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CANADA STATE OF EDTECH 2025

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Introduction

This report reflects the results of the first nationwide survey of Canadian EdTech Leaders. It was developed by the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)—the premier professional association for school system technology leaders in North America. Manitoba Education, Research and Learning Information Networks (MERLIN) was CoSN's data partner and survey host.

The goal of the report is to better understand the priorities of Canadian EdTech Leaders. Since the report only reflects the results of those who participated, results may not be fully representative of the larger EdTech Leader population in Canada. However, these initial findings offer insights into the current state of Canadian EdTech and can serve as a baseline comparison for future survey results. Greater participation in subsequent surveys will reduce the margin of error and provide opportunities to segment the data for deeper insights.

For more details about survey respondents, CoSN, and MERLIN, see About the Survey on page 33.

Key Findings

Cybersecurity

Survey respondents ranked cybersecurity as their top technology priority and are very concerned about the new forms of cyber-attacks AI can enable—despite general perceptions that their school systems are not at high risk for cybersecurity threats. Their heightened concern has translated to investment in education network security. The majority of respondents are spending money on monitoring, identity protection and authentication, security awareness training, and endpoint protection. However, a third of respondents do not a have a dedicated employee on staff who manages cybersecurity.

Artificial Intelligence

The majority of respondents are "embracing AI." Notably, no respondents report AI bans. The most common AI initiatives are staff training on the use of Generative AI (GenAI) for instruction and the implementation of productivity tools for administrators and staff. Most work in school systems that have guidelines that address at least one aspect of AI use.

The biggest concern regarding AI is cybersecurity; the area of least concern is that AI will cause overall job loss. Personalized instruction is, by far, the area where AI is considered to have the greatest potential for positive impact in education.

Healthy technology choices

To help battle the negative effects of excessive personal screen time, nearly all respondents work in a school system that supports students to make healthy choices regarding the use of technology. The most-frequently used measures are limiting the use of personal devices to instructional purposes and banning social media access on school-issued devices. Some provide access to general wellness platforms and others provide family training about online safety. The least-used strategy is lock-down hours for school device access outside of school.

Equity

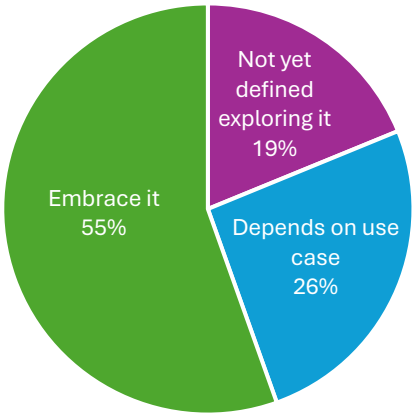
As school resources and communications become digital, off-campus connectivity becomes an equity concern. Students without home access to devices and high-speed internet are at a disadvantage versus those with access. While only a small percentage report that all their students have access to devices and sufficient broadband at home, most reported 10% or less of their students do not home digital access. However, for a significant percentage of respondents the home connectivity of their students is unknown.

Artificial Intelligence

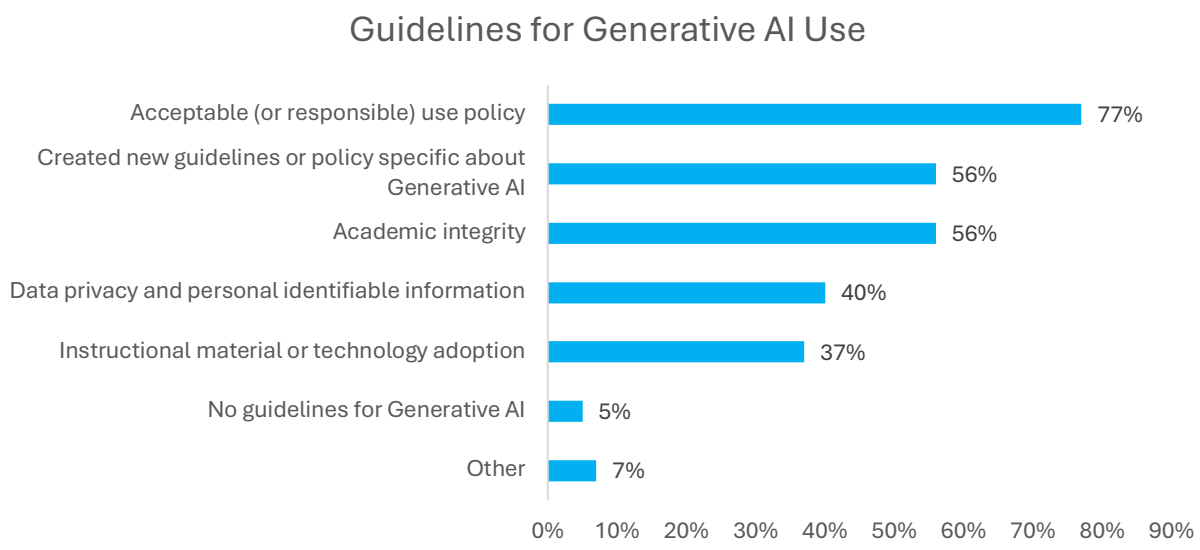
The use of Generative AI (GenAI) has permeated virtually all industries at unprecedented speed. Gartner predicts that "by 2026, more than 80% of enterprises will have used Gen AI APIs or models."[1] A recent study of Canadian students (college, university, and high school) reported that 73% "rely on generative artificial intelligence for their schoolwork".[2] As the use of AI continues to grow rapidly, school systems have had to determine best practices for incorporating it into the educational environment. The majority (55%) of survey respondents say their districts/boards are embracing AI, while more than a quarter (26%) approach AI based on its use case; 19% are still determining how best to approach its use. Notably, no respondents reported AI bans, an answer option on the survey.

[1] https://www.gartner.com/en/articles/hype-cycle-for-genai
[2] https://kpmg.com/ca/en/home/media/press-releases/2025/10/generative-ai-boom-among-canadian-students-raises-dilemmas.html

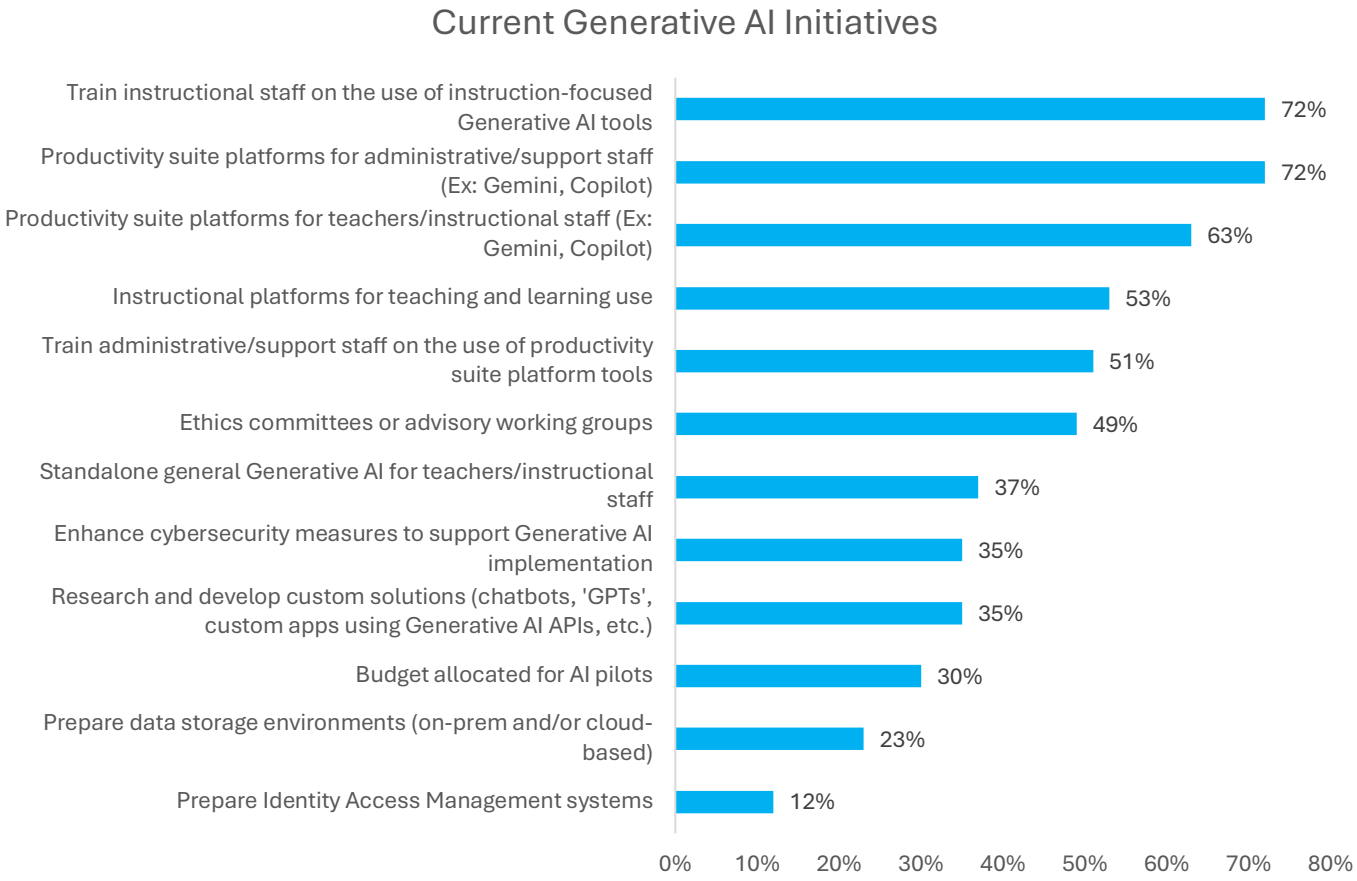
Approach to Generative AI Usage



As GenAI guidance has not been provided consistently across provinces, some school districts/divisions/authorities have created their own guidelines to fill the policy gap. The overwhelming majority (95%) of respondents work in school districts/boards that have guidelines for at least one aspect of AI use. Seventy-seven percent (77%) have an acceptable-use policy in place; 56% created a new guideline specifically about GenAI; 56% have AI guidelines that address academic integrity; 40% address GenAI in their policies about data privacy and personal identifiable information (PII). As adhering to provincial privacy requirements is essential, it will be important for all school systems to update their policies to address GenAI. Thirty-seven percent (37%) address instructional material or technology adoption and 7% cited policies not listed on the survey. Only 5% of respondents are without guidelines.



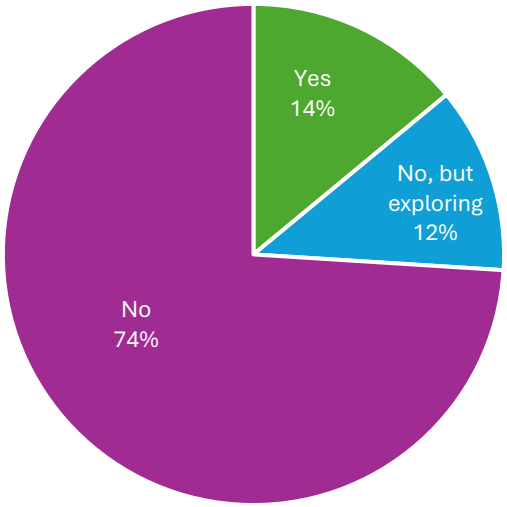
Most respondents have GenAI initiatives in their school system. The two most common initiatives, at 72% each, are training staff on the use of instruction-focused GenAI tools and the use of productivity suite platforms for administrators and support staff. The next most popular initiative (at 63%) is productivity suite platforms for teachers and instruction staff, followed by instructional platforms for teaching and learning (53%) and training administrative and support staff on the use of productivity suite platform tools (51%). Less than half of respondents (49%) are establishing ethics committees or advisory working groups. More than a third (37%) have a standalone general GenAI for teachers/instructional staff. Thirty-five percent (35%) have an initiative to enhance cybersecurity measures to support GenAI implementation, and 35% are conducting research to develop custom solutions. Less than a third (30%) of respondents have budgets for AI pilots; 23% have initiatives to prepare a data storage environment, and 12% for preparing identity management systems.



