

Teachers as

Consumers

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PART 1

Introduction

Teachers are responsible for allocating spending and making initial purchasing decisions before, during and after the school year. Whether it's buying physical school supplies for the classroom or recommending a new virtual education program to the principal or other major stakeholders, teachers play a major role in how a school invests its funding.

Since teachers are clearly consumers, it's important to understand their specific buying habits. This can help you direct your marketing efforts to the most valuable teachers in hopes of creating long-lasting relationships with them.

In this eBook, we'll cover the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how teachers are allocating their spending for the 2021-2022 school year.





PART 2

The market and why it matters

In the U.S., there are **4.3 million** K-12 school staff, with 3.7 million of those individuals serving as teachers.

Higher education represents about **1.6 million** staff and educators.

Data collected from November 2020 states that the working-age population in the U.S. totals **205 million**, with 7 million (3.4%) of those individuals representing teachers.

As you can see, the market here is large. But there are a variety of factors that impact this number on a regular basis. Promotions, school transfers, taking on additional responsibilities and retirement are a few of the many reasons this dynamic market sees a 20% staff turnover rate annually.

Understanding how to properly target those who are going to stick around in the profession is critical, and better catering to their learning needs as tech becomes increasingly important is crucial.





PART 3

2021-2022 school year is challenging



It should come as no surprise that the 2021-2022 school year was always going to be a challenge for teachers. It brought students, teachers, faculty, staff and administration back into the building for in-person learning for the first time in months. With that came many challenges, however. In fact, according to our 2021 Teaching Spending Survey, 4 in 10 teachers admitted that they didn't feel properly prepared coming into the new school year. This makes sense, as 77% of those surveyed said that the previous school year was the hardest on record.

Adjusting to social distancing and mask mandates after learning in a remote/hybrid setting for a year or more was difficult to handle based on the sole fact that it was a new normal to get used to. But 79% of teachers also believed that the pandemic caused many students to lose out. Unfortunately, 72% of teachers said it set their students' learning back.

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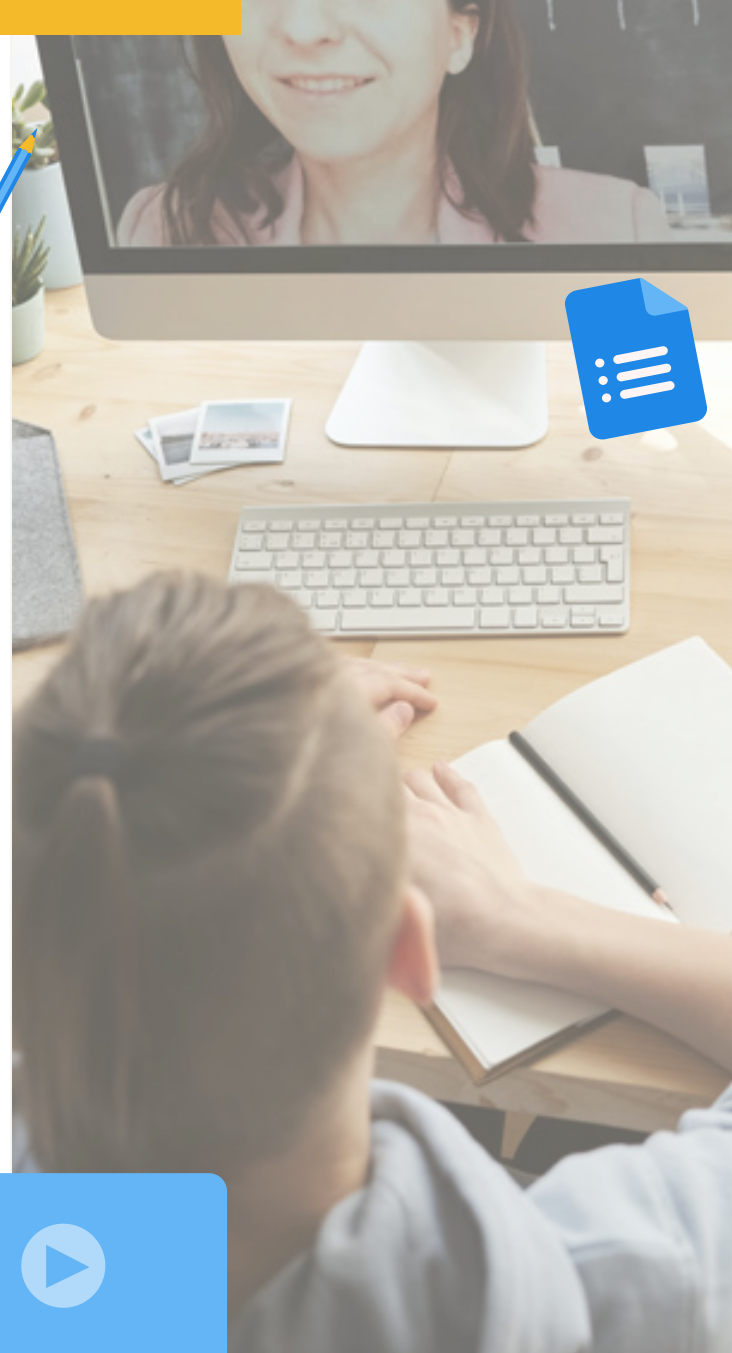
PART 4

