

RESEARCH SURVEY

THE PATH TOWARD DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION:

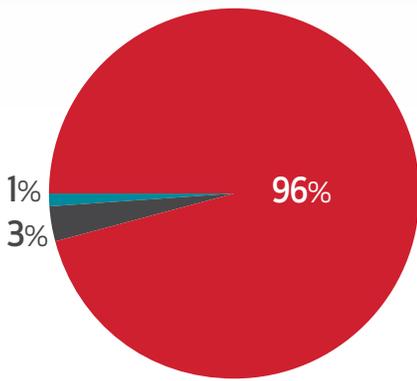
Technology Trends in K-12 Education



Faced with the need to increase graduation rates, keep students engaged, and prepare them for continuing education and the workforce, K-12 leaders are turning to technology for help. To get a better sense of where schools and districts are in the digital transformation process, and to assess drivers and obstacles, the Center for Digital Education (CDE) recently surveyed 101 K-12 decision-makers. The research revealed that while K-12 education is leading the way in digital transformation, leaders are still taking a gradual approach and focusing on the areas of greatest need first. While most efforts are focused on student learning and classroom innovation, schools and districts are also looking to automate back-office and administrative workflows.

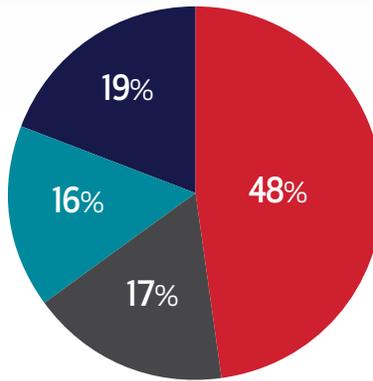
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

INSTITUTION TYPE



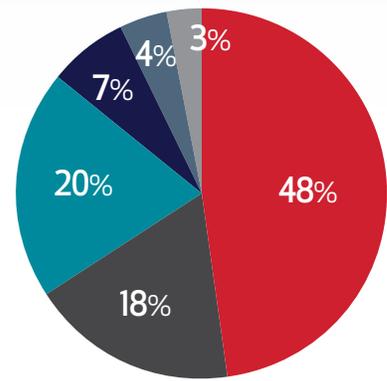
- K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- K-12 PRIVATE SCHOOLS
- K-12 CHARTER SCHOOLS

NUMBER OF STUDENTS



- LESS THAN 2,500
- 2,500 - 9,999
- 10,000 - 29,999
- 30,000 OR MORE

JOB ROLE



- FACULTY/EDUCATOR
- LEADERSHIP/ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, NON-IT
- IT LEADERSHIP/MANAGER
- IT SUPPORT STAFF
- NON-CLASSROOM STUDENT SUPPORT
- OTHER

K-12 IS LEADING THE WAY IN INNOVATION

An overwhelming majority of respondents (61%) either said they are innovators or early adopters when it comes to digital transformation — ahead of higher education respondents who were asked the same question in a broader survey. It comes as no surprise that K-12 leaders are leveraging technology in forward-thinking ways, such as to improve accessibility for students with disabilities. For instance, nearly 40 percent of respondents said they are making more accommodations for test takers by providing online options.

TOP 3 WAYS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

PROVIDING MORE OPTIONS FOR TEST TAKERS LIKE ONLINE TESTING



ENSURING COMPUTER SERVICES ARE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL STUDENTS



CREATING AN ONLINE TEACHING PLATFORM THAT MEETS ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS



IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING IS THE DRIVER OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Student learning is at the heart of digital transformation in K-12 education. As digital natives, today's students expect to use technology in all aspects of their lives, including education. And they need to be prepared to utilize it in higher education and the workforce. At the same time, K-12 leaders recognize not every student learns in the same way. They are turning to technology to individualize instruction, enhance engagement and ensure students are ready for the future. In fact, 80 percent of respondents said preparing students for the workforce is their top digital transformation driver.

TOP 5 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION DRIVERS

ENSURE STUDENTS ARE PREPARED FOR THE WORKFORCE



PROVIDE BETTER STUDENT EXPERIENCE



MODERNIZE TEACHING CURRICULA TO SUPPORT STUDENT NEEDS



IMPROVE STUDENT RETENTION, SUCCESS AND COMPLETION RATES



PROVIDE GREATER SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING NEEDS



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS WIDESPREAD

As the hub of learning in K-12, the classroom is a focus area for digital transformation efforts. The main tools districts plan to use in a digital learning environment include digital content (66%) and student information systems (SISs) or learning management systems (LMSs) (52%). However, the classroom isn't the only place where transformation will take place. Administrative offices (38%) and academic department buildings (22%) were also high on the list. It comes as no surprise that data security tools (29%) and automation technologies (26%) were also prioritized as important transformation technologies. When information is easy to access and secure, and time-consuming processes are automated, administrative staff and teachers have more time to focus on their main mission: improving student learning.

SPACES IN GREATEST NEED OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

CLASSROOMS



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES



STUDENT CENTERS



ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT BUILDINGS



MUSIC AND MEDIA CENTERS



MOST IMPORTANT DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TOOLS

DIGITAL CONTENT



SISs/LMSs



DATA SECURITY TOOLS



AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGIES



MANY DISTRICTS FACE BUDGETING CHALLENGES

Resource-strapped schools often find it difficult to fund technology purchases — nearly half of respondents said this is their greatest digital transformation challenge. But leaders can turn to publicly and privately funded grants to fill the gap. Passing a bond is another way to help pay for technology, maintenance or construction needs.

Digital transformation can be done in steps as funding is available — it doesn't have to be an all or none implementation. Even these small initial investments can pay off down the road, as the efficiencies of new technology can result in long-term cost savings. Districts are wise to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if the new technology will help achieve their goals, and whether it may provide added cost- and time-savings benefits such as reducing administrative time for data entry.

TOP DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGES

LACK OF FUNDING



DATA SECURITY CONCERNS



LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AMONG FACULTY/STAFF



INADEQUATE IT INFRASTRUCTURE



RESISTANCE TO CHANGE AMONG FACULTY/STAFF



FACULTY AND STAFF NEED TRAINING AND ONGOING SUPPORT

Introducing new technology can create a steep learning curve for educators. A significant segment of respondents (44%) cited a lack of knowledge among faculty and staff as the top digital transformation challenge at their school or district. Around the same number (43%) said resistance to change among faculty and staff is a major factor to address. To offset these roadblocks, schools (44%) are providing technical skills training to prepare teachers, administrators and staff to utilize new tools. A well-thought-out change management strategy will also help support staff throughout the process.

New technology also requires the right skillset to keep it running properly. Before training teachers, districts need to ensure their IT staff have the knowledge needed to operate the new tools and troubleshoot potential problems, including security issues. Some schools (29%) are hiring dedicated technology specialists to support the transition to digital curriculum, while others (23%) are making it a point to hire faculty and staff with technology skills.

CONCLUSION: ONGOING TRANSFORMATION

Digital transformation will be a continuous process at K-12 schools and districts for years to come. While it can seem overwhelming, the right partner can help leaders determine their areas of greatest need to start and then help ensure all processes work together seamlessly in the end. This will ensure schools and districts undergo digital transformation efforts that support their main goal: helping students be successful now and in the future.

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The Center for Digital Education is a national research and advisory institute specializing in K-12 and higher education technology trends, policy and funding. The Center provides education and industry leaders with decision support and actionable insight to help effectively incorporate new technologies in the 21st century.

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