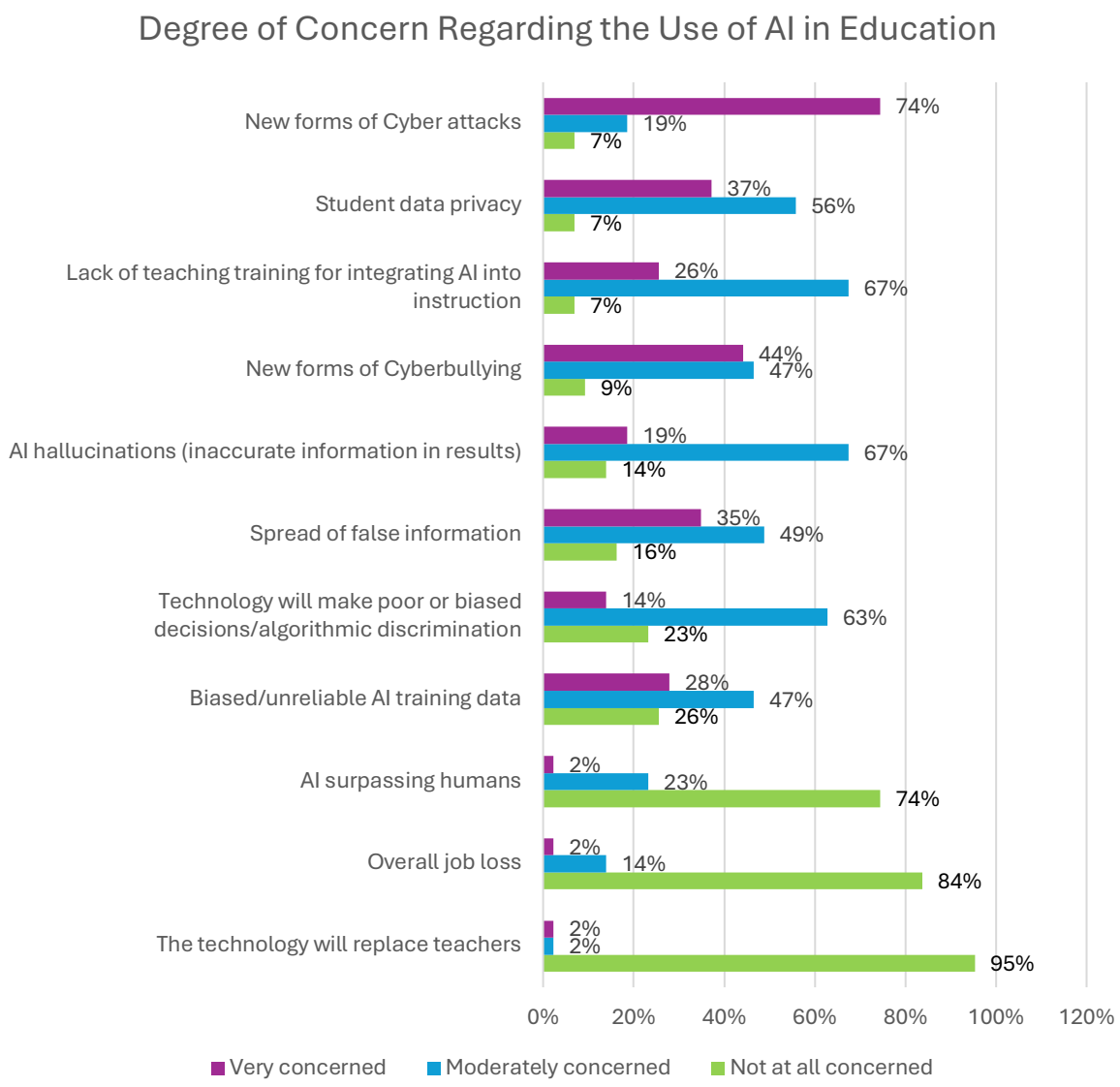
Teachers have always been on the alert for cheating, and AI has complicated that effort. To help ensure the authenticity of student work, 14% of respondents use software designed to detect AI-generated answers. Another 12% are exploring the use of those tools. However, nearly three-fourths (74%) of respondents work in school systems that have chosen not to implement such tools. As there are also tools designed to make AI *un*detectable, those schools are likely avoiding an inevitable AI-generated vs. AI-detected software war.

While the reason so many respondents have not adopted AI-detection software is unknown, teachers know that traditional methods of using essays and reports are becoming increasingly ineffective for assessing student knowledge in an AI world. Other methods will become necessary for evaluating students' level of proficiency.

Use of Tools to Detect AI-Generated Answers in Student Work

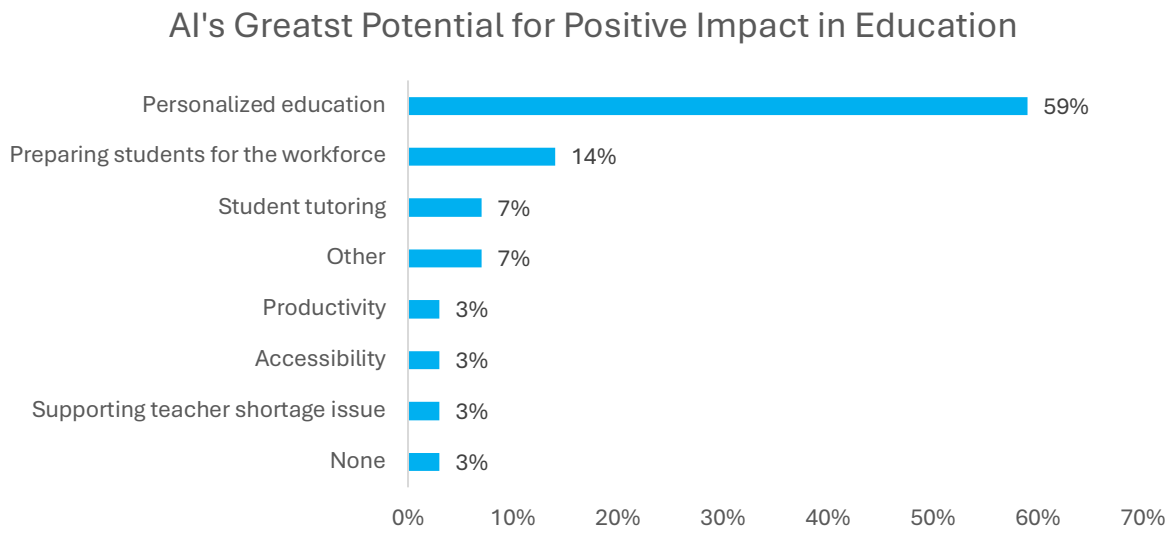


A large majority (74%) of respondents are very concerned about new forms of AI-enabled cyber attacks. Other areas where more than a third of respondents are very concerned: new forms of cyberbullying (44%), threats to student data privacy (37%), and the spread of false information (35%). Less than a third cited a high degree of concern regarding biased/unreliable AI training data (28%), lack of teaching training for integrating AI into instruction (26%), AI hallucinations (19%), and biased/algorithmic discrimination (14%). Respondents were least concerned about AI replacing teachers, with 95% indicating they were “not at all concerned.” Overall job loss (84%) and AI surpassing humans (74%) were the other areas where a majority of respondents had no concerns.



When asked to identify where GenAI has the greatest potential for positive impact in education, personalized education was the top response at 59%. The other areas selected by respondents—though at significantly lower rates—were preparing students for the workforce (14%), student tutoring (7%), "other" areas not listed on the survey (7%), and productivity, accessibility, and supporting teacher shortage (3% each). Another 3% of respondents said AI doesn't have any potential to positively impact education. However, it is possible even more respondents have a negative view of AI in education, as a third chose to not answer this question. This high and highly unusual "skip rate" could be the result of

the “none” answer option placement, which was at the bottom. If respondents didn’t notice that option down on the list, it could explain why so many chose not to answer. Another explanation for skipping the question could be that they have not yet formulated an opinion on the topic. Hopefully, future survey results will help get a clearer picture of AI perceptions.

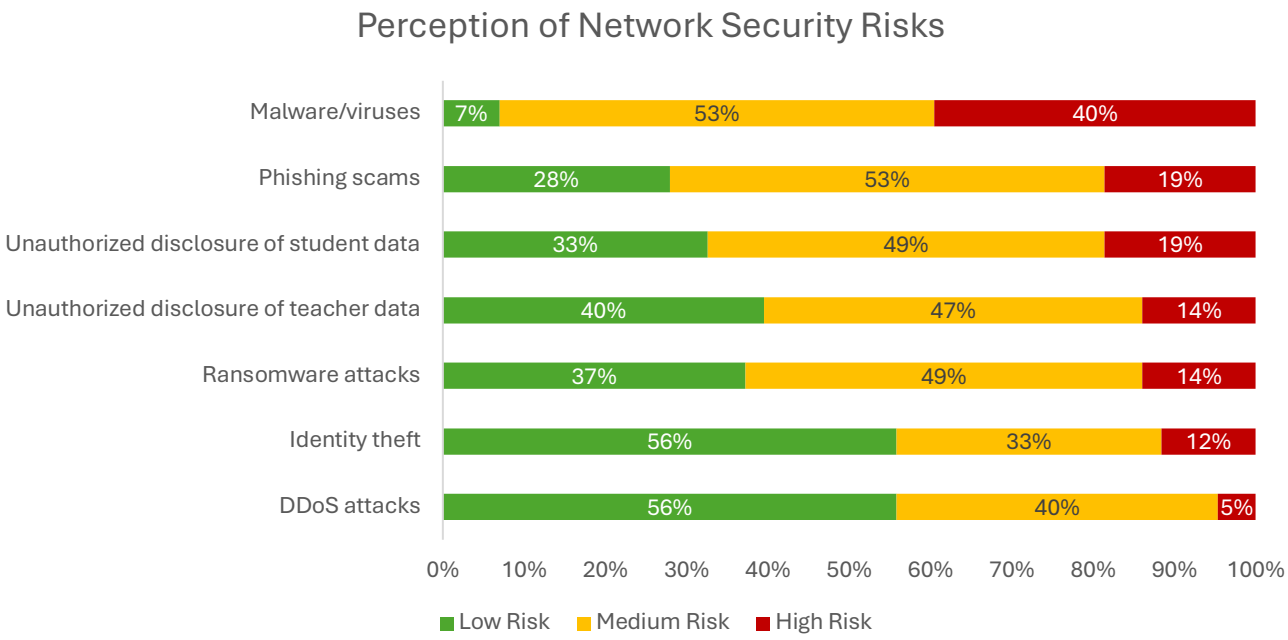


Cybersecurity

When asked to rate their perception of various network security risks, the majority of respondents were least concerned about identity theft and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks, with 56% rating each as low risk. At the other end of the spectrum was malware, with 40% assessing it as a high-risk threat. Less than a fifth of respondents perceived their network to be at high risk for any of the other cybersecurity threats listed on the survey. At 19% each, unauthorized disclosure of student data and phishing scams were the threats with the next-highest percentage of respondents who considered them high risk. Unauthorized disclosure of teacher data and ransomware attacks followed at 14% each. Identity theft was considered a high risk by 12% and DDoS attacks by 5%.

Overall, it is surprising that respondents do not perceive their networks to be at greater risk. According to the most recent National Cyber Threat Assessment report, “cybercrime remains a persistent, widespread, and disruptive threat to individuals, organizations, and

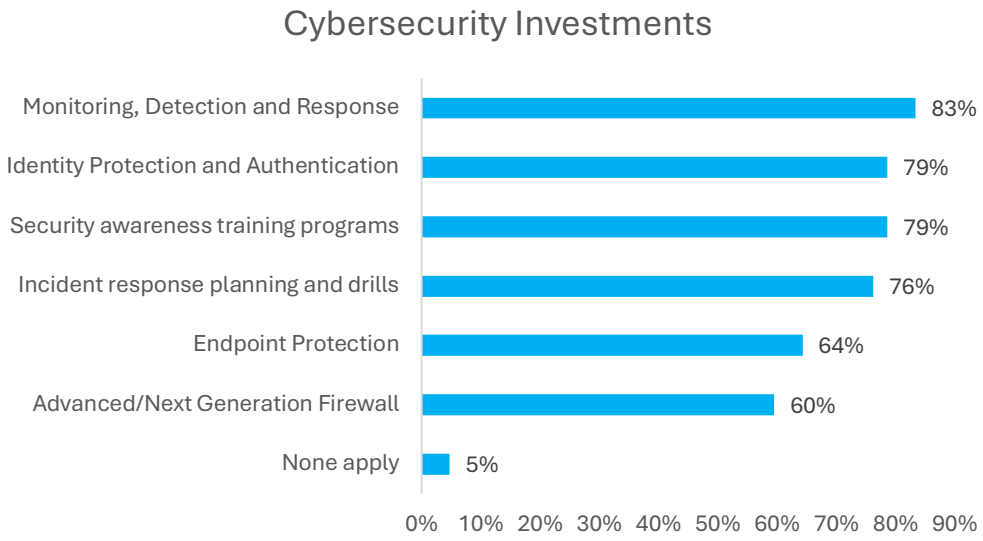
all levels of government across Canada."[3] Multinational corporations have experienced major cyber incidents. Schools with limited resources are easier targets. Schools are also desirable targets, as explained by Ontario's privacy commissioner, Patricia Kosseim: "They hold vast amounts of personal information. They provide services that must continue... They don't have the choice of just closing down business for a few weeks." These are "vulnerable institutions that [cyberattackers] can really force into paying ransom."[4] Students' personal information is more valuable to cyber criminals than adults' information. With the student information kept by schools, cyber criminals can open bank accounts, apply for loans, and incur debt years before those actions are uncovered, as parents do not usually check on their child's credit.



