

NEW
TEACHER
CONFIDENCE
INDEX

5th Annual Educator Confidence Report



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Message from Jack Lynch

Welcome to the **Fifth Annual Educator Confidence Report**.

At HMH®, we believe that the student-teacher relationship is the most vital part of the classroom experience. As a learning company focused on improving outcomes, we are committed to honoring and nurturing that relationship. To do this well, we must take the time to listen closely and understand the realities facing the teaching profession today, both the triumphs and challenges.

"We must take the time to listen closely and understand the realities facing the teaching profession today, both the triumphs and challenges."

In the pages ahead, you will find essential, powerful insights from educators across the country about the issues that impact them daily, from EdTech integration to salaries and school safety to the influence of environmental stressors on the classroom experience.

This year, we are also excited to introduce the first-ever Teacher Confidence Index, a unique measure of educators' overarching sentiment regarding the profession drawn from key survey indicators. This snapshot (the only one of its kind) captures an overall educator confidence score of 43 (out of 100). Surely, we can, and must, continue to improve.

This information is critical not only to HMH, but to all of us. The experiences of our students and educators are rich and nuanced, deserving of our full respect and understanding. While educators report increasing confidence in their use of educational technology and in their collaborative relationships with one another, their total confidence in the profession declined this year, with a new concern rising to the top of the list—the social and emotional needs of their students.

Our school communities offer much more than academics. They are essential spaces for growth, where young people learn how to be empathetic, confident, and engaged, responsible citizens. Our report reminds us how important a holistic approach to learning is and, in underscoring the educator perspective, helps all of us think critically about how to best support teachers as they work tirelessly each day to nurture and inspire the next generation.



Jack Lynch
President and Chief Executive Officer
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt



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Executive Summary

Since its inception in 2015, the Educator Confidence Report has provided a platform for teachers and administrators to share their views on the state of education. This year's analysis focuses heavily on teachers' views on several issues affecting instruction and students. In the parts of the report that highlight the outlook of the larger group of educators, we distinguish teachers' responses from those of administrators, and you'll see that the findings are similar across each group of educational professionals. Yet our overall goal is to make certain that our results are representative of teachers in particular and would generalize to classrooms across the country.

In order to garner a greater understanding of teachers' overall feeling toward the current state of the profession, we introduce our first yearly Teacher Confidence Index. The score was achieved by combining teachers' responses to key sentiments in the survey. This year's Confidence Index stands at 43 on a scale of 0–100. Confidence varies depending on teachers' location, grade level, and whether or not they work in a high-poverty or low-poverty school.

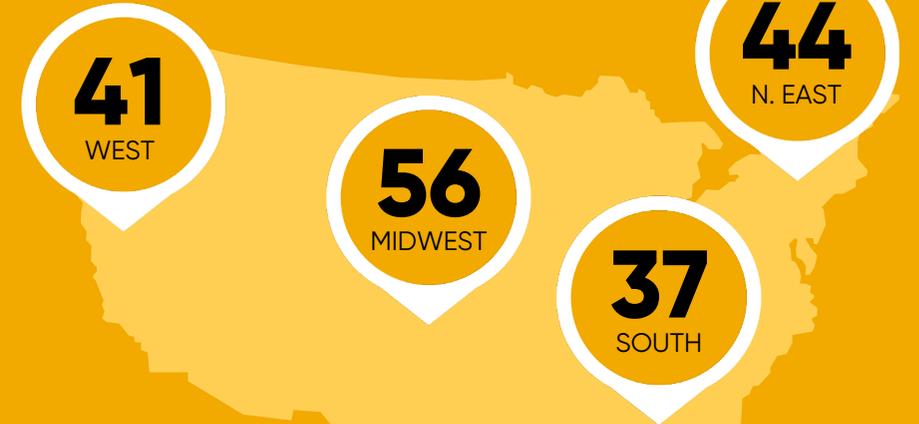
TEACHER CONFIDENCE INDEX

SCORES: 0–100

OVERALL TEACHER CONFIDENCE

43

BY LOCATION



BY POVERTY LEVELS

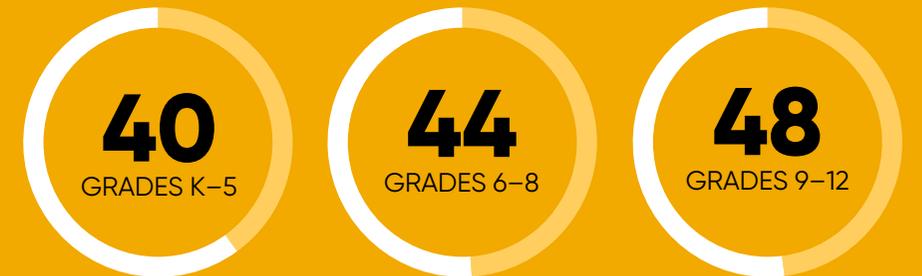


46
LOW POVERTY



41
HIGH POVERTY

BY GRADE

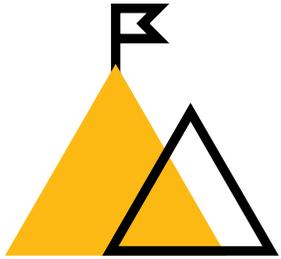


The Teacher Confidence Index is a composite variable comprised of four dimensions tapping teachers' view of the current state of education on a scale of 0–100 with higher scores indicating greater confidence.

Executive Summary

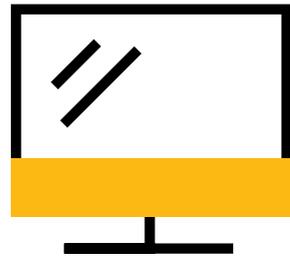
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The report highlights three key themes in education. One of them—social-emotional learning—emerged as a new focus because it is a top concern for educators. We share takeaways from each of the themes below. The report concludes with an analysis of the findings through an equity lens.



POINTS OF OPTIMISM, AREAS OF CONCERN

34% of teachers say they feel optimistic about the state of the profession, down from 50% in 2018.



DIGITAL USAGE AND PERSPECTIVES

65% of teachers are extremely or very confident in their ability to use EdTech, up 11 points since 2016.



EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES ON SEL

96% of teachers and 99% of administrators find that students increasingly need more social and emotional support.

“I think the greatest issue right now involves student stress and the motivation to learn. It is important that we make learning fascinating and draw students in. Teachers need to be creative and they need to teach within their own skill set. Therefore I object to too many checklists as to what good teaching is. Teachers need the freedom to develop their own niche. Technology can definitely support this.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER,
MINNESOTA

The Survey

Methodology:

- A total of 1,305 educators, including 1,102 teachers and 203 administrators, participated in the study.
- Educators were sourced from MDR's (Market Data Retrieval®) educator database.
- Data were collected between May 23 and June 5, 2019. The survey was carried out online.
- Average survey length was 15 minutes.
- Data were weighted to be nationally representative, in line with past waves of study.
- When charts and text reference "teachers," the data are among teachers only. When the word "educators" is used, the data are among both teachers and administrators.

