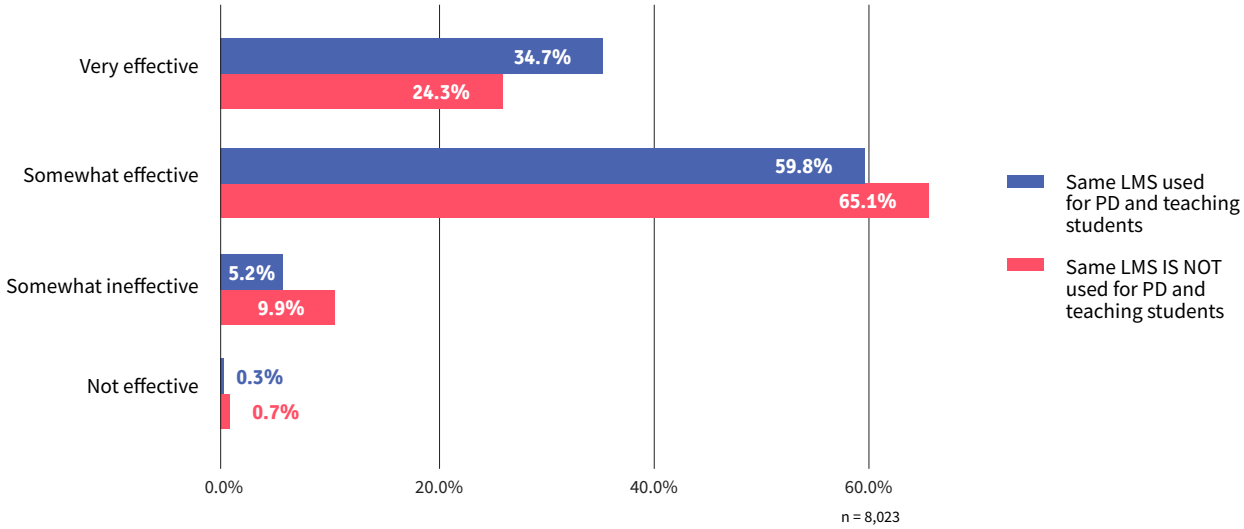
With almost 10% growth from last year, nearly 70% of respondents use the same LMS for teaching students as they do for conducting professional development for teachers. Using the same LMS teachers use in the classroom to facilitate professional development is a proven best practice and we are pleased to see more institutions adopting the model, providing teachers with the opportunity for asynchronous PD and their own blended learning.

More respondents who consider themselves very effective at using technology for teaching also work at an institution that uses the same LMS for students and professional development.

Is the same LMS used for teaching students also used to conduct or support professional development?



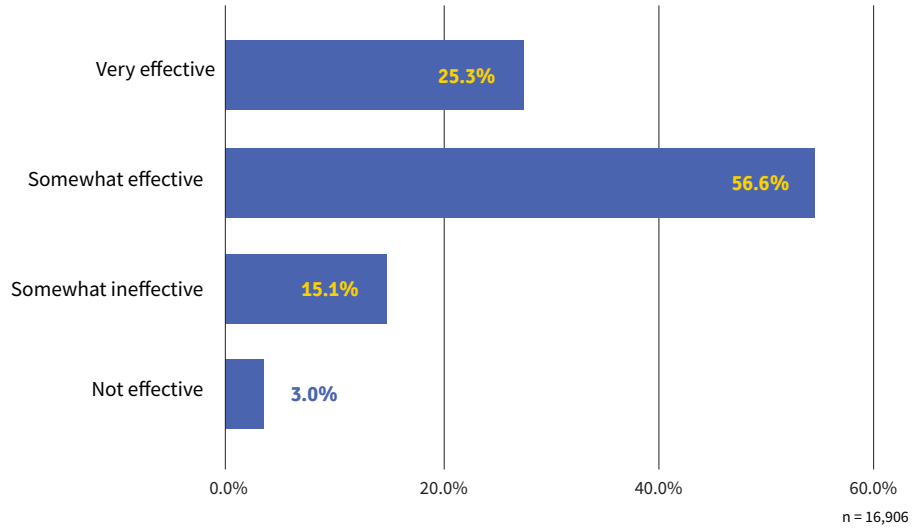
How effective do you consider yourself or the instructors at your institution to be at using technology for teaching? (broken down by LMS use case)