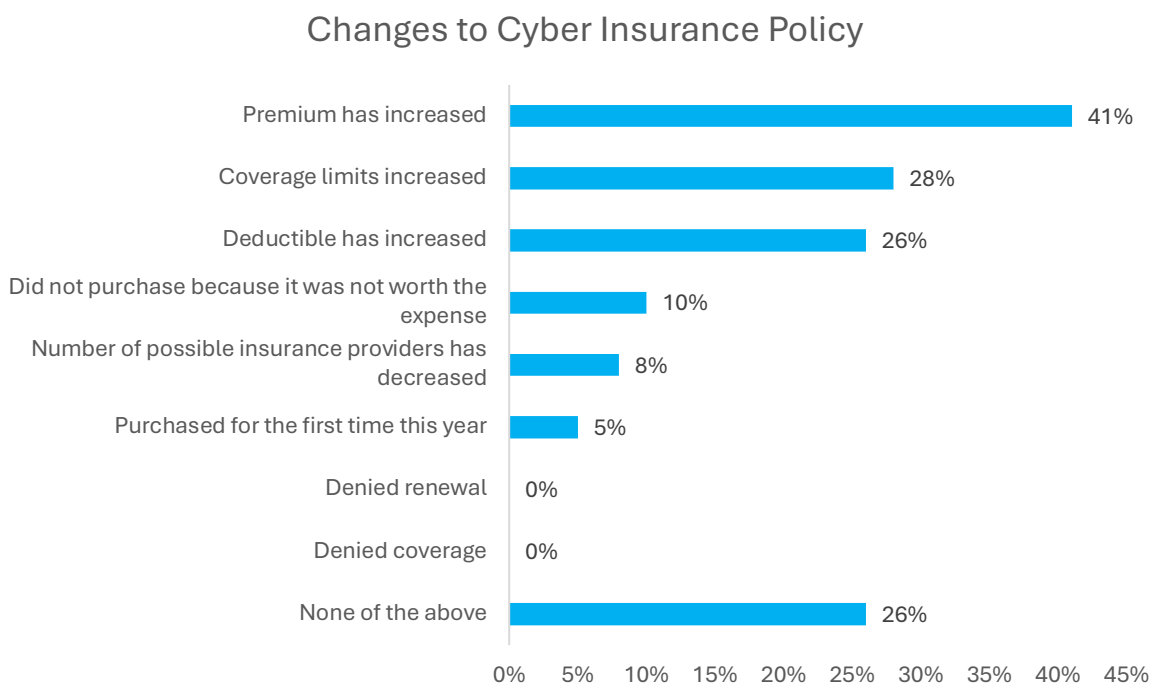
Responses to the question about cybersecurity investments suggests school systems are spending money to keep their networks secure. All the cybersecurity areas on the survey showed a large majority of respondents making investments. Monitoring, detection, and response was the top investment area at 83%, followed by identity protection and authentication (79%) and security awareness training programs (79%). Incident response

[3] https://www.cyber.gc.ca/sites/default/files/national-cyber-threat-assessment-2025-2026-e.pdf
[4] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/cyberattacks-k12-schools-1.7416966

planning also had a high investment rate, at 76%. Endpoint protection was a solution used by 64% and next-generation firewall at 60%.

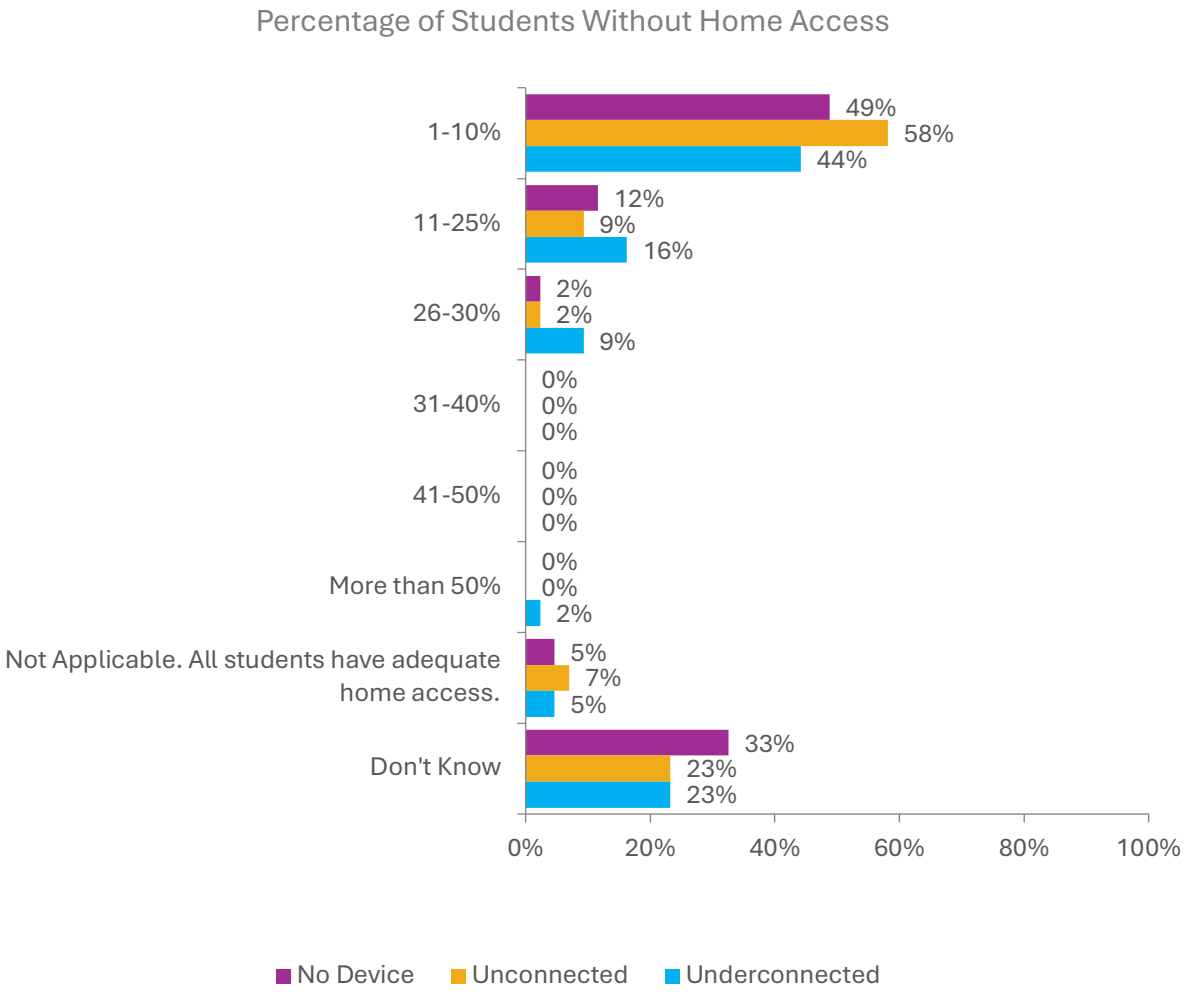


Though more than a quarter (26%) of respondents did not experience any of the cyber insurance changes listed on the survey, premiums increased for 41%. Another 28% reported increases in their coverage limits and 26% reported increases in their deductibles. The number of possible insurance providers decreased for 8%. Ten percent (10%) determined cyber insurance was not worth the expense and did not purchase a policy, and half as many (5%) purchased a cyber insurance policy for the first time. No respondent was denied coverage or renewal.

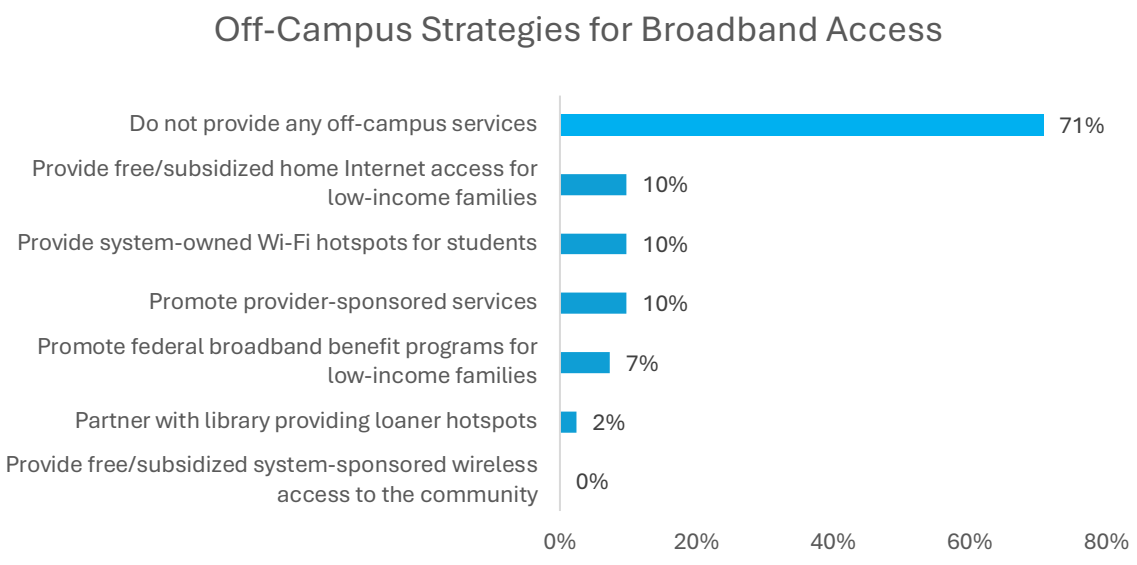


Equity

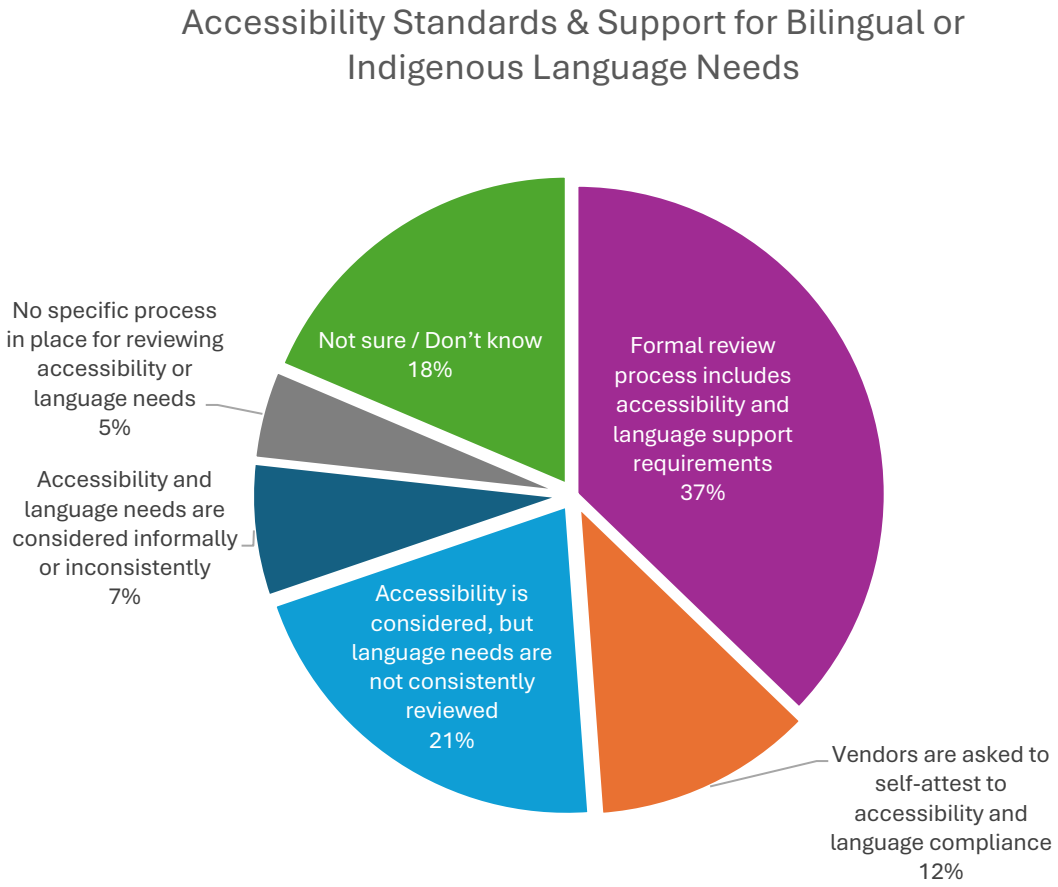
As school resources and communications become digital, off-campus connectivity becomes an equity concern. Students without home access to devices and high-speed internet are at a disadvantage versus those with access. Nearly half (49%) of respondents report that 10% or less of their students do not have devices. More than half (58%) report that 10% or less of their students have devices unconnected to the internet, and 44% report that 10% or less of their students are underconnected—do not have access to sufficient broadband to deliver standard video. Only 5% report that all their students have devices and sufficient bandwidth. Seven percent (7%) report all their students have bandwidth, though it is insufficient for video. However, for a significant percentage of respondents the home connectivity of their students is an unknown. A third (33%) cannot report on device access, and 23% cannot report on internet access.