2019 ECR BY THE NUMBERS

1,305
TOTAL
EDUCATORS



28%

HIGH-POVERTY
SCHOOL



21%

LOW-POVERTY
SCHOOL

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



10 OR LESS
33%

11 TO 20
37%

MORE THAN 20
30%

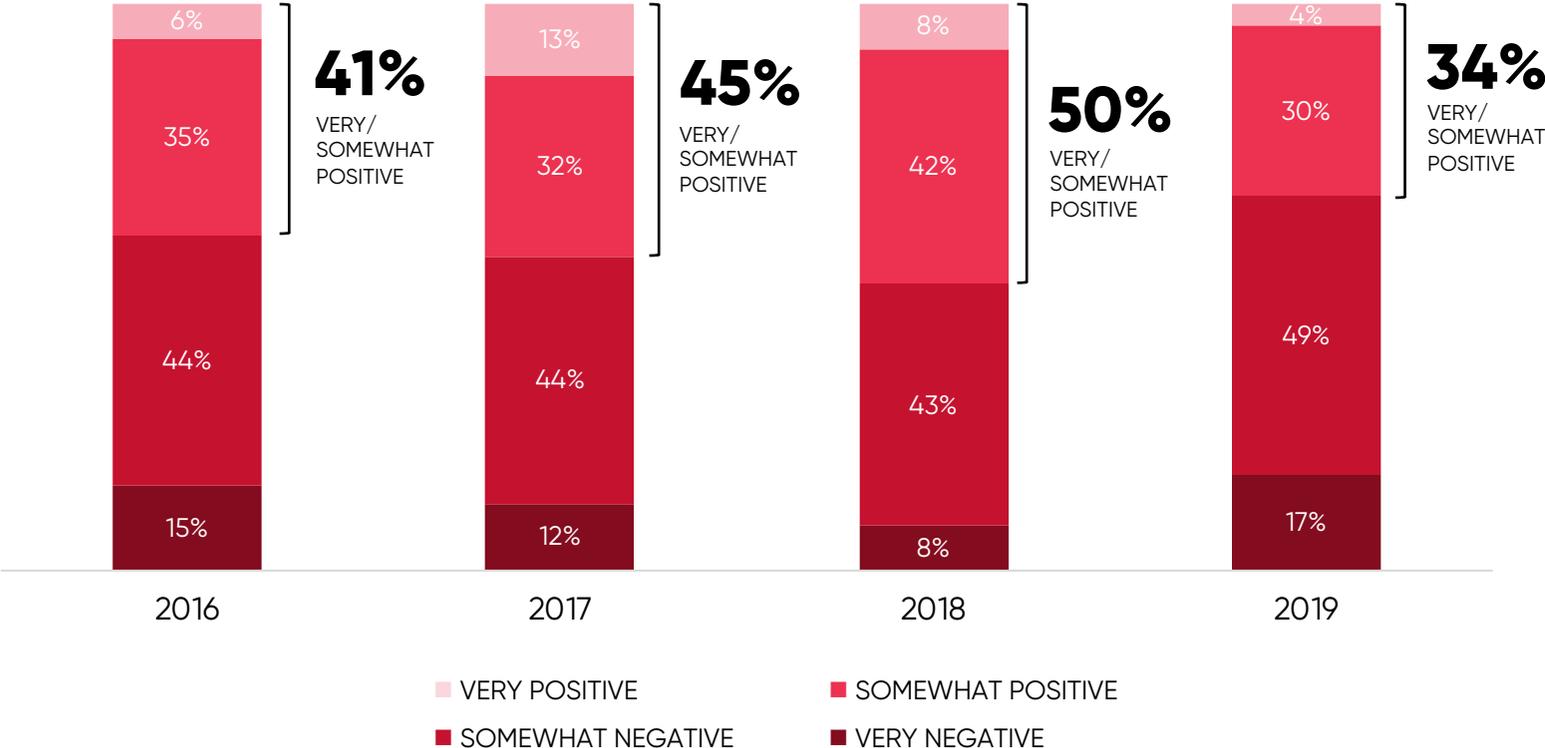
THE STATE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Points of Optimism,
Areas of Concern

Teacher Optimism Has Declined Significantly

Teacher optimism regarding the state of the teaching profession has decreased dramatically since last year, from 50% to 34% since 2018. And among those with five or more years of teaching, 65% say their views toward the profession are more negative now than they were five or so years ago.

Administrators remain less pessimistic about the state of the teaching profession than do teachers: their optimism has not waned since 2018, remaining at 57%. Still, 51% say they view the profession more negatively now than five years ago.



Points of Optimism on the Decline

Some aspects of teachers' jobs that prompted the most excitement last year, such as collaborating with colleagues and using data to inform instruction, have fallen in favor. We see this as another expression of overall discontent and not necessarily a waning of enthusiasm for any particular aspect of their work.

Other areas that fewer teachers are optimistic about relative to last year include a shift in standards to include a greater focus on critical thinking along with more opportunities for real-world application in curriculum and assessment, both down nine points.

"I'm an optimist, I really hope that politicians and state leaders are seeing the importance of the roles of teachers and will push for more help in the schools and classrooms."

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, NORTH CAROLINA

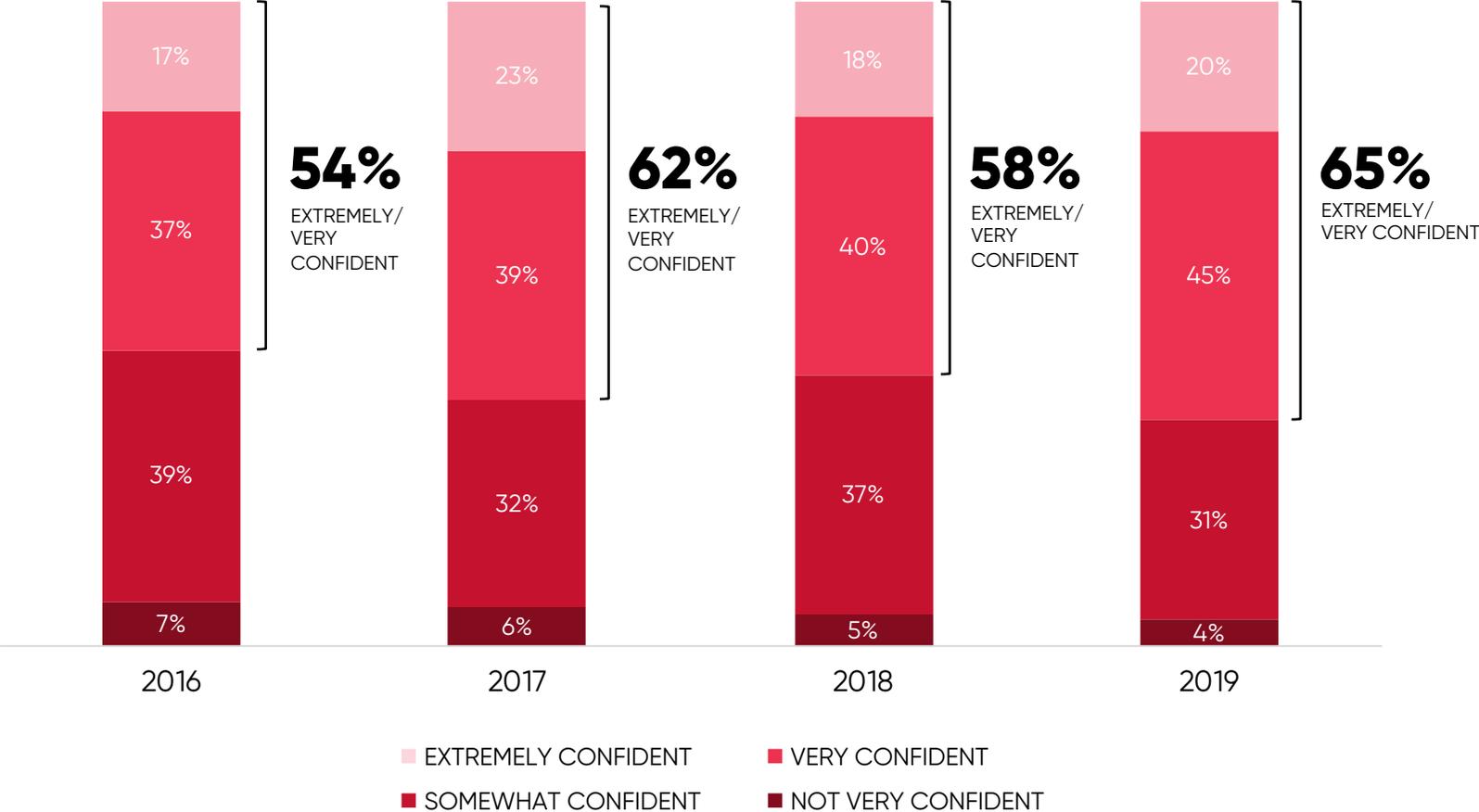
AREAS WHERE TEACHERS ARE ESPECIALLY OPTIMISTIC