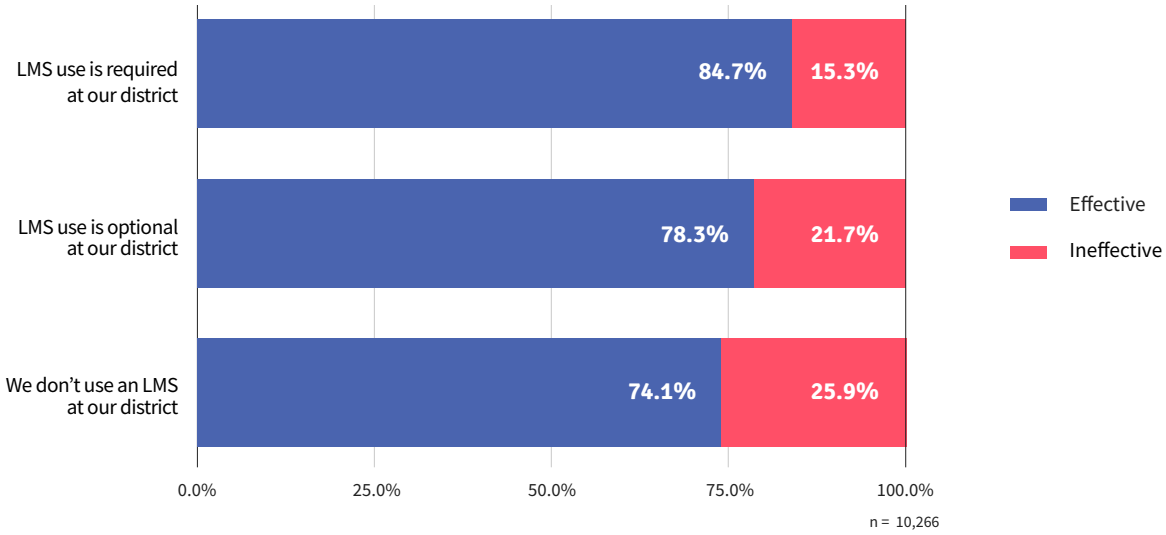
Collaboration in Education

82% of respondents feel their school or district is at least somewhat effective at enabling collaboration between teachers. As the data shows, schools and districts in which LMS usage is mandated are the most effective at enabling collaboration. These responses support the idea that the LMS is one of the most effective tools for facilitating not only teaching and learning, but collaboration, as well.

How effective is your district or private school at enabling collaboration among educators?



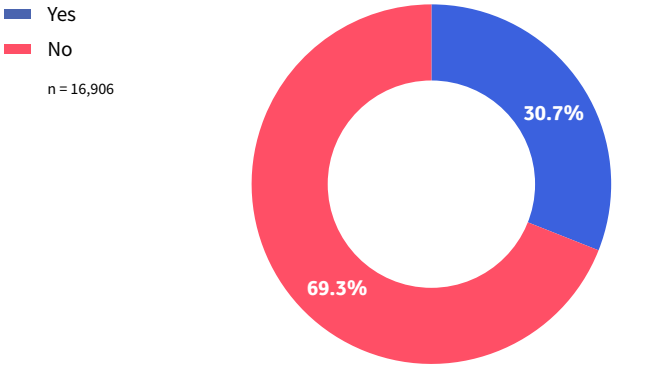
How effective is your district or private school at enabling collaboration among educators?
(broken down by required/optional LMS use)