A large majority (71%) report that their school does not provide for any off-campus broadband. Of those that do, three strategies are employed at the same rate (10%): free/subsidized home internet for low-income families, system-owned Wi-Fi hotspots, and promotion of provider-sponsored services. Another 7% promote low-cost internet programs for low-income families and 2% partner with libraries to provide loaner hotspots.



More than a third (37%) of respondents have a formal review process to ensure that educational technology tools meet provincial accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG) and support bilingual or Indigenous language needs. About a fifth (21%) consider accessibility but do not consistently review language needs. Twelve percent (12%) rely on vendors to self-attest to accessibility and language compliance. Seven percent (7%) use informal or inconsistent processes to assess products for accessibility and language, with 5% reporting the worst-case scenario: their school system does not have a process in place for evaluating tech tools for these needs. Eighteen percent (18%) are unsure or do not know how their school system vets products for these considerations.



Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents work in school systems that have a comprehensive, embedded approach to using EdTech that includes partnerships with Indigenous communities, culturally respectful storytelling tools, guidance on sacred knowledge, and support for identity- and place-based learning. Another 35% report they support some areas but it is not system wide. At 5% each were those in early stages of implementation exploration and those who have not yet focused on this aspect of teaching and learning. Respondents who were unsure about their school system's approach to using EdTech to support Indigenous ways of knowing account for 12%.

Educational Technology to Support Indigenous Ways of Knowing	
We have a comprehensive, embedded approach that includes partnerships with Indigenous communities, culturally respectful storytelling tools, guidance on sacred knowledge, and support for identity and place-based learning	44%
We support some areas (e.g., storytelling or connection to land), but efforts are not yet consistent or system-wide	35%
We are in early stages of exploration and learning how to integrate these elements meaningfully	5%
We have not yet focused on integrating Indigenous ways of knowing into our use of digital tools	5%
Not sure	12%

Strategic Planning

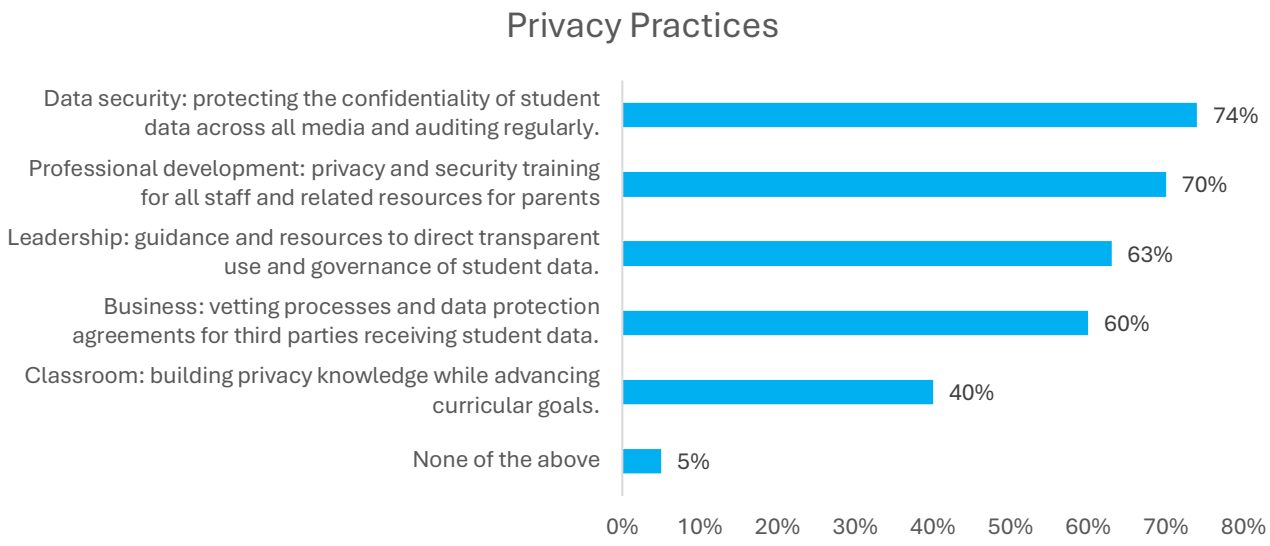
Cybersecurity was ranked the number-one technology priority for the 2025/2026 school year. Data privacy and security ranked second, followed by GenAI at third. Parent/school communications and cloud infrastructure, at fourth and fifth respectively, rounded out the list of the top 5 priorities.

It is important to point out the intersection of all these initiatives. Proper cloud infrastructure is an integral aspect of cybersecurity. A cybersecurity breach puts students' and teachers' private data at risk. Students and teachers can put their own data at risk by entering sensitive information when using GenAI tools. Also, cybercriminals use GenAI to execute their cyberattacks. Communication to inform parents about these risks and cyber best practices is another strategy that that helps to keep school networks secure.

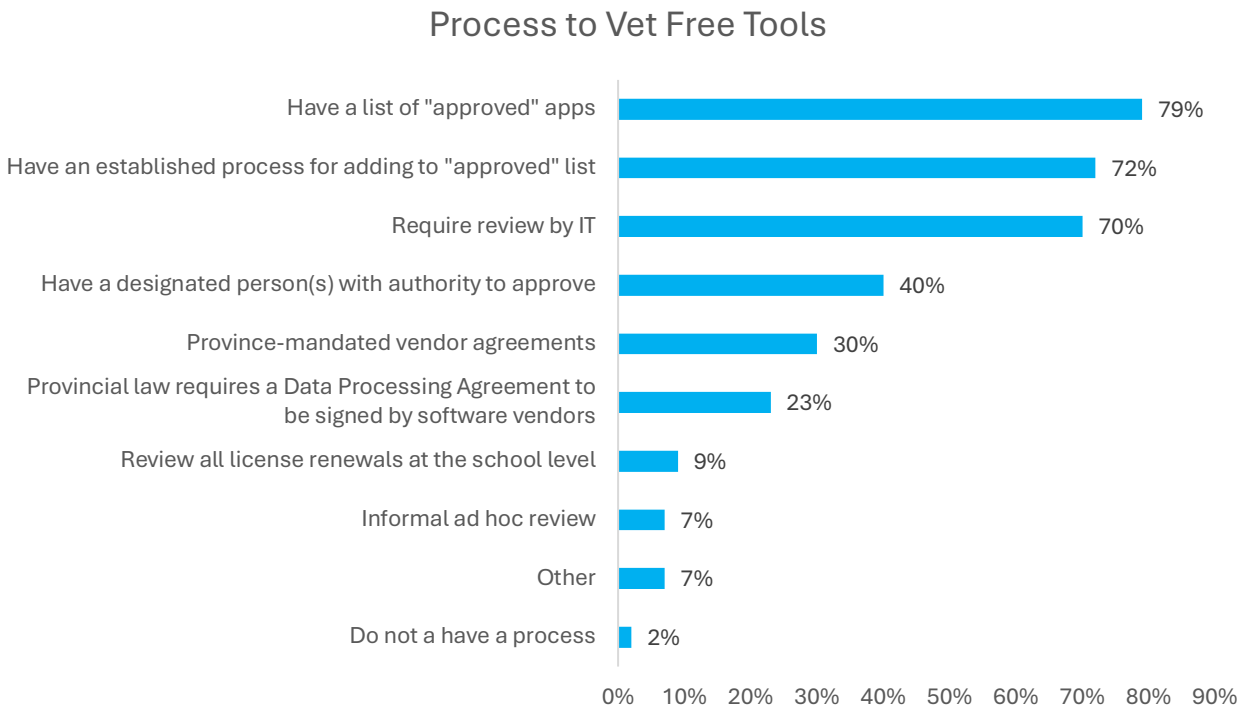
Rank	Technology Priority
#1	Cybersecurity
#2	Data Privacy and Security
#3	Generative AI
#4	Parent/School Communication
#5	Cloud Infrastructure

The majority of respondents will be focusing on several privacy practices in the coming year. Nearly three-quarters (74%) will focus on improving data security, and 70% will provide professional development on privacy practices for staff as well as resources for

parents. Leadership will be a focus of 63% to ensure proper governance of student data, and 60% will direct their efforts to vetting vendors and agreements to protect student data. The only practice that did not receive a majority response rate was the student-facing initiative: only 40% will use classroom time to educate students on privacy best practices. Hopefully, the 5% of respondents who did not select any of the privacy practices on the survey as a future focus have implemented them already.



Nearly all (98%) of respondents have at least one process for vetting free tools in their school system. Having an approved app list is the most common at 79%, and 72% have an established process for adding apps to that list. Review by IT is required by 70%, and 40% have a designated person or persons with authority to approve free apps. Thirty percent (30%) of respondents work in provinces that have mandated vendor agreements, with 23% working where provincial law requires software vendors to sign a data processing agreement. Less than a tenth (9%) review app licenses at the school level, and 7% review apps on an ad hoc basis. While ad hoc reviews are the least desirable method for vetting tools, it is marginally better than the 2% reporting that they have no process for doing so. Respondents that use a review method not cited on the survey comprised 7%.



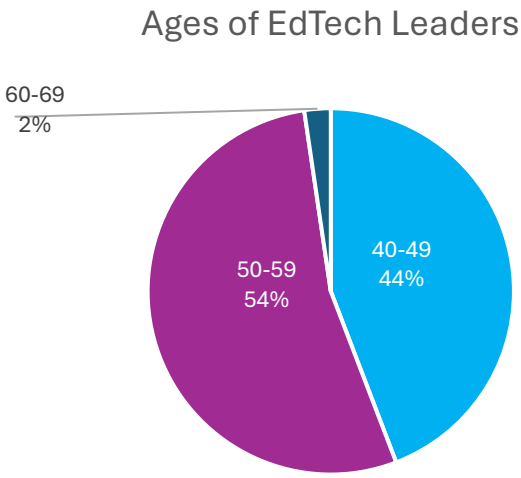
Data interoperability plays a key role in enabling efficient and effective teaching and learning within a digital ecosystem. As highlighted by one respondent, "[Integration] improvements would reduce duplication of work and support better decision-making." However, several challenges impede the seamless data transfer between systems. Respondents cited budget constraints as the biggest barrier to improving data interoperability. Ranked second was instructional leaders' lack of understanding about interoperability and third was the complexity of the work. Tied for fourth place was a procurement process that does not consider interoperability needs and lack of staff expertise to address those needs. Of least concern was the lack of widely agreed-upon technical standards.

To improve interoperability efforts, several respondents pointed to EdTech providers and the need for "consistency across tools to be able to extract data" as well as the need "to integrate with key business platforms," not just those used for teaching and learning.

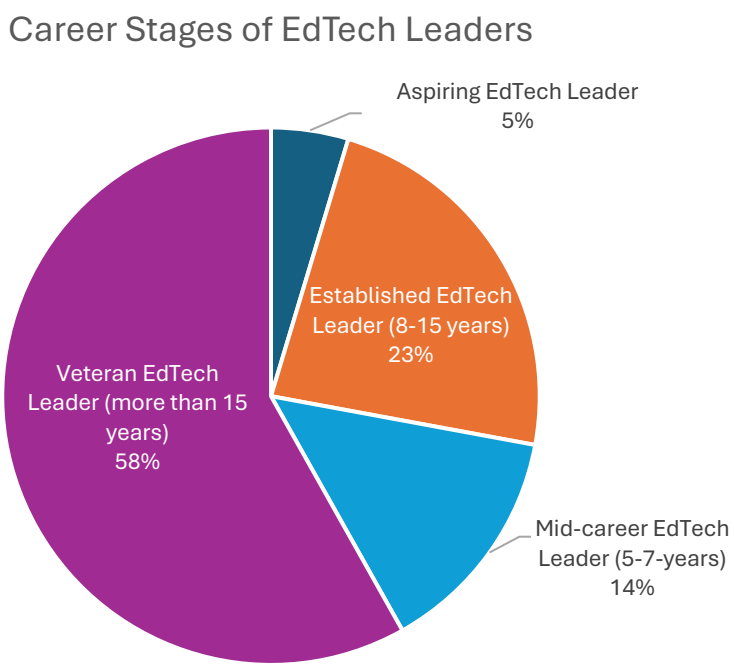
Rank	Barriers to Improving Data Interoperability
1	Budget constraints
2	Lack of awareness/understanding by instructional leaders
3	Complexity of the work
4	Procurement without involvement / alignment
	Lack of staff expertise *(tied with above)*
6	Lack of widely agreed upon technical standards

EdTech Leader Profiles

The survey respondents comprised 77% men, 21% women, and 2% who chose not to answer the question. All are middle aged—between 40 and 60. The majority (54%) of respondents are 50-59 years of age, 44% are 40-49, and 2% 60-69.