Collaborating with colleagues to develop engaging/effective instruction for students	45%	↓ 8 pts
More access to online learning tools	38%	
Access to new open-source curriculum materials	37%	↓ 5 pts
A shift in standards toward requiring more critical thinking from students	35%	↓ 9 pts
Actually using data to inform/improve instruction instead of just collecting data	34%	↓ 6 pts
Increased attention being paid to student social and emotional needs*	33%	
More opportunities for real-world application in curriculum and assessment	31%	↓ 9 pts
Increased access to the latest technology	30%	

* Indicates item is new to 2019

Confidence in Using EdTech Is Up

Sixty-five percent of teachers are extremely or very confident in their ability to use EdTech in instructionally effective ways, up seven points from 2018 and up 11 points since 2016.



Benefits of Using EdTech

Nearly all teachers (95%) see the benefits of using educational technology, with 81% saying they experienced at least one of the top three benefits: student engagement, differentiated instruction, and readily accessible instructional content.

BENEFITS EXPERIENCED FROM USE OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Improved student engagement with learning	56%
Improved ability to deliver differentiated, individualized instruction	45%
Improved ability for students to access instructional content anytime/anywhere	45%
Time-savings in workflows and processes (like entering grades, tracking student growth, etc.)	37%
Time-savings in delivering instruction	36%
Greater ability to experiment and be innovative in the classroom	36%
Improved student achievement	31%



95%

OF TEACHERS
EXPERIENCED
BENEFITS FROM
USING EDTECH

Teachers and Administrators Are Aligned on Top Concerns

Each year since 2015, the Educator Confidence Report has shared educators' biggest concerns. To learn what's on their minds, we ask educators to rate 12 to 16 potential topics of concern. For the first three years, "lack of funding" topped the list. In 2018, we added teachers' low salaries as a topic, and that quickly pushed "lack of funding" from the top spot.

This year, the top concern of teachers and administrators is "the increasing social and emotional needs of students." The addition of SEL as a topic came in response to what we at HMH have heard from educators throughout the year, that the responsibility to address students' social and emotional needs is the biggest challenge they face.



TOP CONCERNS AMONG:

TEACHERS

- 75%** The increasing social and emotional needs of students
- 73%** Teachers' salaries being too low
- 66%** Lack of funding

ADMINISTRATORS

- 79%** The increasing social and emotional needs of students
- 69%** Lack of funding
- 57%** Teachers' salaries being too low

Stressors Inside and Outside the Classroom Impact Teachers

In response to a new question asked this year, 75% of teachers said that stressors from the educational environment make it difficult for them to be at their best in the classroom. This is not surprising in light of the teachers' concerns highlighted in the study. Administrators concur, with nearly 9 in 10 agreeing that stressors impact teachers' ability to be at their best.



STRESSORS FROM THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT—WHETHER FROM INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OUR DISTRICT—MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR TEACHERS TO BE THEIR BEST IN THE CLASSROOM

Teachers



Administrators



■ STRONGLY AGREE ■ AGREE

"I feel that the emotional issues I need to deal with on a daily basis take away so much time for learning for those that want to learn."

—AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER, MISSOURI

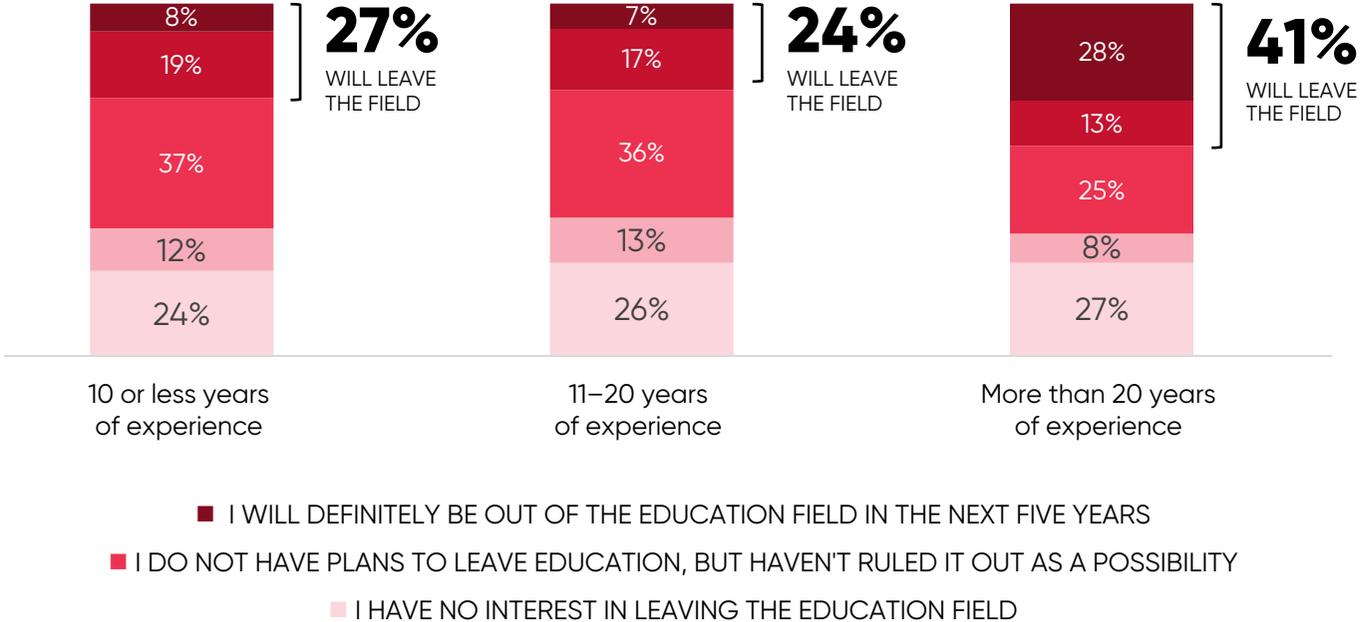


New Teachers at Risk of Leaving the Profession

Just 24% of teachers with 10 or fewer years of experience say they “have no interest” in leaving education. Eight percent say they will “definitely be out of the education field” in the next five years and another 19% report this sentiment comes close to how they feel.

Data are similar for teachers with 11 to 20 years of experience. Among teachers with more than 20 years (many of whom would be approaching retirement eligibility or are already eligible), 28% expect to be out of the field or retired in the next five years.