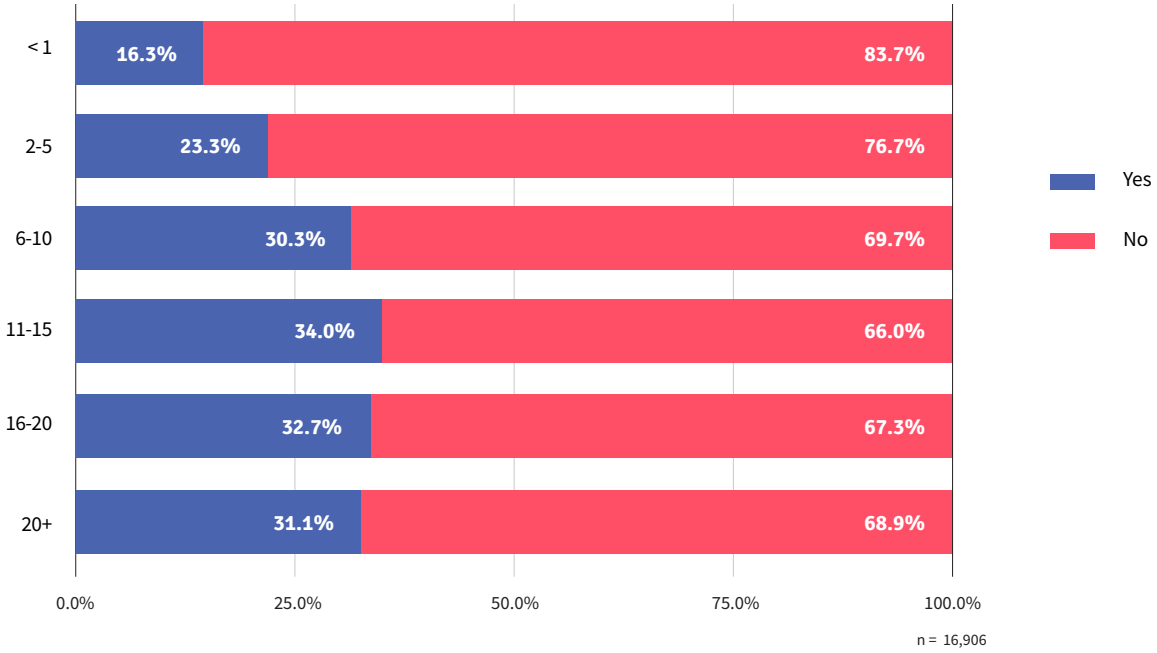
Twitter for Professional Growth

A resounding 69% of respondents use Twitter for professional growth and connecting with other professionals in the field of education. Teachers with 11-20 years of experience are most likely to use Twitter as a professional learning network (PLN).

Do you use Twitter to connect with other educators?



Do you use Twitter to connect with other educators?
(broken down by years worked in education)