With rough alignment to the senior age brackets, 58% of respondents describe themselves as veteran EdTech Leaders—more than 15 years of experience. Those with 8-15 years of experience comprised 23%, and mid-career (5-7 years) account for 14%. Only 5% of respondents described their learning pathway as “aspiring.”

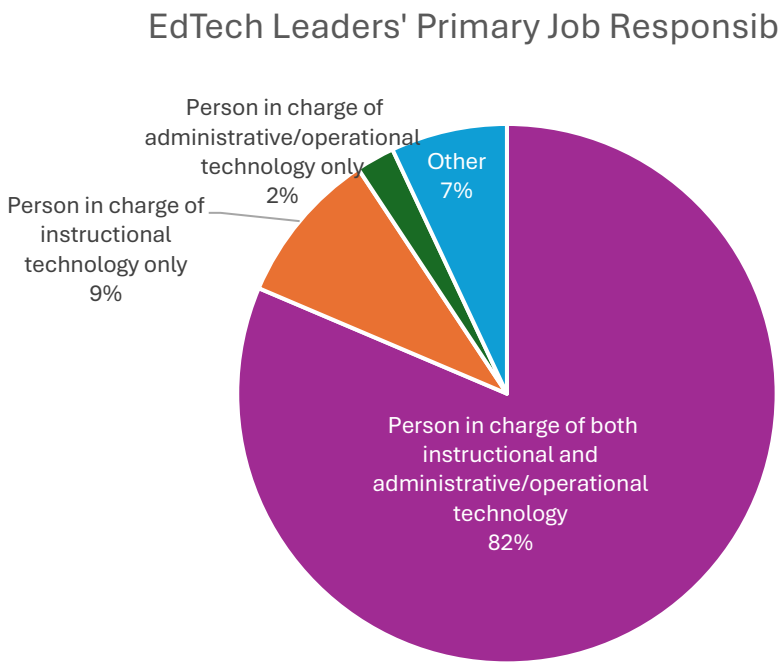


Not surprisingly, the majority (68%) of respondents have a background that includes technology. More than a third (35%) are from a strictly technology background. Another 16% described their background as business and technology, 12% as business, education and technology, and 5% as education and technology. This compares to less than a third (30%) who come to their position with an education background (28%) and 2% with a background in business and education.

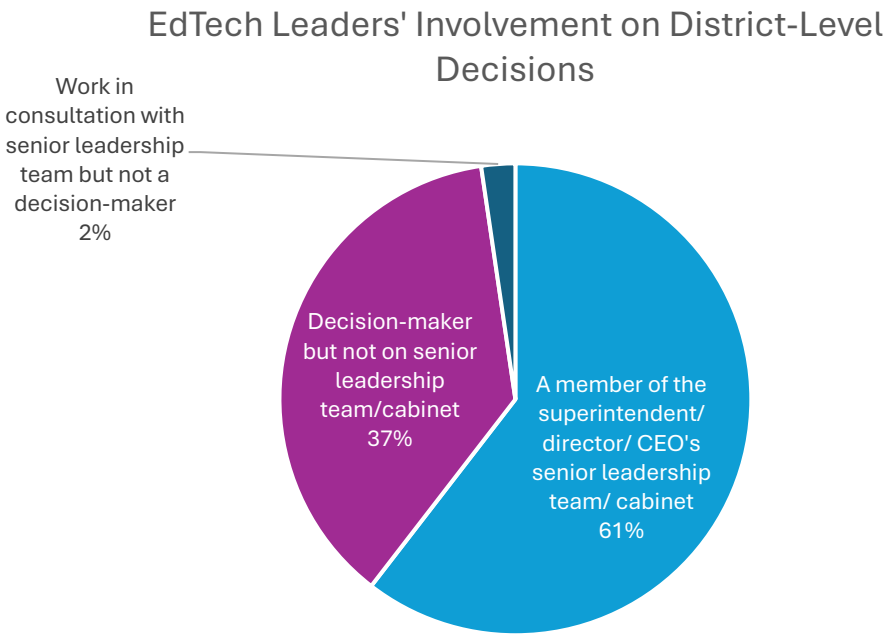
EdTech Leaders' Professional Background	
Technology	35%
Education	28%
Business & Technology	16%
Business, Education, & Technology	12%
Education & Technology	5%
Business & Education	2%

A vast majority (82%) of respondents oversee both instructional and administrative technology. Those responsible for instructional technology alone comprise 9% and those

responsible for administrative technology only comprise 2%. The remaining 7% who cited other job responsibilities included supervision and support of schools and public relations to build comfort about technology use, especially AI.



Beyond teaching and learning, technology use permeates virtually all aspects of school systems and can include varied systems such as school bus tracking, HVAC systems, the lighting system, and security cameras. Survey results suggest that the scope and importance of the EdTech Leader role is recognized by district leaders. The majority (61%) of respondents are a member of their senior leadership team and 37%, while not in the cabinet, are system-level leaders and decision-makers. Even those without decision-making authority (2%) work in consultation with their senior leadership team.



Staffing

Respondents were asked to provide their best estimate for various technology positions. Top technology leaders were the highest earners, with the majority (68%) earning $130K or greater—including more than a quarter (29%) earning $160K-$200K and 7% earning more than $200K.

Top instructional technology leaders were also reported to have salaries at the higher brackets with 46% earning $130K or more, though with less than a quarter (23%) earning $160K-$200K and only 3% earning more than $200K.

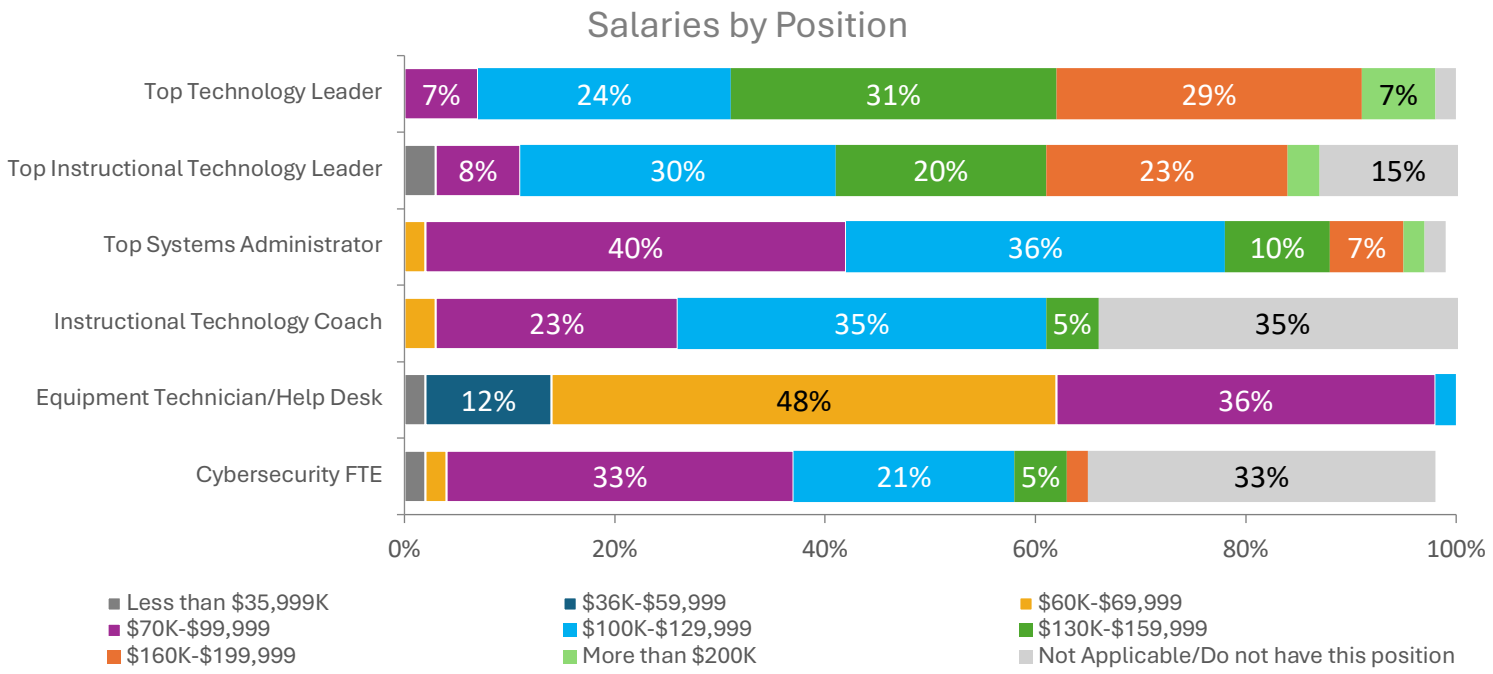
Two percent (2%) of those in the top system administrator position also earn more than $200K; however, including that 2%, only 19% earn $130K or more.

Just 5% of instructional coaches have salaries between $130-$159,999 and no respondent reported a salary higher than that. At 35% the largest salary bracket for this position was $100K-$129K.

Nearly all help desk technicians earn less than $100K, with almost half (48%) with salaries of $60K-$69,999.

A third (33%) of cybersecurity FTEs were reported to earn $70K-$99,999K and 21% were in the $100K-129,999 salary bracket.

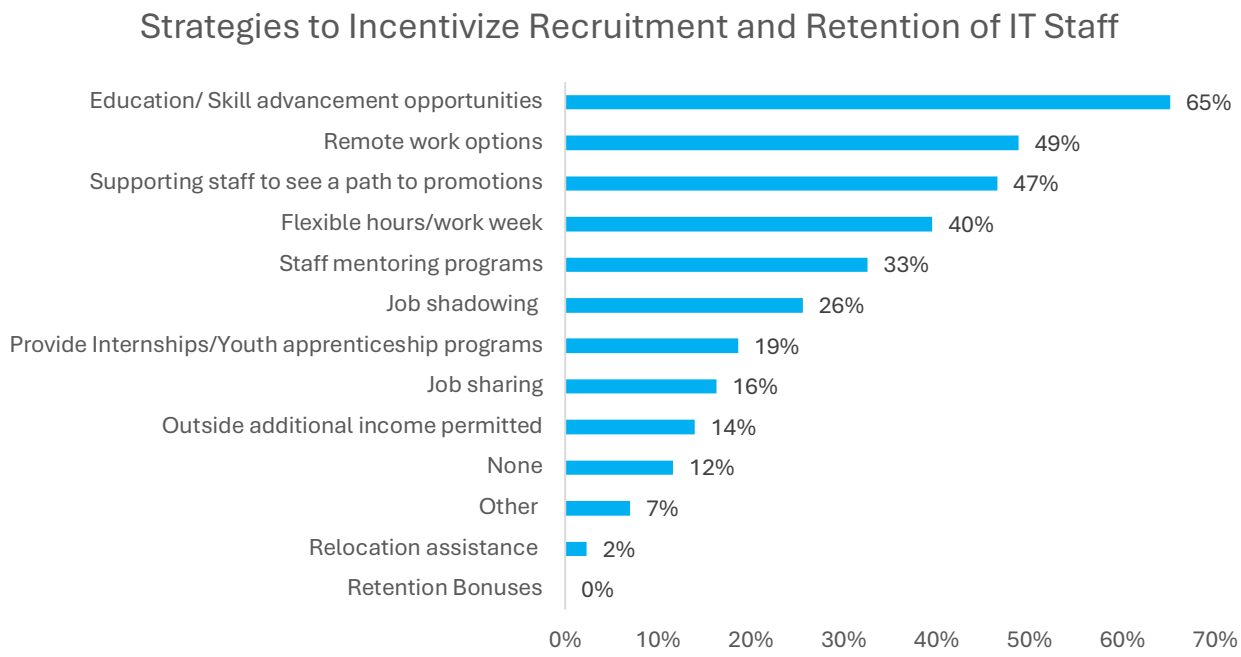
Notable about the salary results is the percentage of respondents who indicated their systems “do not have this position.” Equipment technician/help desk was the only position reported to be a staffed position by every respondent. Instructional technical coaches (35%) and cybersecurity FTE (33%) were the mostly frequently cited unstaffed positions, followed by top instructional technology leader at 15%. Top technology leader and top systems administrator positions were reported as nonexistent at the rate of 2% each.