POSSIBILITY THAT TEACHERS WILL LEAVE THE FIELD IN FIVE YEARS



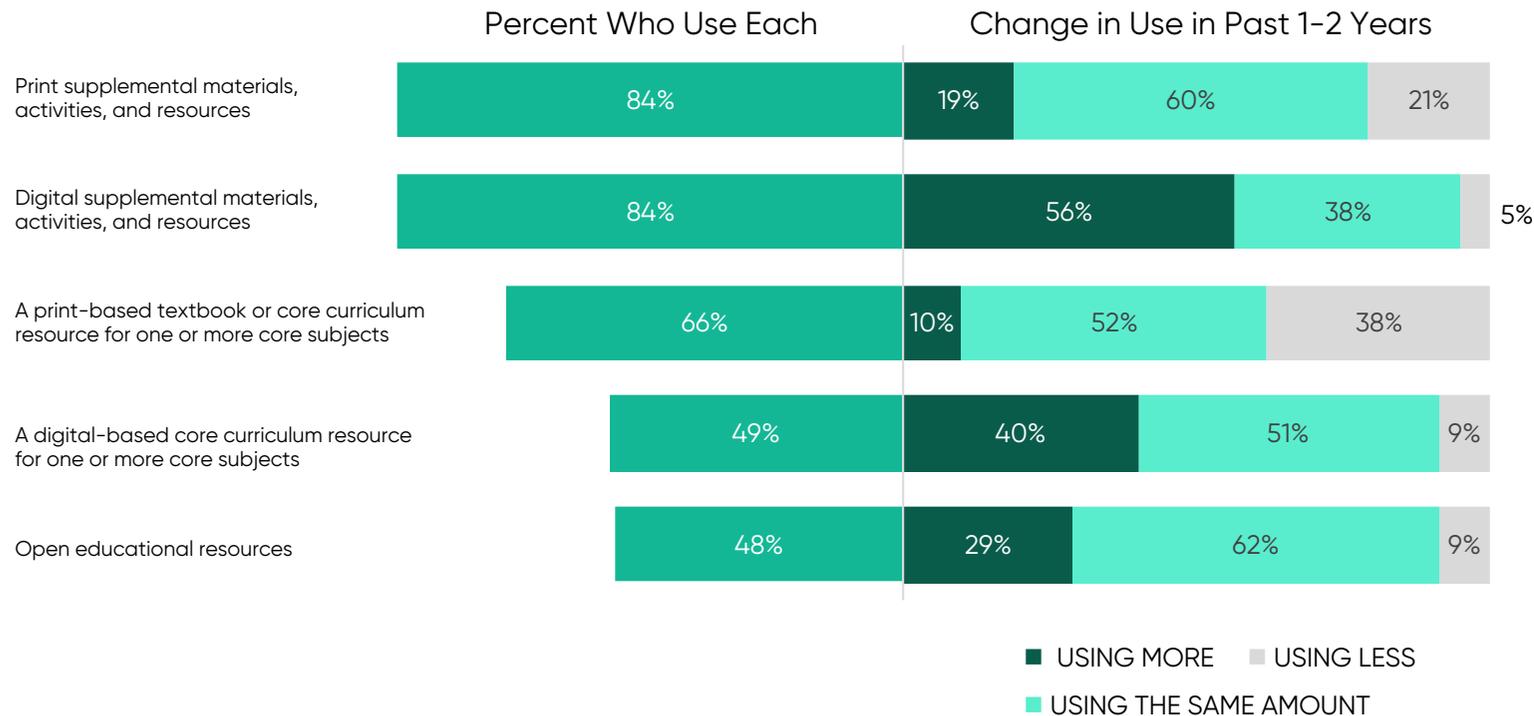
DIGITAL RESOURCES IN THE CLASSROOM

Current Usage
and Perspectives

Teachers Are Increasingly Turning to Digital Resources in the Classroom

A high percentage of teachers use both digital and print supplemental materials. While print core-curriculum resources are more readily available than digital resources, 38% of teachers say they are using print less often, and 40% say they are using digital core-curriculum resources more often.

RESOURCES TEACHERS USE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

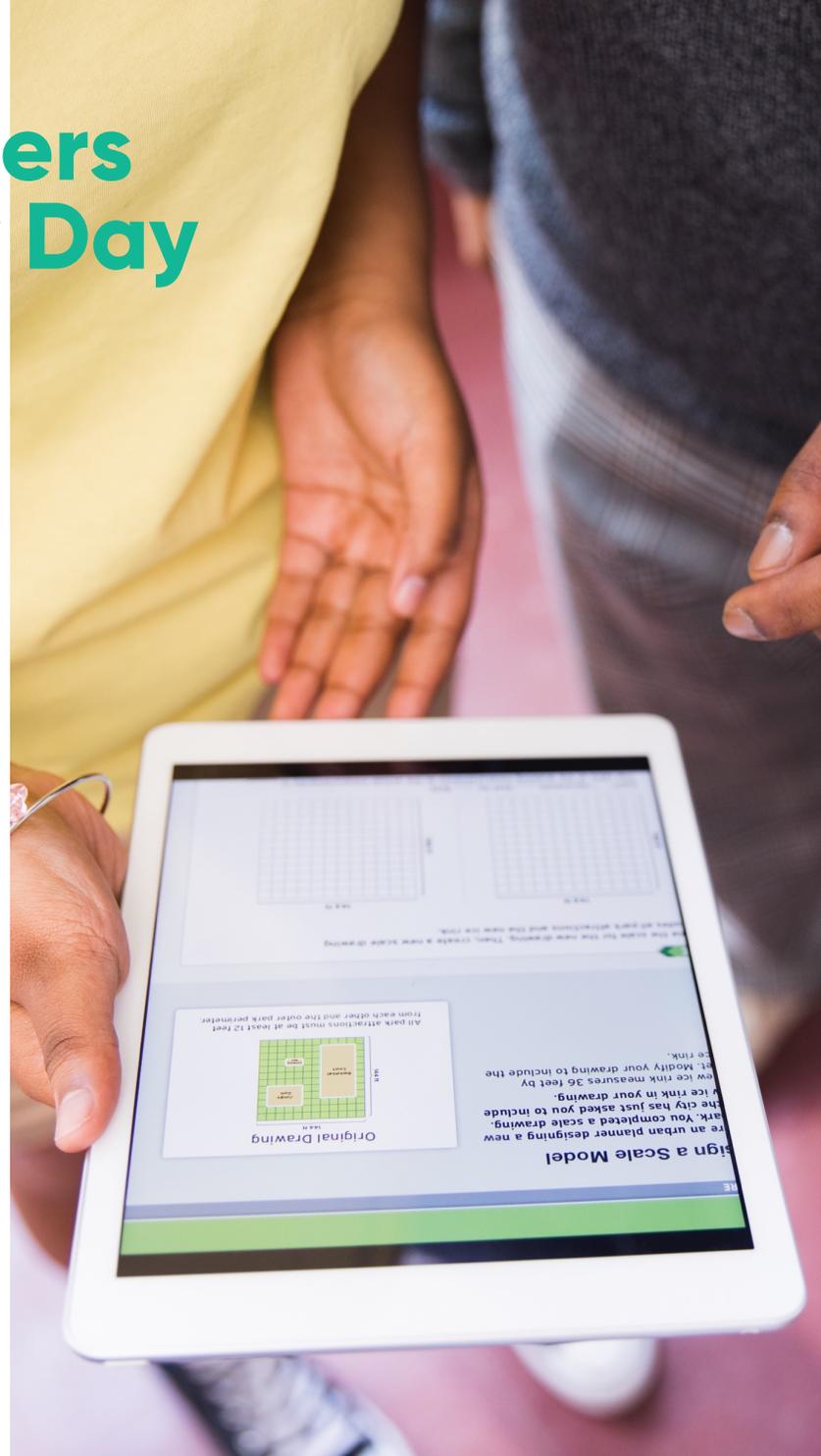


Majority of Teachers Use EdTech Every Day

Seventy-two percent of teachers say they use educational technology resources every day or almost every day, while 97% use educational technology with their students at least once a week.

"I have been able to go beyond the words and stories that I share with my students. Virtual simulations and videos bring them to life. Current events is a weekly part of our routines and opens the world up for exploration and knowledge."

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, NEW JERSEY



HOW OFTEN TEACHERS USE EDTECH



- EVERY DAY
- ALMOST EVERY DAY
- ABOUT 2-3 TIMES A WEEK
- ABOUT ONCE A WEEK
- LESS OFTEN THAN ONCE A WEEK
- NOT AT ALL

Note: Less than one percent of teachers said "not at all."