The COVID learning and spending impact

Teachers were expected to help their students learn with a mix of methods. Some students went fully remote, others stayed in the classroom and 85% of teachers said that at one point during the pandemic, they've had to use a combination of in-person and live or asynchronous virtual learning.

A large percentage of teachers are doing something to address learning loss as a result of the pandemic (86%), with 76% of schools reportedly encouraging students to enroll in summer school to make up for the learning gap.

However, only 30% say that they will adjust the curriculum, tutor or offer access to online tools to get kids back on track. This is likely due to their constraints on resourcing, funding and time.



The COVID learning and spending impact (continued)

“Expect the unexpected” is a statement that most working professionals can attest to during the pandemic, and teachers may be at the front of the pack in this aspect. While many schools are back to in-person learning, a rise in COVID-19 cases could lead to complete school closure and send teachers and students back to their at-home classrooms in the blink of an eye.

Many teachers are already planning for this and 86% still anticipate issuing devices to every student. An additional 27% of teachers plan to get WiFi hotspots to students who don't have internet access at home. Almost half of all teachers surveyed will purchase these devices themselves or make recommendations to the school to purchase additional tools and resources.





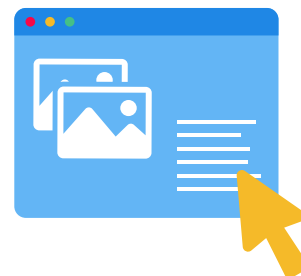
PART 5

Teachers moral support

As teachers tried to cope with the pandemic, support was necessary for many different factors.

Nearly 85% of teachers agreed that support from their peers is what got them through the hardest parts of the school year. Another 58% gave credit to school administrators for helping them, and 58% were credited to family and friends for support.

Getting through the first school year during the pandemic would've been impossible without the right tools and resources. Therefore, 72% of teachers cited technology software and 58% said hardware was important in making it to the end of the school year. Only around 39% of teachers said parents were supportive during this time, and only 39% said district administrators and 28% said the local community was helpful.



Teachers resource support

In the middle of a pandemic, teachers are shelling out almost \$400 of their own money to purchase supplemental learning materials. This is because over a third of all teachers surveyed agreed that their school's budget couldn't adequately cover the costs needed to take care of classroom supplies, instructional materials and educational professional development.

On average, teachers spent about \$386 out of pocket to purchase learning materials and other classroom supplies for the 2020-2021 school year, and nearly 35% spent over \$500. Overall, 40% of teachers agreed that they've spent more of their own money on school supplies for the students than they ever have in years past.