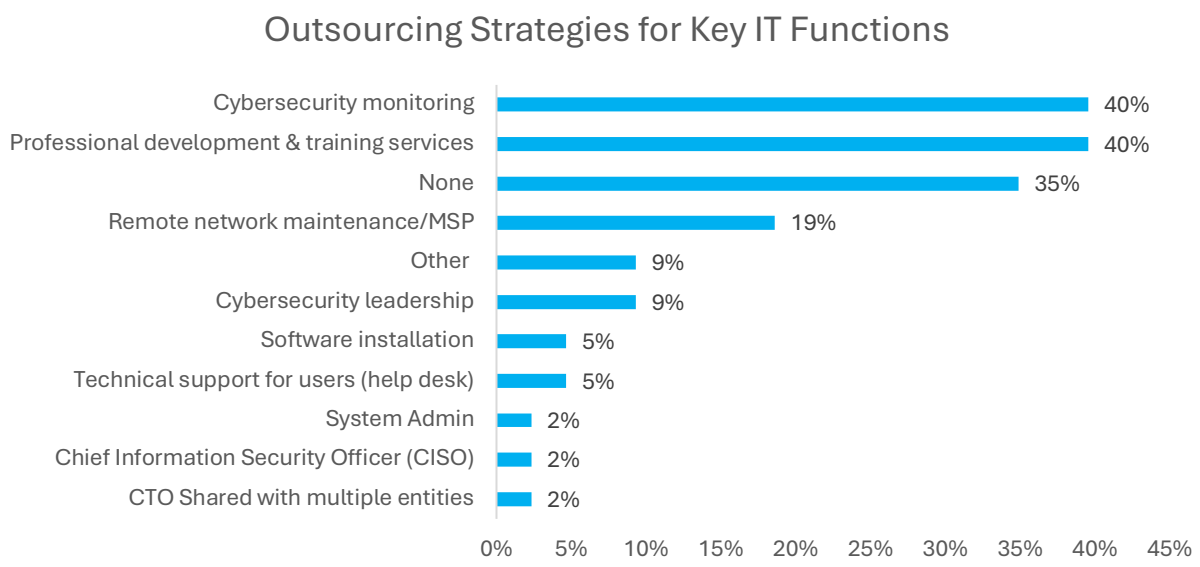
Percentage less than 5% is not displayed.

To incentivize recruitment and retention of IT staff, 88% of respondents employ a variety of strategies. Proving educational and skill advancement opportunities was the most common, at 65%. Nearly half (49%) allow remote work options, 47% provide paths for employee promotion, and 40% offer flexible hours. A third (33%) have staff mentoring

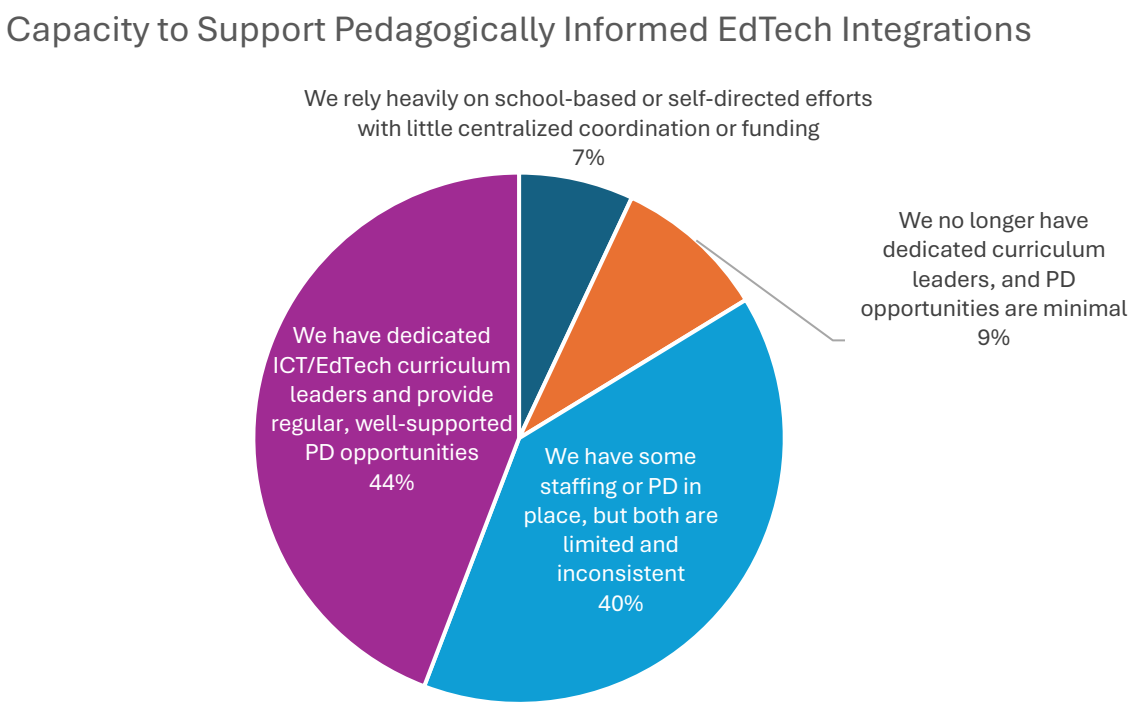
programs and 26% have job shadowing programs. The strategies used least frequently—by less than fifth of respondents—are internship programs (19%), job sharing (16%), permission to earn outside additional income (14%), relocation assistance (2%), and strategies not listed on the survey (7%). No respondents use retention bonuses as a method to keep employees on staff.



A majority (65%) of respondents outsource IT functions to fill their internal resource gaps or to reduce costs. The functions outsourced most are cybersecurity monitoring at 40% and professional development also at 40%. The next most-outsourced function is network maintenance, though at a much lower rate of 19%. Less than a tenth of respondents outsource any other IT functions, including other strategies not listed on the survey (9%), cybersecurity leadership (9%), software installation (5%), help desk (5%), system administration (2%), chief information security officer (2%), and shared CTO (2%).



In describing their system's current capacity to support pedagogically informed EdTech integration, less than half (44%) of respondents report having dedicated ICT/EdTech curriculum leaders and providing regular, well-supported PD opportunities. While 40% have some staffing or PD in place, it is limited and inconsistent. Nine percent (9%) work in a system that no longer has dedicated curriculum leaders and in which PD opportunities are minimal. The remaining 7% have little centralized support and rely on school-based or self-directed efforts.

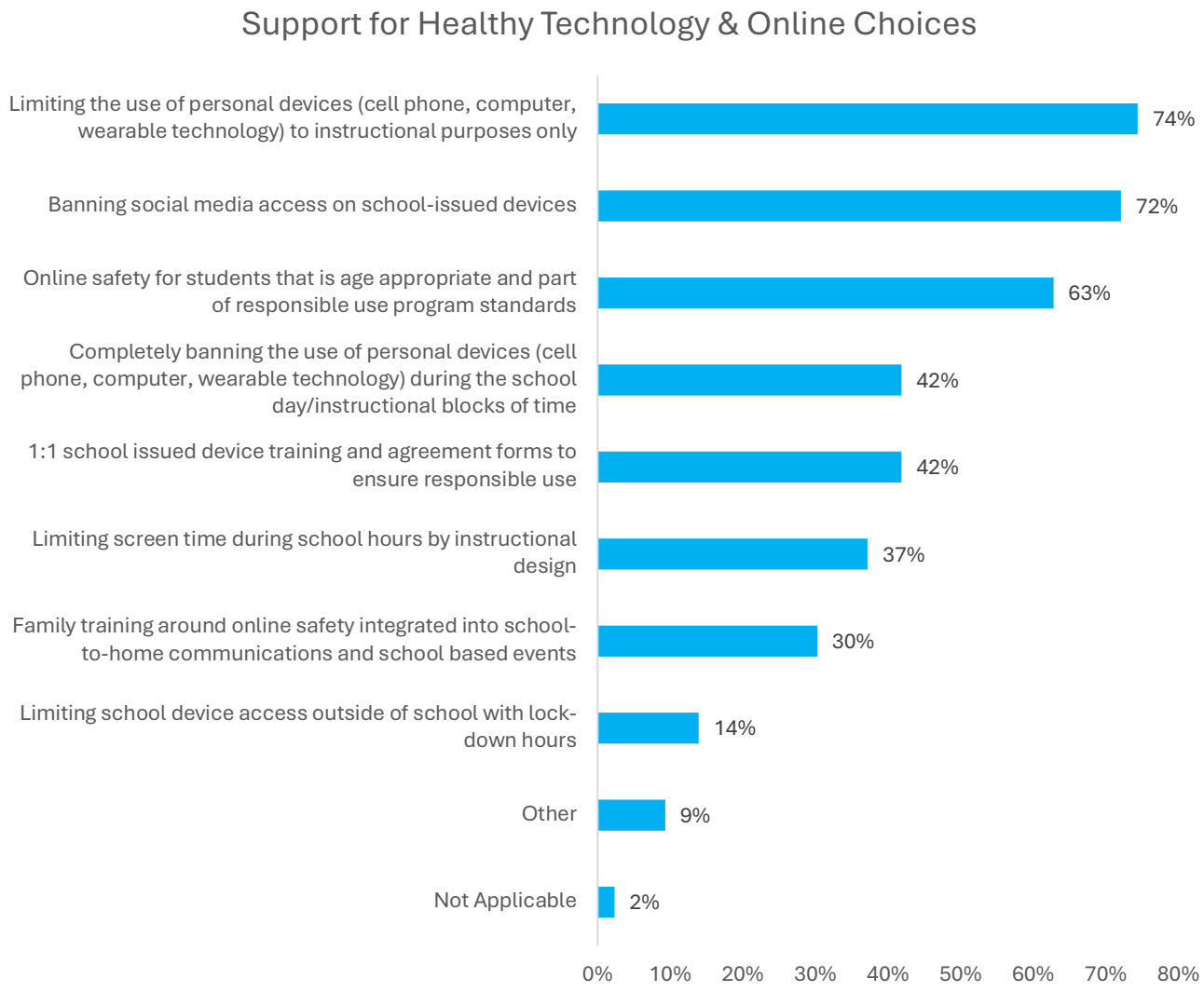


Well-Being

A recent report on Canadian youth and mental health showed a link between excessive personal screen time (7+ hours) and severe symptoms of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress.[5] So it is not surprising that the overwhelming majority (98%) of respondents work in a school system that supports students to make healthy choices regarding the use of technology and online safety in and out of school. Nearly three-fourths (74%) limit the use of personal devices to instructional purposes and 72% ban social media access on school-issued devices. Sixty-three percent (63%) have a responsible use program that outlines age-appropriate online safety for students and 42% have agreement forms to ensure responsible use on 1:1 school-issued devices. Complete bans on the use of personal devices during instruction time are employed by 42% and 37% limit screen time during school hours. Family training about online safety is a strategy used by 30%,

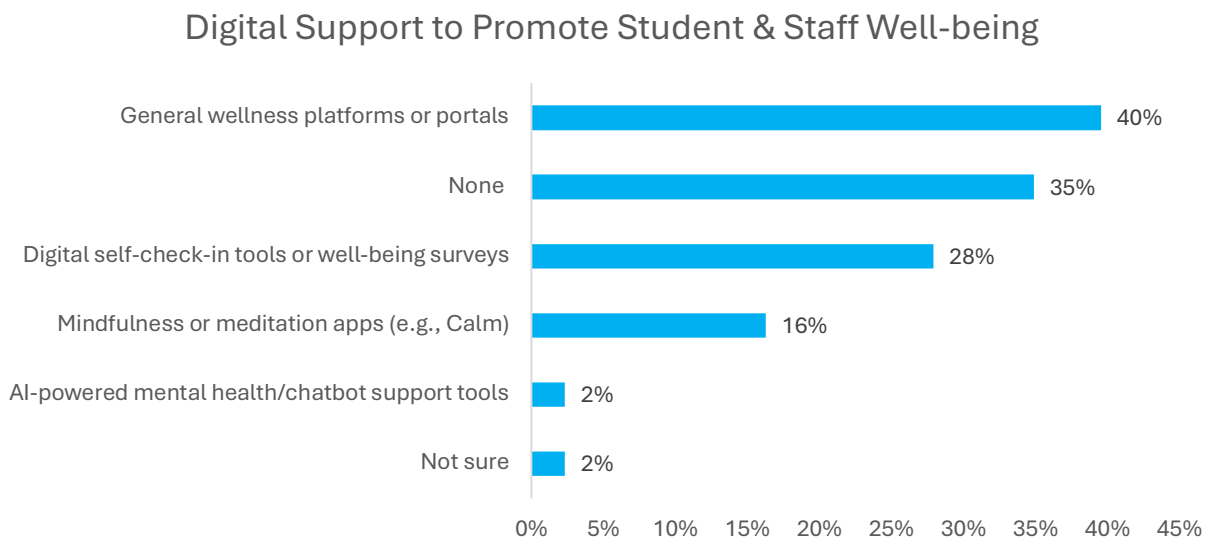
[5] https://www.mhrc.ca/screen-time-youth-mh

and 14% have lock-down hours for school device access outside of school. Nine percent (9%) of respondents used a strategy not listed on the survey.