High Hopes for EdTech

Teachers are in broad agreement that technology has helped them accomplish great things, and they believe it has the potential to do even more in the future. About 8 in 10 agree that educational technology should be used to expand teacher capacity. The same number of teachers believe EdTech can close equity gaps by allowing them to personalize instruction, and they say it has empowered them to strengthen their practice. And they predict there is more to come: 78% say education has not fully realized technology's potential to positively impact teaching and learning.

"Technology enhances student inquiry beyond their current environment. This provides students opportunities to be aware of the needs of others in the world and to propose solutions."

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, OKLAHOMA

83%
AGREE

Technology in schools should be used to extend and expand teacher capacity

83%
AGREE

Technology can help level the playing field in the classroom by allowing me to personalize instruction in ways I would not otherwise be able to do

82%
AGREE

Technology has empowered me to strengthen my teaching practice in ways I would not otherwise be able to do

TEACHERS' EDTECH VIEWS

AS A PROFESSION, WE HAVE NOT YET FULLY REALIZED THE POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING
(Administrators: 86%)



■ STRONGLY AGREE
■ AGREE

Teachers Face Barriers to Effective EdTech Integration

Barriers to successful, instructionally effective use of technology still exist—with lack of time to integrate digital materials into instruction being the most common obstacle. Declines from 2017 have held, and, compared to 2018, fewer teachers say that lack of student devices hinders their ability to use technology for effective instruction.

EDTECH OBSTACLES

Lack of time to plan for integration of digital resources into instruction	51%	
Lack of devices for students in the classroom	40%	↓ 10 pts from 2017
Inadequate student access to devices/internet outside the classroom	38%	↓ 5 pts from 2018
Device unreliability	31%	
Lack of digital curriculum-focused professional development (e.g., how to effectively incorporate digital content into instruction; what resources to use for what purposes; etc.)	26%	



51% AGREE

There is a lack of time to plan for integration of digital resources into instruction

Teachers Uncertain About Technology's Impact

Sixty percent (60%) of teachers remain wary that a focus on technology may damage the student-teacher relationship. The same was true in 2018. And responses to a new question this year show that about half of teachers worry there will be a renewed call for technology to replace teachers, especially as tech becomes more adaptive to students' needs.



I WORRY THAT A FOCUS ON USING TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNING IS COMING AT THE EXPENSE OF PERSONAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS



I WORRY THAT AS EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY BECOMES MORE SOPHISTICATED, POLICY MAKERS WILL SEE EDTECH AS A REPLACEMENT FOR TEACHERS



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE IS THE HUMAN CONNECTION A TEACHER MAKES WITH A STUDENT



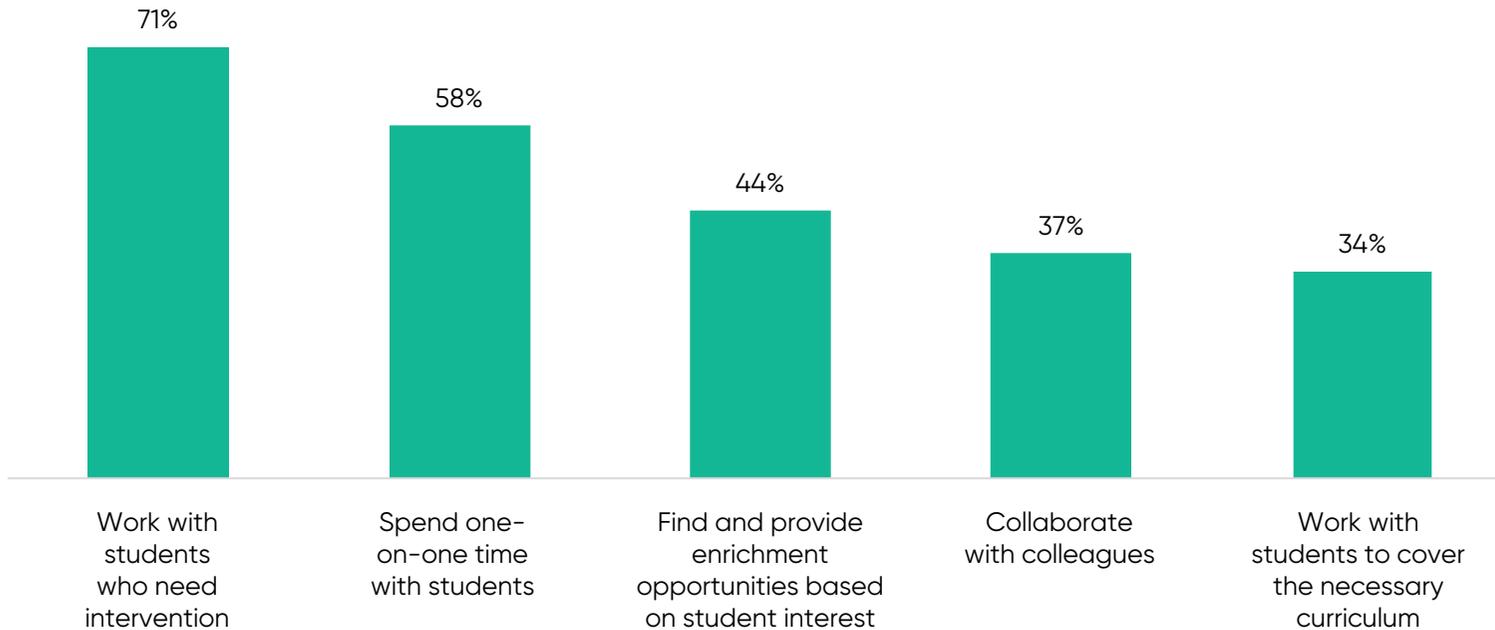
■ STRONGLY AGREE

■ AGREE

Technology Not Yet a Time-Saver

Similar to last year, about 7 in 10 agree that technology's potential to improve workflows is not yet realized. If potential time-savings from technology were fully realized, students would benefit in big ways.

WAYS TEACHERS WOULD USE TIME SAVED BY TECH



69%
AGREE

Technology's potential to improve workflows is not yet realized



A CLOSER LOOK

Schools are not fully leveraging technology to improve workflows and make processes more efficient