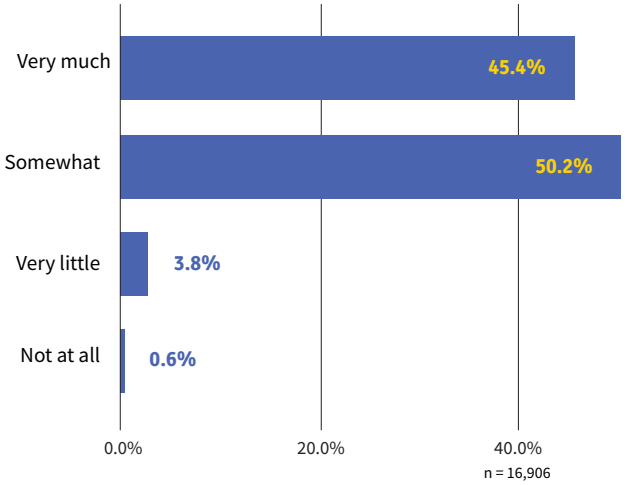


The Human Impact of Digital Learning

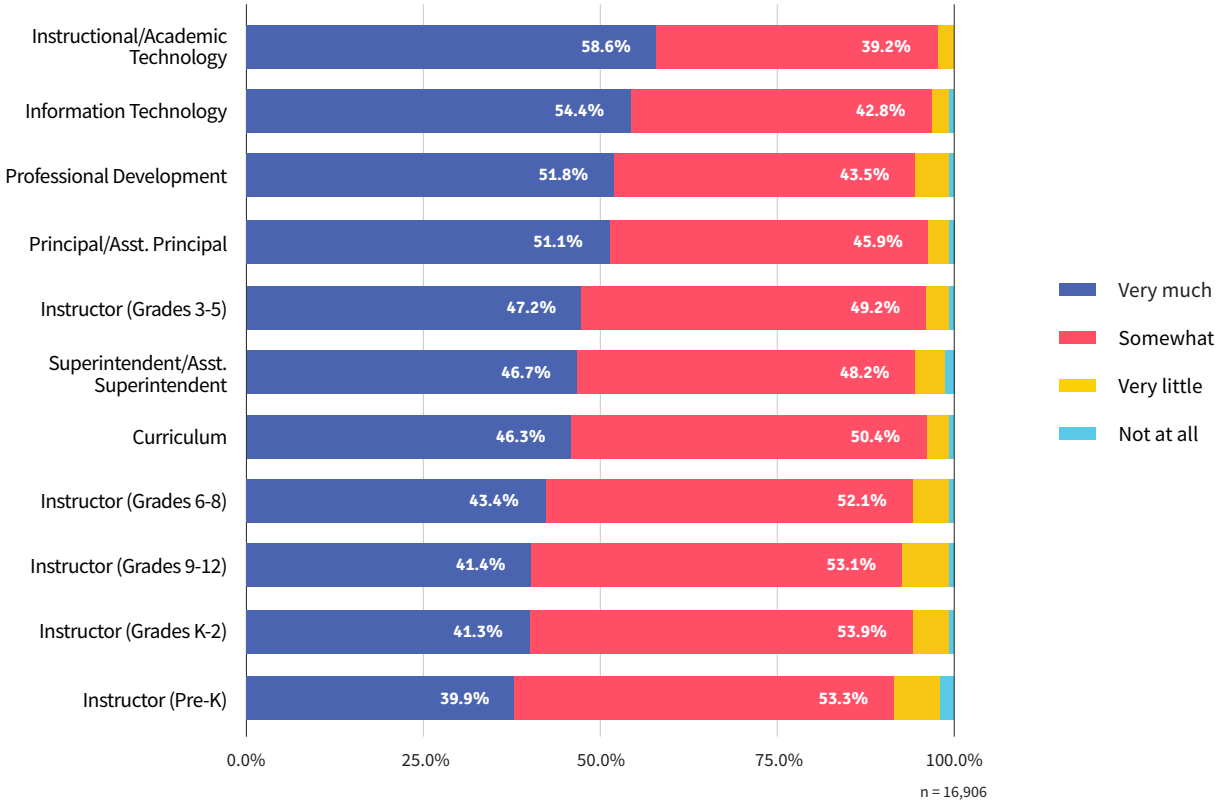
Impact of Digital Learning on Student Achievement

An overwhelming 95.6% of respondents agree that digital learning has a positive impact on student achievement. Though it's interesting to note that classroom teachers spanning all grades did not find digital learning as highly effective as their colleagues in instructional technology, professional development and administrative roles.

In your opinion, does digital learning positively impact student achievement?



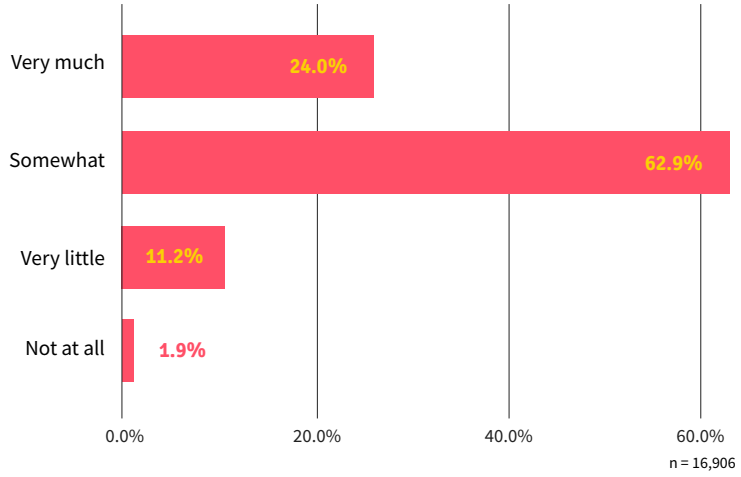
In your opinion, does digital learning positively impact student achievement?
(broken down by job function)



