

White Paper

State of K-12 Education in America



Introduction

The education sector isn't immune to the impacts of social, technological, political, and economic change. As such, it's crucial to be aware of developments both outside and inside the education industry. Agile Education Marketing recently conducted focused market research to understand, in more detail, the most salient issues teachers and administrators are facing.

550 education professionals—specifically, 354 K-12 teachers and 196 K-12 administrators and support staff—were surveyed. Respondents answered between nine and 10 questions (depending on their role) about key themes such as budgets and spending, educational materials, and priorities and the need for and access to supplemental services.

These answers were categorized according to the participant's formal designation, the grades which they serve, and whether they work at a public or private school. The results shed light on the current state of education across various categories such as Mental Health, Security and Safety, Student Behavior and Performance, Funding, and Budgets.

2023 Agile Education Marketing Survey: Key Findings

Educational professionals across grades in public and private schools seem to share similar sentiments about the majority of concerns and challenges. Below is an overview of the data grouped according to six categories: Mental Health and Preparedness, Cyberbullying and Cybersecurity, Health and Safety, Funding and Budgets, as well as Student Behavior and Performance.



TEACHERS' MENTAL HEALTH AND PREPAREDNESS

Mental and emotional support was named as a top priority by both teachers and administrators. **92.3%** of administrators reported feeling responsible for supporting teachers to varying degrees.

The majority of teachers (**65%**) said their school's administration had done a good job to support their mental and emotional health, especially high school teachers, but **17%** felt administration had not done enough.

In terms of stress teachers experienced over the past year:



50.5% said they were moderately to highly stressed about their ability to do their job.



50.3% reported feeling the same degrees of stress related to the support (or lack thereof) they received from administration.



When asked about their ability to support their students, **54.2%** felt little to no stress.



Just over that percentage of teachers (**58.5%**) experienced the same level of stress regarding how safe they feel at school.

On average, high school teachers reported more stress than any other grade group.



Despite the above reported stress, **84.6%** of teachers reported feeling prepared or very prepared to teach. However, private school teachers were **12.5%** more likely to feel prepared to effectively teach and cover grade-level instruction in comparison to public school teachers.

CYBERBULLYING AND CYBERSECURITY

Interestingly, this is one of the few areas in which teacher and administration perceptions differ quite widely.

67.4% of administrators thought it's somewhat or very likely that someone from their school will experience cyberbullying and placed it in their top three concerns, whereas teachers did not.

56.6% of this same cohort believe that it's somewhat or very likely that their school will experience some form of cyberattack. Perhaps unsurprisingly, private school administrators are more likely to report feeling greater readiness in the event of a cyber threat or breach.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

These results can be analyzed within two separate categories, namely disease and school violence. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, just over half (**55.6%**) of all school administrators believe it's likely that their school will experience a new infectious disease, and this was more prominent in private school teachers and administrators.

Overall, both teachers and administrators are concerned about the school violence epidemic in America. **60%** of administrators think it's likely that someone (or some people) in their school will be a victim of physical violence, and private school administrators were **16.2%** more likely to hold this view.

More specifically, **59.3%** of all respondents believe this violence might take the form of a school shooting or bomb threat. This belief is **13.75%** more likely to be held by private school administrators.

Curiously, administrators reported feeling more prepared to handle an act of violence than an infectious disease. That said, public school administrators were **10%** more likely than their private counterparts to say they don't feel prepared for school violence.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND PERFORMANCE

When asked about their top three most prevalent challenges that students faced the past year, teachers and administrators were in agreement for the most part. Both groups said that students being able to focus on the task at hand while using digital devices was a concern.

Teachers' other two primary worries included concern about students' inadequate math skills and learning gaps or loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding teachers' obstacles, teachers and administrators alike agreed that student performance and standardized tests, as well as students' behavioral issues, are notable problems.



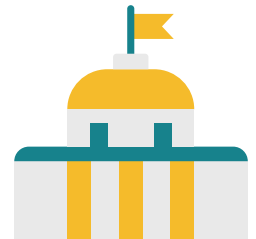
FUNDING AND BUDGETS

Teachers' (across all grades) and administrators' views were generally aligned when it came to school resources and spending. Both agreed that general school supplies are the least funded resource, followed by computers and other electronic devices.