76%

OF ADMINISTRATORS AGREE

69%

OF TEACHERS AGREE

Teachers would spend time saved by technology collaborating with colleagues

58%

OF ADMINISTRATORS AGREE

37%

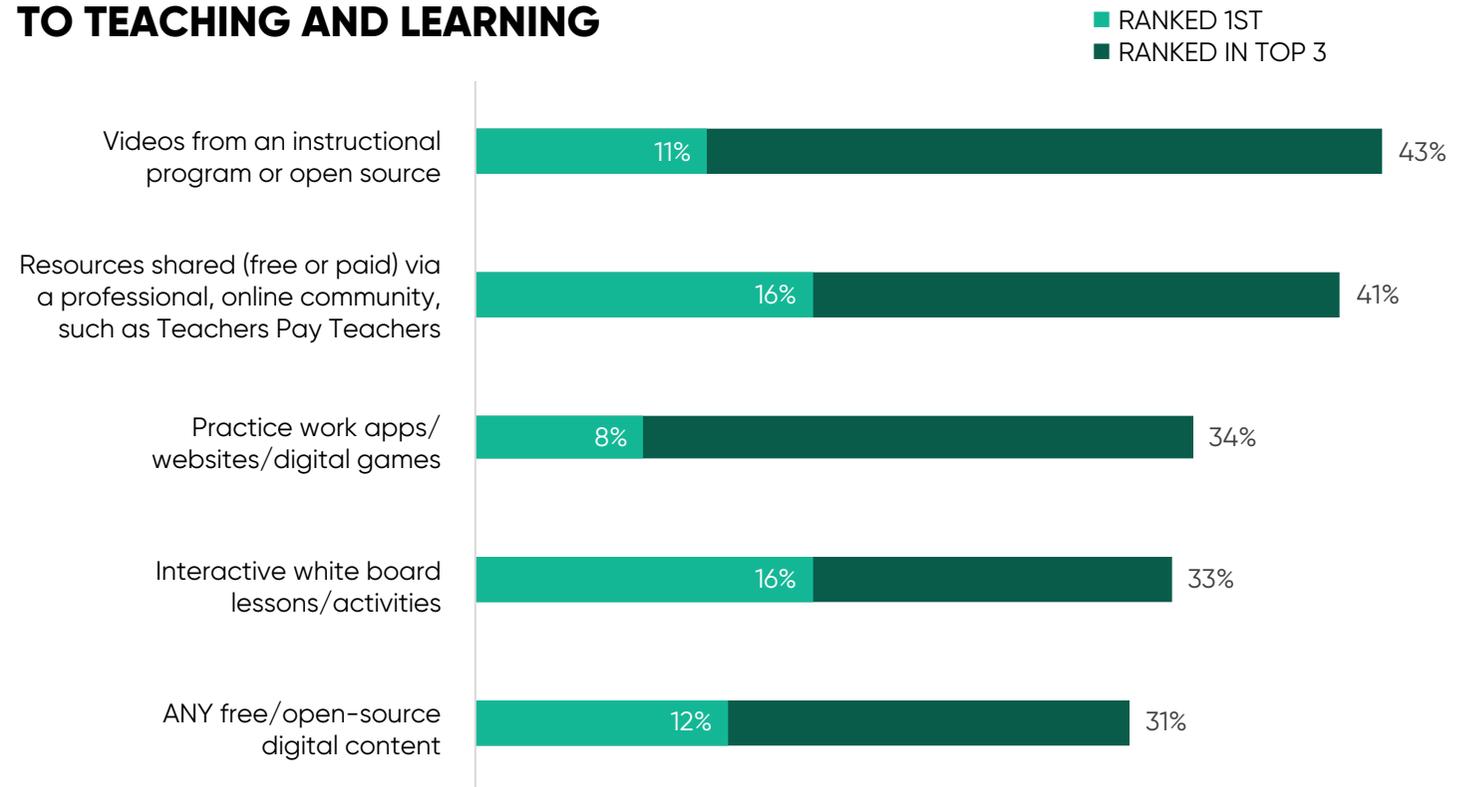
OF TEACHERS AGREE



Not All Digital Tools Are Created Equal

Teachers say that videos and resources from professional online communities are the most integral to teaching and learning. About one in three say that practice apps and games, interactive white board content, and free, open-source content are among the top three most integral types of materials. In contrast, only 7% of teachers say that social media for student learning and only 8% say virtual labs are among the top three most integral tools for teaching and learning.

DIGITAL MATERIALS MOST INTEGRAL TO TEACHING AND LEARNING



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Student Needs,
Educator Perceptions

Educators Bear Witness to Students' Social and Emotional Needs

As reflected in educators' top concerns, overwhelmingly, teachers and administrators agree (96%) that they are increasingly finding that students need more social and emotional support.

This acknowledgment holds true across teachers and administrators, years of experience, student grade, region of the country, and more.



I AM FINDING THAT STUDENTS INCREASINGLY NEED MORE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Teachers



Administrators



■ STRONGLY AGREE

■ AGREE

SEL for Meeting Students' Social-Emotional Needs

Nearly three in four teachers believe a well-crafted social-emotional learning initiative could have at least a moderate impact on students' well-being, with 40% saying it could have a significant or very significant impact. However, only 11% of teachers feel their school has a well-crafted and fully integrated approach to social-emotional learning, with another 22% saying they have an SEL initiative, but it is not well-crafted nor fully integrated.



A CLOSER LOOK

Administrators are more optimistic than teachers about the potential of a well-crafted social-emotional learning initiative, with 55% saying it would have a very significant/significant impact.

TEACHERS' VIEW OF POTENTIAL IMPACT OF WELL-CRAFTED, FULLY INTEGRATED SEL INITIATIVES ON STUDENTS



- A VERY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
- A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
- A MODERATE IMPACT
- A SMALL IMPACT
- NO IMPACT AT ALL
- DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE

TEACHERS' VIEW OF THEIR SCHOOL'S SEL INITIATIVE



- YES, WE HAVE A WELL-CRAFTED, FULLY INTEGRATED SEL INITIATIVE
- WE HAVE AN SEL INITIATIVE, BUT I DON'T FEEL IT IS WELL-CRAFTED
- WE DO NOT HAVE AN SEL INITIATIVE
- DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE

Teachers Want SEL to Focus on Self-Discipline, Self-Motivation, and Self-Regulation

When asked to select the top three areas teachers most want their school to address, “self-discipline and self-motivation to succeed academically and otherwise” wins by a wide margin.

Self-regulation of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations is also highly valued—particularly by administrators—followed by responsible decision making in service of well-being and the development and displaying of empathy.

“Social emotional needs are skyrocketing, discipline is in serious trouble within the schools, and parent involvement is at an all-time low.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER, MARYLAND

SKILLS TEACHERS WANT SEL INITIATIVES TO DEVELOP (% selected in top three)

66%

Self-discipline and self-motivation to succeed academically and otherwise

48%

Self-regulation of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations

38%

Responsible decision making that protects and promotes the well-being of self and others

34%

Feeling and showing empathy for others, including others from diverse backgrounds and cultures

Teachers Want SEL to Reduce Emotional Distress and Increase Positive Attitudes

Educators know that, just like teachers, students cannot be their best and ready to learn if their emotional house is not in order.

Reducing emotional distress, depression, and/or anxiety is the top outcome teachers would most like to see from a social-emotional learning initiative at their school. This is followed by improved attitudes toward self and others.



SEL OUTCOMES TEACHERS WOULD MOST LIKE TO SEE

(% selected in top three)