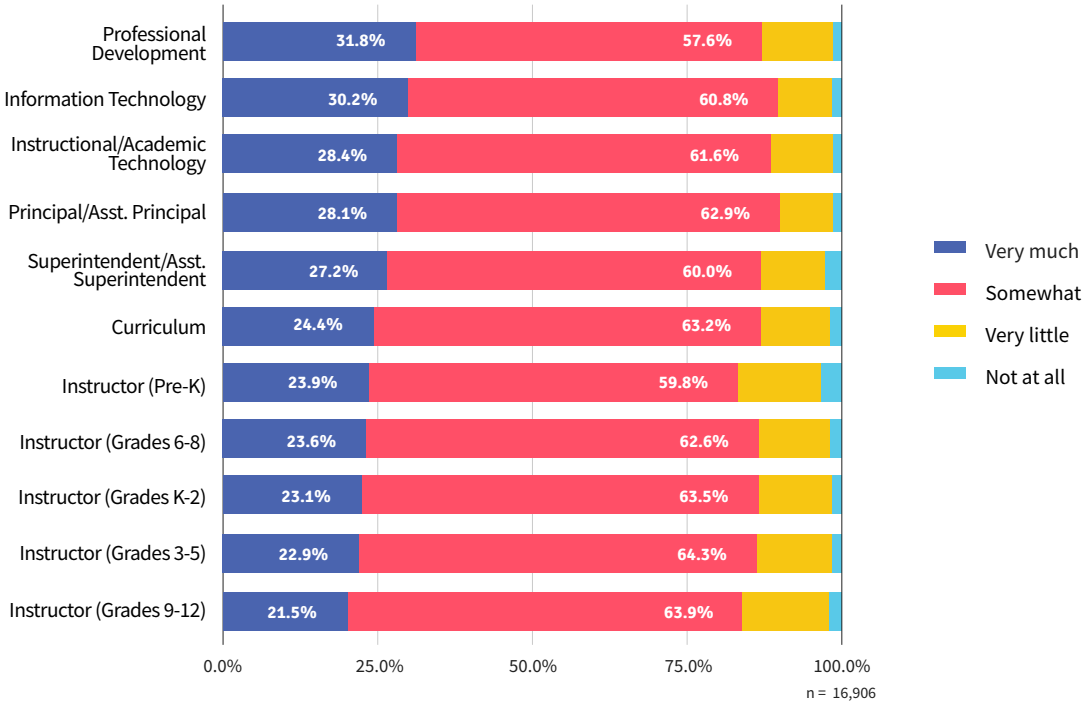
Impact of Digital Learning on Instructor Effectiveness

A majority of respondents agree that the rise of digital learning has helped teachers become more effective. Administrators felt the most strongly about the impact of digital learning on teacher effectiveness, while classroom teachers hovered at the opposite end of the spectrum.

In your opinion, has the rise of digital learning made instructors at your district or private school more effective?



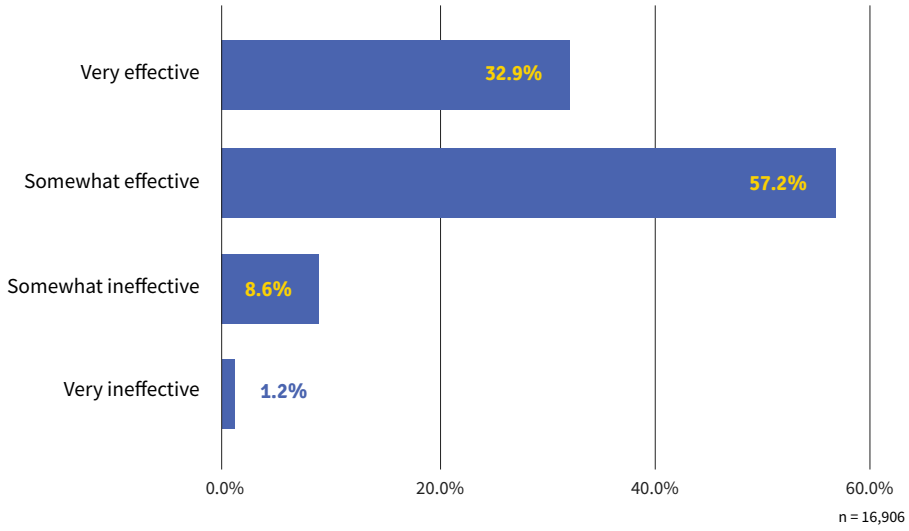
In your opinion, has the rise of digital learning made instructors at your district or private school more effective? (broken down by job function)