Notably, public school teachers were **10%** more likely than private ones to report this as an issue. Furthermore, teachers of grades 5-8 reported spending more of their own money on classroom supplies than any other grade level. **92%** of teachers said they spend between \$400-\$500 of their own money on school supplies every year.

Regarding funding for school safety, kindergarten teachers in particular felt that security measures at their schools are seriously underfunded. By contrast, teachers and administrators both feel textbooks and software licenses are among the most adequately funded school resources.

In terms of budgeting, more than three-quarters (**76.27%**) of teachers believe that administrators understand and prioritize teaching needs when drawing up budgets. That said, over four-fifths (**81.6%**) of administrators think that the budgeting process has become more difficult over the last five years. Despite that obstacle, **61.7%** of administrators are optimistic that they'll receive increased funding in the coming year.



Challenges and Implications for the Education Industry at Large

These data point to some crucial common threads, often highlighting a disparity between private and public schools:

1. There's a degree of misalignment between teachers and administrators regarding the problems they believe students are facing.
2. The threat of violence and infectious disease is very real. Many teachers don't feel safe and supported at school, and those who do are more likely to be employed at private schools.
3. General school supplies underfunding is a glaring problem, especially in public schools.
4. While private school professionals are more worried about cyberbullying, public school employees are more concerned about cybersecurity and attacks.
5. While private school staff have greater fears surrounding safety, public school administrators feel less equipped to handle incidents, and public school teachers struggle more with poor student behavior.

These trends aren't unique to Agile Education Marketing's research. Data released by the National Center for Education Statistics¹ shows that the frequency of student misconduct, acts of disrespect, rowdiness outside of the classroom, and prohibited use of electronic devices has increased dramatically over the last several years.

As a result, almost 80% of respondents at the surveyed schools believe they require more support for staff and student mental health. Unsurprisingly, a meta-analysis conducted by Westphal et. al. found that burnout across K-12 teachers has also risen significantly².

Despite the ubiquity of digital devices, research from Rahman et. al. found that digital literacy levels are still low to moderate at best³. In the case of K-12 students, this leaves them vulnerable to cyberbullying and malicious cyber attacks.

Additional data from Agile Education Marketing⁴ showed that school officials are concerned about a lack of funding, and teachers have little knowledge of or say in how funds are spent.

What implications do these findings have for the industry as a whole?

It's clear that there's a need for greater provision of psychological support to teachers, such as stress management training and access to counselors. Schools will also have to invest in greater safety and security measures. Local and federal governments must allocate more funding for this endeavor in public schools.

Furthermore, school boards and districts will need to rethink their approach to budgeting, with a greater focus on ensuring that perennially underfunded categories—such as general school supplies—are not passed on to teachers' pocketbooks. More resources should be directed toward strengthening schools' cybersecurity posture and digital literacy education to prevent breaches and cyberbullying.



Keep Abreast of Industry Trends with Agile Education Marketing

In the face of this mountain of concerns and challenges, it's painfully apparent that schools will have to make tough decisions when it comes to budgeting. This means education vendors need to respond accordingly and outmaneuver their competition when it comes to effectively positioning their education products and services, because there are only so many resources schools can afford to purchase.

Now more than ever, service providers need data to drive their marketing decision-making processes to keep pace with developments in the education sector.

However, combing through heaps of information is a laborious and time-consuming task, and those resources could be better utilized elsewhere.

The good news is that you don't need to tackle that undertaking alone. Agile Education Marketing has a vast service portfolio designed to help businesses confidently make data-informed decisions to take their marketing strategy to the next level.

Our extensive [Education Data](#) repository makes it easy to increase efficiency, productivity, and lead generation. [Data products](#) geared toward integration, targeting, and data analysis empower users to make the most of their data. For those who need a helping hand, our [data services](#) are designed to turn your data into actionable insights.

Reach out to us today to learn how we can best support your needs and meet your goals.

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SOURCES

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