58%

Reduced emotional distress, depression, and/or anxiety

53%

Improved positive attitudes toward others

39%

Improved positive attitudes toward one's self

A FOCUS ON EQUITY

An Analysis of the
Findings through
an Equity Lens

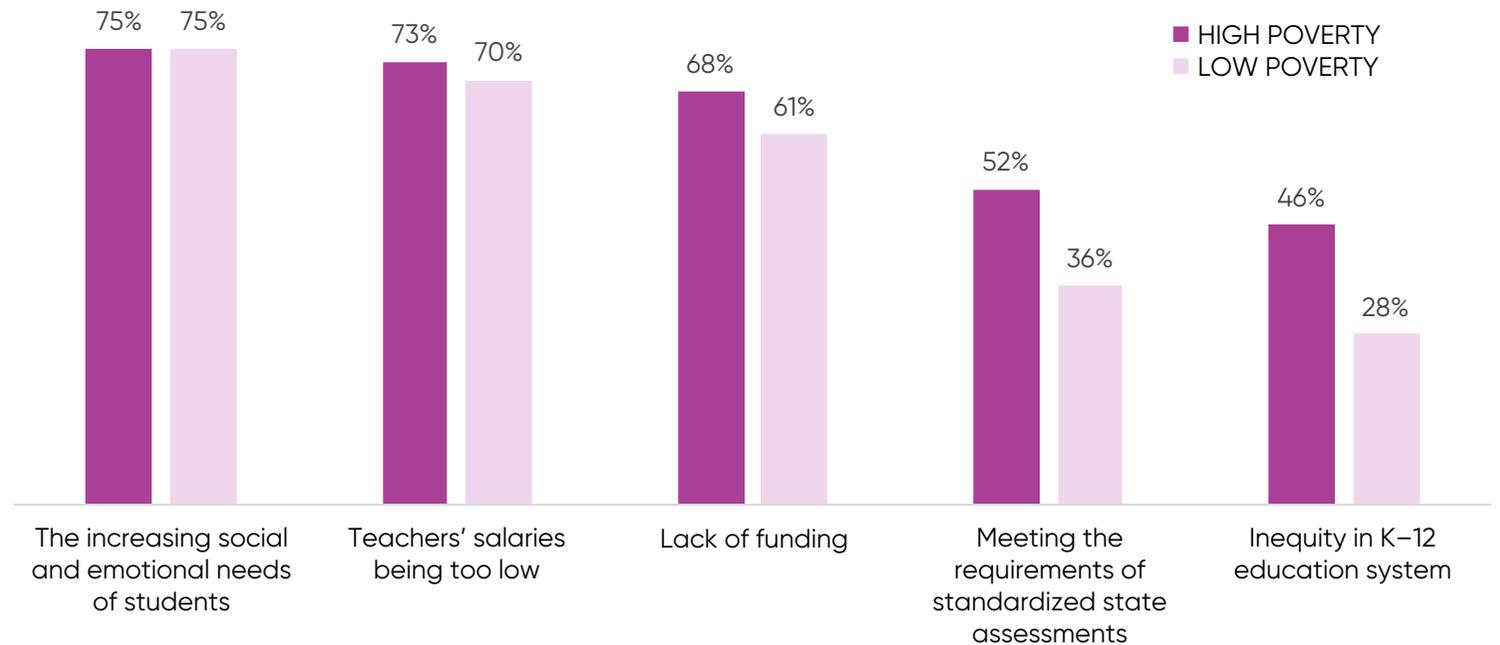


Less Optimism, Greater Concerns in High-Poverty Schools

Teachers in high-poverty schools are less optimistic about the state of the teaching profession and cite far more concerns compared to teachers in low-poverty schools.

Teachers in low-poverty and high-poverty schools are equally concerned about students' social-emotional needs and low teacher salaries. However, teachers in high-poverty schools are more concerned about a wide range of topics.

TOPICS OF TEACHER CONCERN

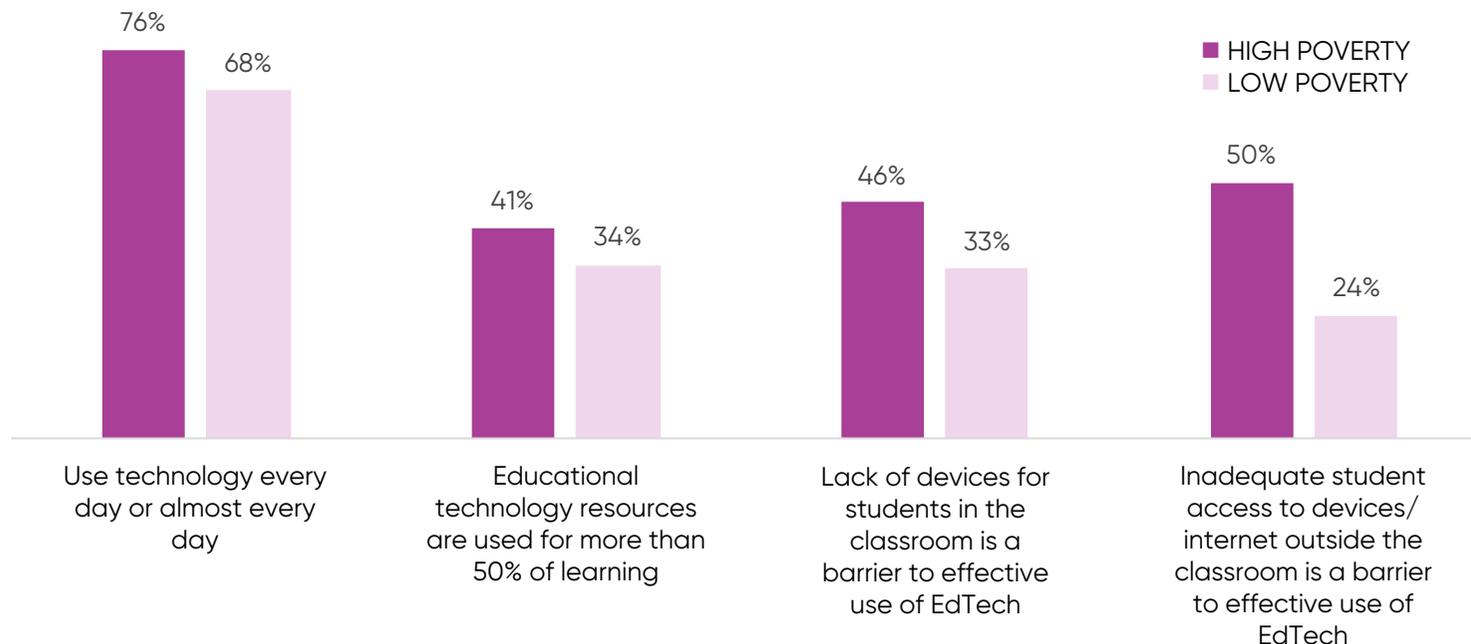


Access to Technology a Mixed Story in High-Poverty Schools

Teachers in high-poverty schools more often than teachers in low-poverty schools report a lack of devices for students in the classroom and inadequate student access to devices/internet outside the classroom.

While some teachers in high-poverty schools say students have limited access to technology in and/or outside of school, others are actually using technology to a greater degree than teachers in wealthier schools. Three in four teachers in high-poverty schools use technology with students every or almost every day and 41%, compared to 34% in low-poverty schools, say they use EdTech resources for more than 50% of learning.