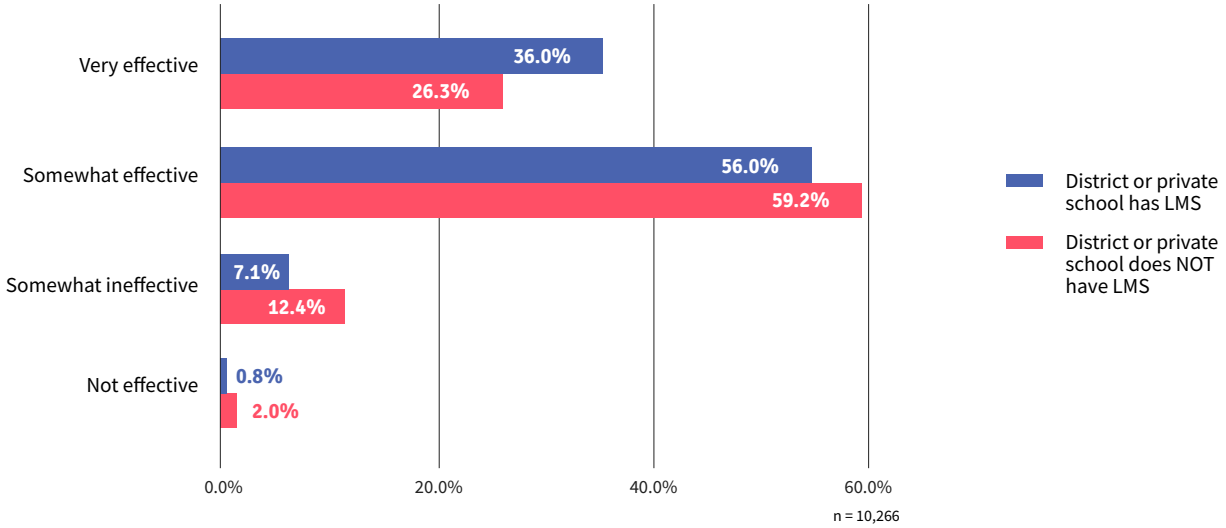
Preparing Students for College and Careers

90% of respondents consider their district or private schools to be effective at preparing students for life beyond K-12 education. Not surprisingly, schools and districts who use an LMS are more likely to feel that they're more effective at preparing students for college and careers, further demonstrating the value of combining education and technology.

How effective at preparing students for college and career readiness do you consider your district or private schools to be?



How effective at preparing students for college and career readiness do you consider your institution to be? (broken down by LMS adoption)



Final Thoughts

So there you have it—the interpreted results of Schoology's third annual State of Digital Learning survey. Thanks to your contributions and diverse insights, we were able to facilitate thoughtful conversations around digital learning and its impact. We are continuing to gauge the top priorities and challenges for teachers and administrators and have gathered more evidence of the importance of a dedicated instructional technology staff. We will continue to make strides toward understanding effective professional development.

We truly appreciate everyone who participated in this survey, our largest to-date. And a special thanks to all of you who worked tirelessly to compile and interpret the data, design and implement the survey, and present it to the public.

The journey is far from over. There is more work to be done and we will continue to dig into this data and share the useful insights we discover with you via eBooks, infographics, articles and blog posts.

One thing's for sure, the state of professional development needs to be addressed. It's a problem with far-reaching effects. Edtech community, this is our call to action! Who's with us?