Beyond helping students manage their device usage, the majority of respondents (63%) report that their school system provides digital supports designed to promote student and staff mental health. Access to general wellness platforms is the most common at 40%. More than a quarter (28%) use digital self-check-in tools or well-being surveys and 16% use meditation apps. A very small percentage (2%) have AI-powered mental health/chatbot support tools. Once guidance regarding “effective and safe use” of AI tools to support mental health becomes available from the recently announced National Guidance for

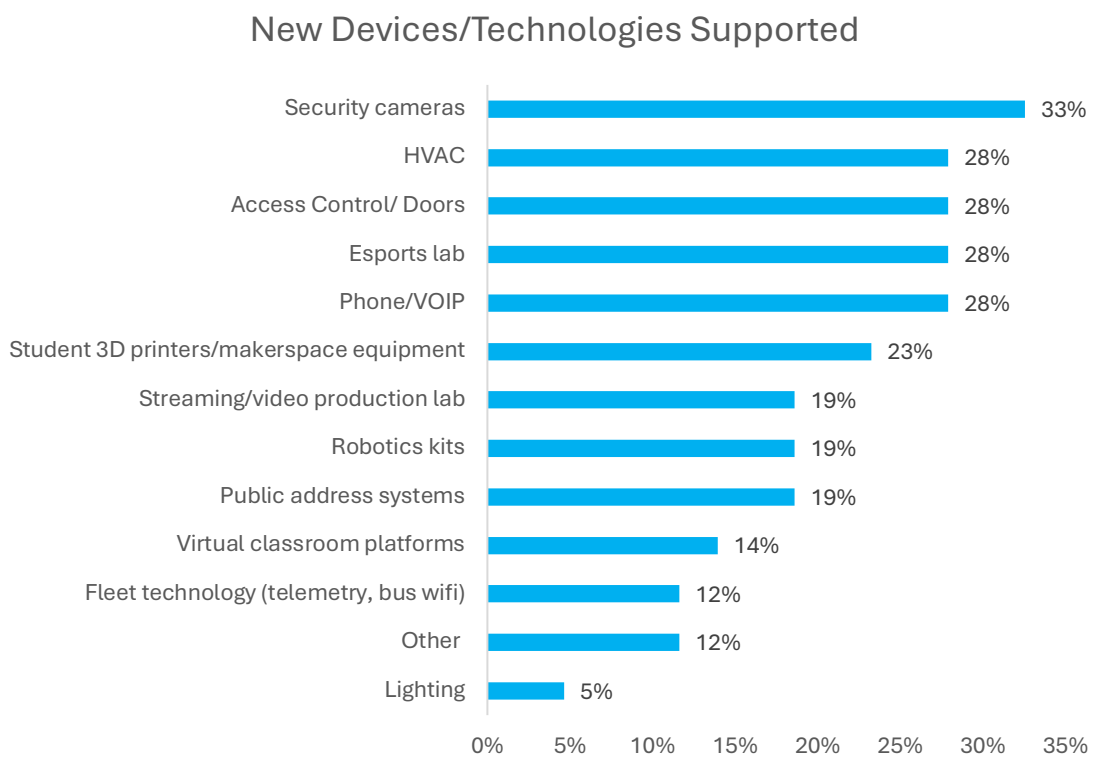
Artificial Intelligence Use in Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care initiative,[6] the percentage of those using AI tools to promote well-being may increase.



Devices

Devices traditionally not in their purview have become the responsibility of the IT department. When asked about new devices/technology they now support that they did not support three years ago, a third (33%) of respondents reported the addition of security cameras. HVAC systems, access control/doors, Esports lab, and phone/VOIP were each cited by 28%. Makerspace equipment such as 3D printers are now supported by 23%. Video production labs, robotics kits, and public address systems were each reported to be a new responsibility by 19% of respondents. Virtual classroom platforms (14%), fleet technology (12%) and lighting (5%) were the other newly supported technologies. Twelve percent (12%) of respondents also support additional technologies not listed on the survey.

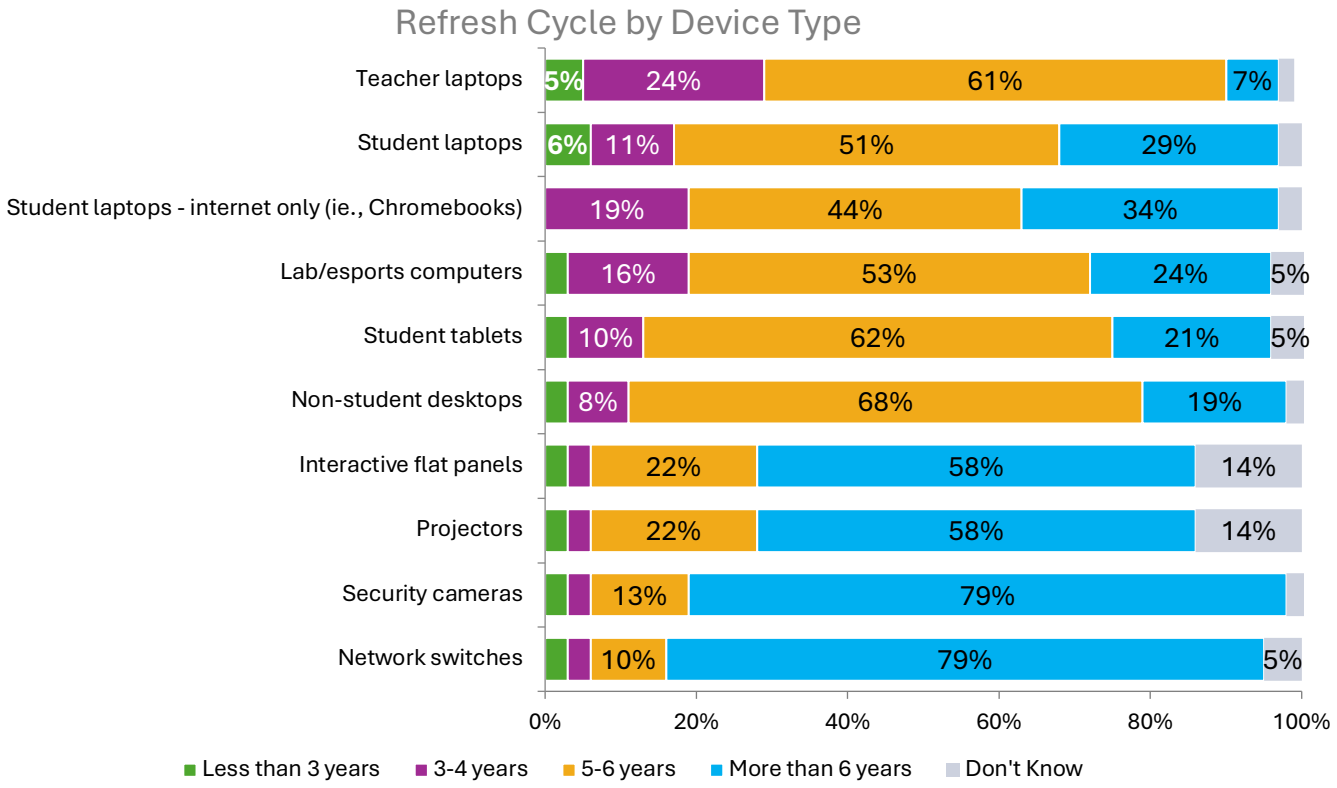
[6] https://www.ccsa.ca/en/canada-gets-its-first-national-guidance-ai-mental-and-substance-use-health



The replacement schedule for devices varies significantly by device type. High-use student- and teacher-facing devices—laptops, desktops, tablets, and lab computers—have shorter refresh cycles than other school system hardware. Respondents report that teacher laptops are replaced most frequently; 90% refresh in six years or less, with five-six years being the most common schedule at 61%. Nearly a quarter (24%) refresh teacher laptops on a three- to four-year cycle. More than half of respondents (51%) replace student laptops every five to six years, though more than a quarter (29%) refresh after six years. More than a third of respondents (34%) replace internet-only student laptops after more than six years. The most common refresh cycle for these devices is five to six years at 44%, with 19% replacing every three to four years.

More than half (53%) of respondents replace computers used in labs and for esports between five and six years. Nearly a quarter (24%) replace after more than six years and 16% after three to four years. The majority (62%) of respondents replace student tablets in five to six years, with 21% replacing after more than six years and 10% after three to four years. More than two-thirds (68%) replace non-student desktops every five to six years, 19% more than six years, and 8% every three to four years. Hardware with the longest

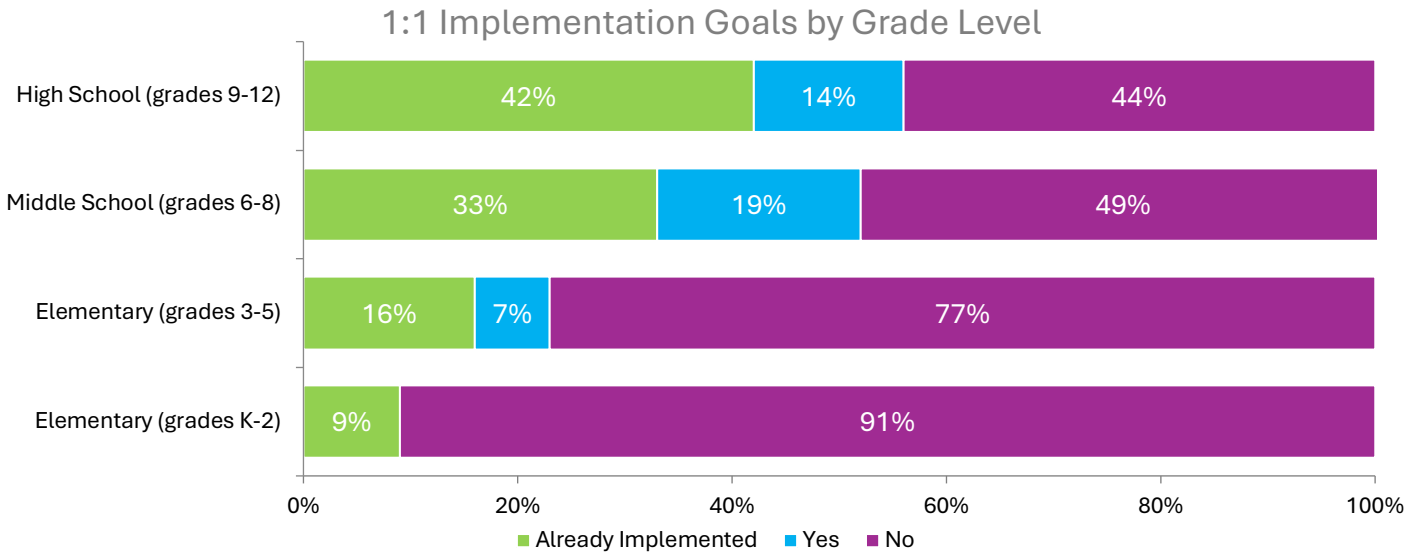
refresh cycle of more than six years included interactive flat panels and projectors at 58% each, and security cameras and network switches at 79% each. Except for student internet-only laptops, each device type had a small percentage reporting replacements of less than three years; student laptops had the most at 6%, followed by teacher laptops at 5%. All other device types had 3% reporting refresh cycles less than three years.



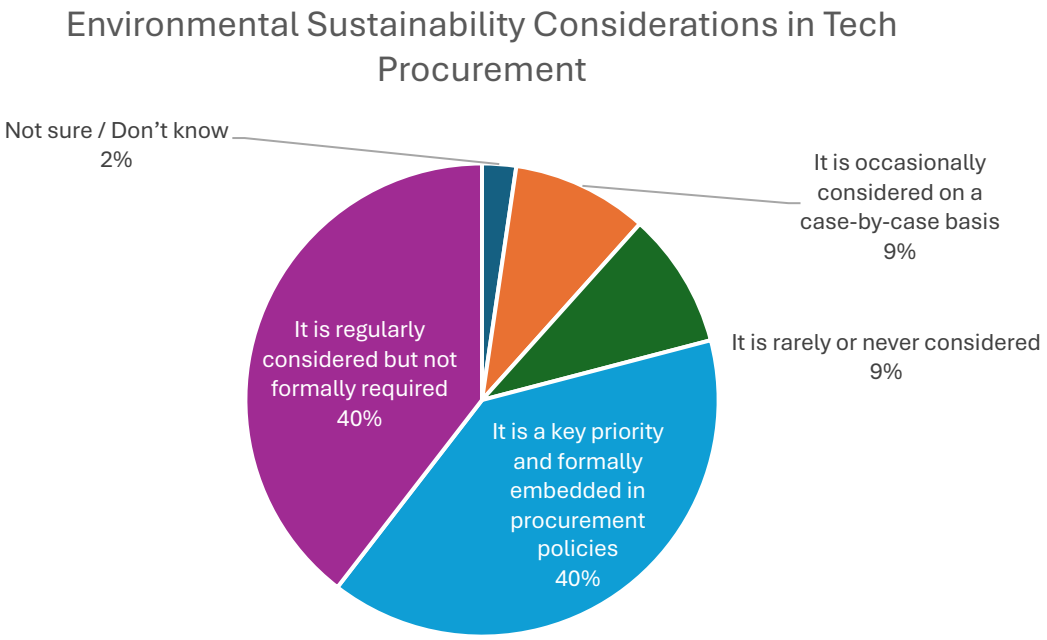
Percentage less than 5% is not displayed.