EDTECH USE AND BARRIERS



PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WHO USE EDTECH WITH STUDENTS EVERY DAY / ALMOST EVERY DAY

76%

of teachers in high-poverty schools

COMPARED TO

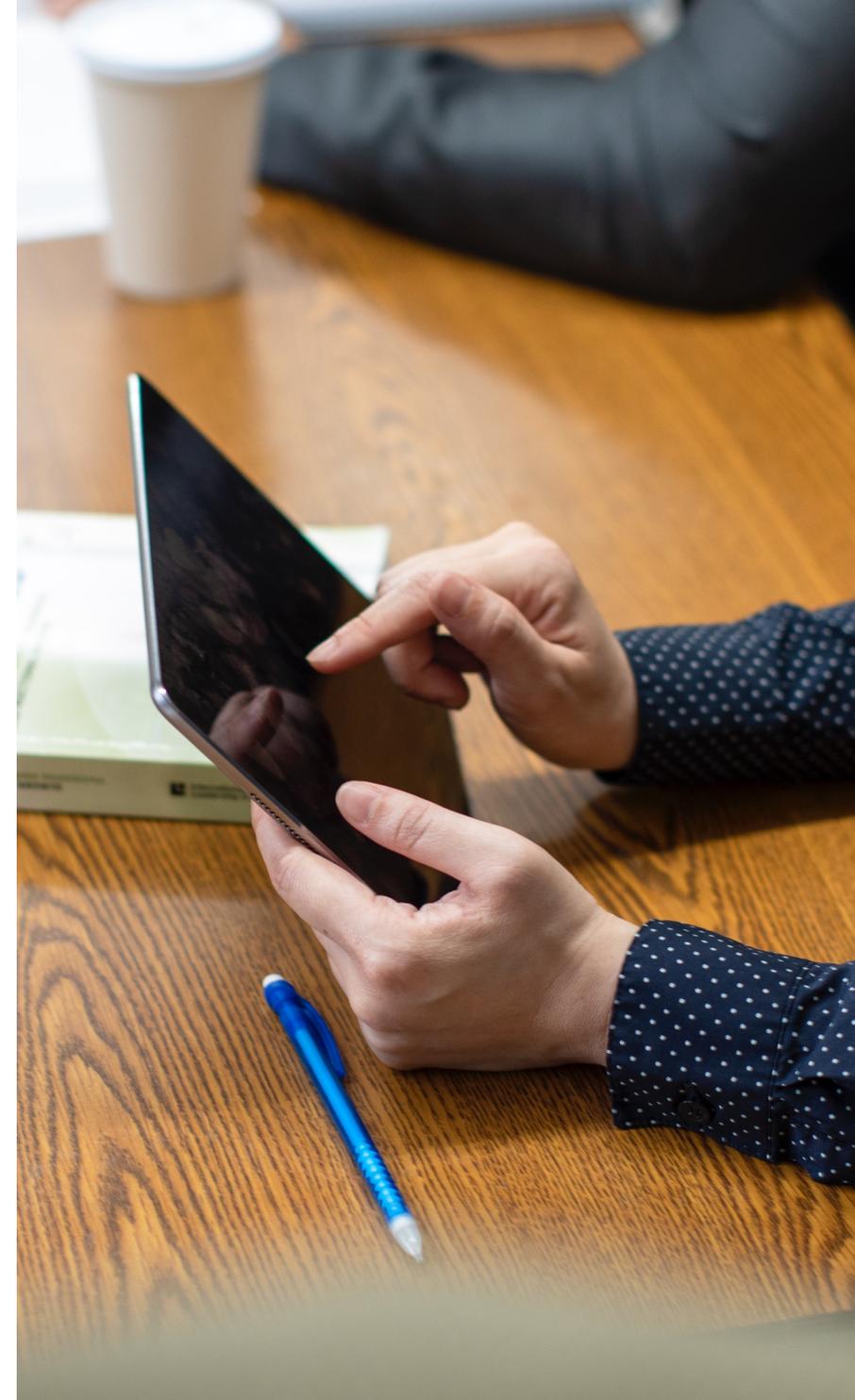
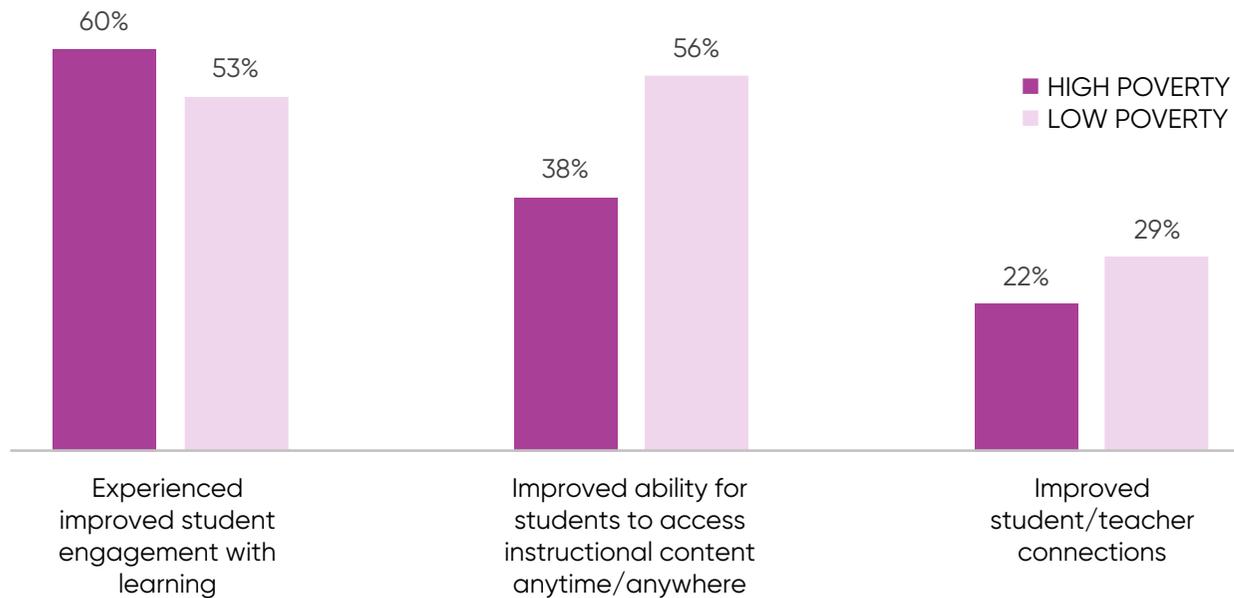
68%

of teachers in low-poverty schools

Benefits of Technology Vary Between High- and Low-Poverty Schools

Teachers who use technology in high-poverty schools are more likely to have experienced improved student engagement, while teachers in low-poverty schools are more likely to have experienced improved student access to instructional content anytime/anywhere and improved student/teacher connections.

BENEFITS OF EDTECH FOR TEACHERS

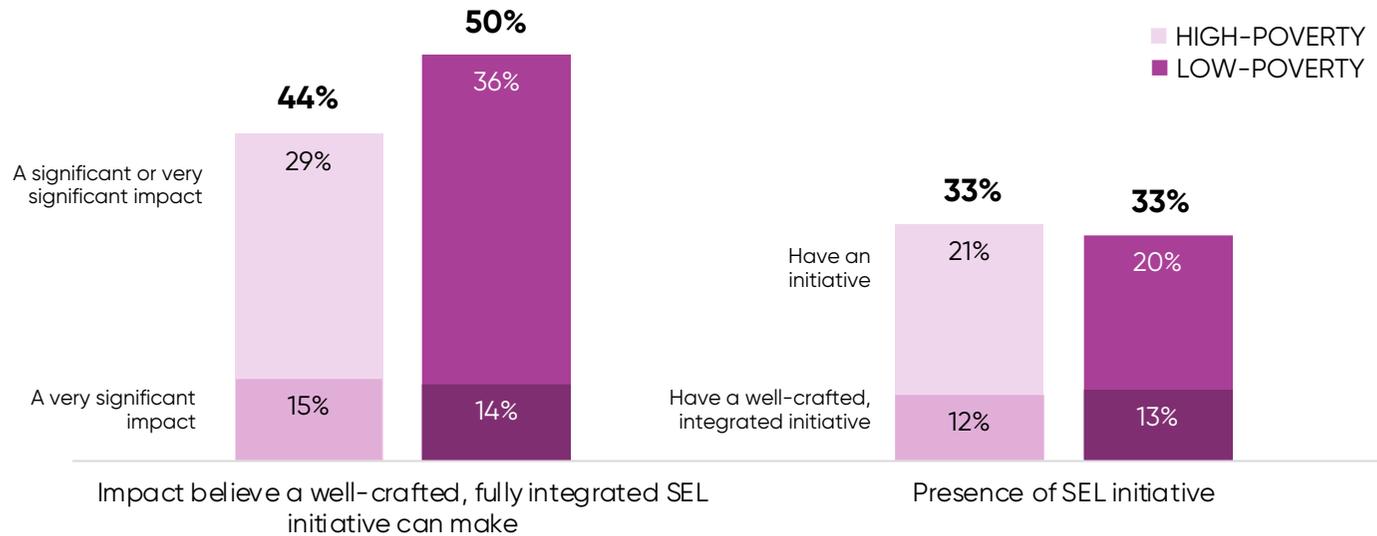


Views on SEL Impact and Presence of SEL Are Similar; Desired Outcomes Differ Slightly

The presence and belief in the power of a well-crafted, fully integrated approach to supporting student social and emotional needs is similar in both low- and high-poverty schools.

However, the focus and desired outcomes of an initiative to support student social and emotional needs differ in some ways. Teachers in high-poverty schools are more likely to want an initiative to address and support self-regulation of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations and they are more likely to want an SEL initiative to result in reduced aggression and improvements in grades.

SEL: VIEWS ON IMPACT AND PRESENCE OF AN SEL INITIATIVE



WHAT TEACHERS WANT FROM AN SEL INITIATIVE

	HIGH POVERTY	LOW POVERTY
Want an SEL initiative to address self-regulation of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors	53%	47%
Want to see a reduction in aggression as an outcome of an SEL initiative	46%	19%
Want to see improvements in grades as an outcome of an SEL initiative	28%	20%