PART 7

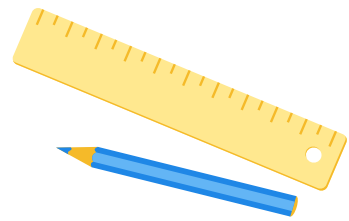
School expenses: Decision-makers

Schools are constantly making purchases throughout the year. Whether it's replacing interactive whiteboards during the third semester or purchasing new projectors, computers and learning supplies for the following year, decision-makers in school are also full-time shoppers.

Most schools finalize their budgets during April, May and June. And while the administrator is generally the last person to sign off on a purchase, there's a good chance that this individual didn't play a major role in the initial browsing process. Since teachers are typically the individuals who utilize the tools and resources the most, they will likely play some role in the buying decision, even if it's only to influence the final decision-maker.

With so many stakeholders in a school setting, purchasing for educational purposes has to be a group effort.





PART 7

School expenses: Decision-makers (continued)

When it comes to purchasing materials and supplies, teachers play a critical role in the final decision. **Technology is a different story.**

Over 80% of teachers said that they have some input and personal involvement in purchasing materials and school supplies for their own classrooms. About 30% of teachers didn't have full approval to purchase whatever they wanted, but 12% admitted to being about to choose supplies from a pre-approved list.

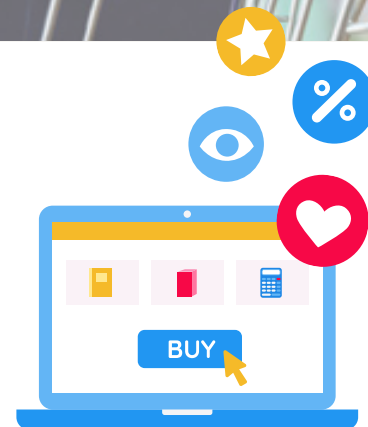
Involvement in technology purchases is much different from teacher leeway in supplies. Less than 50% of teachers have any input when it comes to technology decisions, and only 5% are given a technology budget altogether. Most teachers say that their IT director and principal are in control of selecting the technology that will be used in their classroom. In most cases, teachers, department leads and curriculum directors have no say in the tech that enters the classroom.





PART 8

Teacher shopping behavior

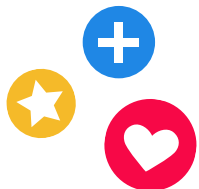


Many teachers agree that their profession can consume their identity. And while they're helping school stakeholders make purchasing decisions, they're also spending their own money elsewhere.

In the next year, 85% of teachers said they will make a large purchase, with more than 61% admitting they will allocate money towards going on a long vacation.

To make purchasing decisions, 97% of teachers say they research brands through online reviews, searches and by word-of-mouth.

Teachers know a brand is teacher-friendly when it offers discounts and supports causes tied to education. When it comes to using a teacher discount, 92% agreed they would use it to buy classroom or school supplies, but also on discretionary purchases on dining, computers/mobile devices, entertainment, travel, subscription services and clothing.





Tips for selling to teachers

By now, you understand that teachers make a large contribution to the decision-making that goes into purchases. But understanding how to reach them outside of the classroom is essential. Here are some tips to do this successfully:

1. **Engage** highly influential teachers and harness their spending power with direct outreach efforts.
2. **Connect** with teachers during breaks and over the summer. Teachers need to continue enhancing their skills to be ready for the next school year or semester.
3. **Build** your brand and market directly to influential teachers. Educator Marketplace is a great resource to use for expanding your channel strategy and connecting with opt-in teachers. Here, you can offer exclusive promotions to those who show interest.





PART 10

Conclusion

School staff rosters are publicly available. On top of that, Agile's data team has relationships with state officials and department heads so we can get a clear focus on who's retiring, transferring schools, taking on more responsibilities or leaving the industry.

With this information, you can get a better idea of who to reach out to within your target market. Agile can help you filter your demographic and find the right educational professional to supply your edtech recommendations.

To learn more about what we have to offer, [contact Agile directly today.](#)





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