Responses to the question about 1:1 implementation show a clear grade-level progression. The higher the grade level, the greater the percentage of 1:1 implementation—with 9% at grades K-2, 16% at grades 3-5, 33% at grades 6-8, and 42% at grades 9-12. High school and middle school also have higher percentages (14% and 19% respectively) of respondents indicating 1:1 is a goal, compared to 7% for elementary grades 3-5 and 0% for grades K-2. While a recent media report found that 70% of Canadian children aged six and younger "are able to use some form of technology unaided,"[7] the lack of 1:1 goals at the younger grades suggests that school systems believe young children will benefit more from non-technology-added teaching and learning.

[7] https://mediaincanada.com/2025/08/21/mtm-junior-2025/



For 40% of respondents, environmental sustainability considerations such as e-waste, recycling, and energy-efficient hardware is a key priority that is embedded in their technology procurement policies. For another 40%, environmental sustainability is a procurement consideration but not a requirement. Those that occasionally consider it on a case-by-case basis account for 9%. Another 9% rarely or never consider environmental sustainability, and 2% are unsure about the degree to which environmental concerns impacted their technology purchase decisions.



Summary

This preliminary data suggests that EdTech Leaders are aware of both the promise and risks of AI. The majority of respondents are embracing AI, and notably none reported AI bans. Most see AI's potential for enabling personalized education and have AI training initiatives for staff and administrators under way.

However, respondents expressed a high degree of concern about new forms of AI-enabled cyber attacks. It is not surprising that cybersecurity is ranked as the top technology priority. This concern appears to be reflected in the significant investments being made to keep networks secure, including the majority of respondents who have an FTE cybersecurity staff position.

Among respondents, the importance of the EdTech Leader role is recognized by their district leaders. All reported being consulted by their leadership team including a majority who serve on their superintendent's cabinet. With responsibilities that encompass diverse areas such as instructional technology, security cameras, Esports labs, and lighting systems, EdTech Leaders have a depth of understanding of today's modernized infrastructure that is invaluable. As school systems continue to integrate new technologies, their input is essential for both protecting the network and enabling positive student outcomes.

About the Survey

This survey was developed by the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)—the premier professional association for school system technology leaders in North America. Manitoba Education, Research and Learning Information Networks (MERLIN) was CoSN's data partner and survey host.

The 46-question survey was emailed to provincial organizations on June 2, 2025 and closed on September 19, 2025. There were 43 unique responses from 8 provinces. The survey has a 9.6% margin of error at the 95% confidence level.

School System Type

Most respondents (74%) work in a public school system. Catholic school system respondents comprised 16%, French schools 7%, and private schools 2%.

Metropolitan Status

The largest segment of respondents (37%) described their metropolitan area as primarily urban with some rural or suburban area. Areas described as primarily rural with some urban or suburban areas comprised the next largest segment at 23%. Entirely urban or city-based comprised 16%, entirely rural or remote 9%, and primarily suburban 7%. Participation from First Nations and "other" metro types not listed on the survey accounted for 2% and 5%, respectively.

Enrollments

Forty percent (40%) of respondents work in school systems with 10,001-25,000 students. Those with large enrollments (25,001-80,000) comprised 23%, and very large enrollments (more than 80,000) 9%. Smaller enrollments account for the balance, with 16% having student populations of 5,000 or less and 12% with 5,001-10,000.

CoSN, the world-class professional association for K-12 EdTech leaders, is driven by a mission to equip current and aspiring K-12 education technology leaders, their teams, and school districts with the community, knowledge, and professional development they need to cultivate engaging learning environments. Visit cosn.org or email membership@cosn.org to find out more about CoSN's focus areas, annual conference and events, advocacy and policy, membership, and the CETL® certification exam.

Manitoba Education, Research and Learning Information Networks (MERLIN) was established in 1995 as a special operating agency with the Department of Education and Training. It was formed as a facilitating body to coordinate the delivery of technology services to the education community across Manitoba. Now celebrating their 30th anniversary, MERLN currently operates under the Department of Innovation and New Technology.

MISSION

To support the use of technology in improving educational services to learners.

MANDATE

- Provide services that support educational institutions in the application of technology tools to enhance and expand program delivery; and
- Provide direction and management in the educational use of networks, acting as a broker of services to meet client needs.

Dell Technologies works hand-in-hand with schools and districts to design student-centric learning models aligned to local goals and community needs—strengthening outcomes for students and their communities. Guided by our purpose to create technologies that drive **human progress**, we partner across **K-12** and **Higher Education** to expand access to opportunity and accelerate innovation. To support this mission, we provide secure, scalable infrastructure and student-ready **devices** that power modern classrooms and campuses.

CoSN Resources

In addition to regional events and an annual conference, CoSN provides EdTech Leaders with resources and services to address a wide variety of topics:

- **Framework for Essential Skills (www.cosn.org/framework)—** The Framework of Essential Skills of the K-12 CTO comprises three primary professional categories in the education technology field: Leadership and Vision, Educational Environment, and Managing Technology and Business. Each of these categories includes 10 essential skill areas, outlining the responsibilities and knowledge needed to be a viable educational technology leader. Each of these skills, and the knowledge needed to demonstrate them, are included in CoSN's Certified Education Technology Leader (CETL) certification exam.

- **The Digital Leap Success Matrix—(www.cosn.org/successmatrix)** School system leaders need guidance to advance their technology goals and to overcome challenges, both unexpected and expected. The Digital Leap Success Matrix outlines the practices needed to create a successful digital school system. The Matrix is aligned to CoSN's Framework of Essential Skills of the K-12 CTO.

- **Cybersecurity Resources (www.cosn.org/cybersecurity)**—A suite of resources that address cybersecurity in K-12 organizations around planning, prevention & preparation, implementation, responses and more.

- **Screens in Balance: Education, Technology, and Community Conversations (https://www.cosn.org/2025-blaschke-report-toolkit/)**—Actionable tools to help educators, families and policymakers communicate about the role of screens and learning.

- **CoSN's NIST Cybersecurity Framework Resource Alignment for K-12 v2.0 (www.cosn.org/Cybersecurityframework)**— Seamlessly aligns the NIST Cybersecurity Framework with a wealth of free and CoSN member resources, empowering school districts to fortify their cyber programs and safeguard their educational environments against evolving digital threats. Use this site to find the resources you need to build and expand your cybersecurity program.

- **Student Data Privacy (www.cosn.org/privacy)**—Resources to help you understand student data privacy requirements and create and improve your student data privacy program while building trust across your community.

- **GenAI Readiness and Maturity Tool (www.cosn.org/ai)**—To empower school districts to assess their preparedness for responsible integration of Generative AI, CoSN and the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) collaborated to develop the online K-12 Generative AI Maturity Tool, which expands upon the K-12 Generative AI Readiness Checklist.

- **K-12CVAT (www.cosn.org/K-12CVAT)** — CoSN K-12 Community Vendor Assessment Tool that measures vendor risk for K-12 schools, districts, and education service districts. To ensure that your school system information and constituents' Personal Identifiable Information (PII) are protected, the K-12CVAT should be used as part of procurement processes, including RFP processes and purchase evaluations.

- **Interoperability Toolkit (www.cosn.org/interoperability)**—Resources to help districts increase the interoperability of their academic and operational systems.

- **Network & Systems Design (www.cosn.org/networkdesign)** — A suite of resources to help schools and districts design and implement resilient technology infrastructure that adapts to shifting and sustainable technologies which support the increasing demands of teaching and learning.

- **EmpowerED Superintendent Resources (www.cosn.org/superintendents)** — Leadership strategies based on imperatives for technology leadership and action steps for strengthening the technology leadership team (created in partnership with AASA, The Superintendents Association). Resources include One-Pagers on critical focus areas:
  - Self-Assessments for Superintendent, CTO, District Leadership Team
  - Financing Technology Innovations: Strategies and Tools for Determining 1) Total Cost of Ownership and 2) Value of Investments

- **Driving K-12 Innovation (www.cosn.org/k12innovation)** —Annual report on key trends around emerging technologies to transform learning, organized around Hurdles, Accelerators, and Tech Enablers.

- **What is K-12 Technology Environmental Sustainability? (www.cosn.org/sustainability)**—Resources to help school leaders implement environmentally sustainable practices in educational technology, including guidance on procurement, energy efficiency, and responsible device management.

- **Accessibility (www.cosn.org/accessibility)** —CoSN offers the AI & Accessibility in Education Blaschke Report, guidance, and policy support to help school leaders ensure educational technology is accessible, inclusive, and compliant with legal standards.

In addition to these public resources, CoSN provides members with extensive member-only resources (such the ASBO/CoSN Toolkit for collaboration between the school business official and CTO) as well as a collaborative resource by CASEL/CoSN on technology and social emotional learning (SEL). Plus, CoSN issues Member Exclusive Briefs that provide guidance on key emerging technologies such as the report on generative AI, "ChatGPT—Above the Noise" as well as EdTechNext reports such as "Low-Cost, High-Impact Technologies to Address Digital Equity." CoSN also provides Member Exclusive Briefs offering guidance on emerging technologies, such as "The EdTech Debate: A Call for Balance," which explores the growing debate around educational technology in K-12 classrooms and addresses concerns about screen time and academic impact—often based on limited or anecdotal evidence.

Additional Resources

Cybersecurity

- **Cyber Skills Development** (https://www.cyber.gc.ca/en/education-community/cyber-skills-development)— Federal learning hub with resources for teachers, parents, and students. Offers games, online modules, and support materials. Canadian Centre for Cyber Security

- **Introduction to Cyber Security for Educators** (https://www.cyber.gc.ca/en/education-community/learning-hub/courses/introduction-cyber-security-educators)—Self-paced course for educators covering cybersecurity fundamentals, threats, and classroom safety practices. *Canadian Centre for Cyber Security*

- **Cybersecurity for K-12 Educators** (https://cybersecurecatalyst.ca/cybersecurity-for-k-12-educators/)— Provides lesson plans, workshops, and teacher resources focused on cyber hygiene and digital citizenship for K-12. *Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst*

- **Security Awareness Curriculum** (https://www.focusedresources.ca/student-security-awareness)— Canadian-developed modules teaching online safety, password protection, and responsible technology use for students aged 4–18. *Focused Education*

AI

- **K-12 AI Literacy** (https://www.amii.ca/courses-literacy/k-12-ai-literacy)— Canadian teacher resource bank for AI literacy. Offers lesson plans and interactive activities to teach AI concepts in classrooms. *Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (Amii)*

- **Policy Brief: Responsible Use of AI in Education** (https://www.ctf-fce.ca/blog- perspectives/towards-a-responsible-use-of-artificial-intelligence-in-canadian-public-education/)— National policy document addressing governance, equity, and ethics for AI adoption in public education. *Canadian Teachers' Federation*.

- **An AI Use Case Initiative for Canadian Education** (https://c21canada.org/integrating- ai-education-transforming-learning-2025/)— Pan-Canadian stories on the effect ive integration of AI into education for both K-12 and Higher Education.

- **Digital Literacy and the Use of AI in Education** (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/ai-in-education)— Provincial policy and guidance document outlining the responsible use of AI tools in K-12 and curricular integration. *Province of British Columbia*

- **Digital Media and Literacy Resources** (https://mediasmarts.ca)—Canadian non-profit providing curriculum-linked resources for digital citizenship, online safety, and AI/media literacy. *MediaSmarts*

- **Learning Together for Responsible AI** (https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/advisory-council-artificial-intelligence/en/public-awareness-working-group/learning-together-responsible-artificial-intelligence)—Federal resource defining AI literacy and competencies for Canadians with focus on ethics, governance, and social impacts. *Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada*

About the Survey Report Author

Paula Maylahn is an education consultant with 40 years' experience across K-20. She is a project director for CoSN's interoperability initiatives, contributing author on "The Experts' Guide to the K-12 Market" and "The Experts' Guide to the Postsecondary Market," and the author of the paper "Interoperability: Definitions, Expectations, and Implications." Paula is a council member of the Women's Education Project, a twice-elected board member of the Software & Information Industry Association Education Division, former executive council member of the PreK-12 Learning Group of the Association of American Publishers, and former board member of the United Design Guild where she chaired the education council.