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K-12 Education Benchmark Report

PowerSchool Education Research Forum

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Introduction

The TalentIndex: K-12 Education Benchmark Report from the PowerSchool Education Research Forum details findings from a 2017 survey* of education professionals' insights on organizational growth, industry trends, common challenges and performance benchmarks.

The report is useful for district leaders, school administrators, human resources personnel and others involved in maximizing student achievement, human capital decision-making and K-12 operational efficiency.

The report focuses on factors influencing the employee life cycle – recruitment, hiring, onboarding, evaluation, contract renewals and professional learning – and provides data on the much debated teacher shortage.

As today's schools strive to better understand the people issues behind many of their current challenges, it is our intention that the *TalentIndex* provides guidance to prepare for a brighter future in education, and in the lives of all educators, support staff and students. We hope you find this year's report valuable.

Executive Summary

The *TalentIndex* shows that K-12 education continues to increase demand for employees and places attracting teacher candidates as a top priority. Unfortunately, hiring data indicates a four-year decline in the number of teacher applications per job posting, so schools will need to improve recruitment, hiring and retention to secure a qualified educator for every classroom.

Budget constraints and difficulty measuring talent management performance continue to hinder operational improvements as they did in the previous year's report – limiting schools' abilities to make data-driven decisions and improvements, which contributes to difficulty retaining teachers and maximizing student achievement.

K-12 professionals have an unwavering focus on attracting, developing and retaining quality teachers to achieve their ubiquitous goal of advancing student achievement, and are interested in leveraging new tools to ensure the success of these initiatives.

Key metrics from the 2018 TalentIndex include:

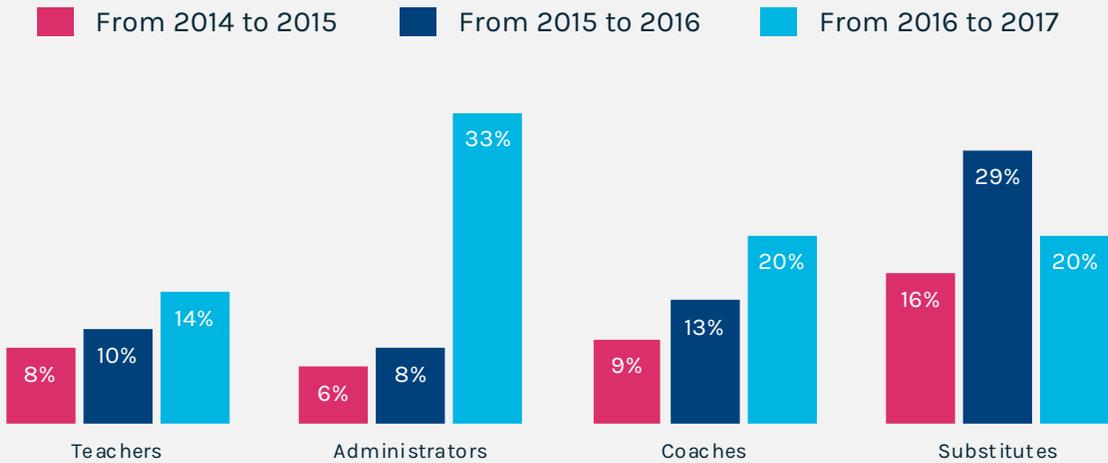
- Demand for teachers increased 14 percent in 2017; on average, 18 applicants applied for each position.
- 51 percent of districts are experiencing a teacher shortage; districts in rural areas and towns report the highest rates of shortages.
- 35 percent of K-12 schools do not measure talent management performance.
- 84 percent of survey respondents said attracting teacher candidates was one of three top priorities.
- Budget constrictions and student achievement are the biggest challenges influencing academic and administrative operations.
- 97 percent of K-12 leaders agree that research-based educator screening assessments are valuable.

**TalentEd by PeopleAdmin produced the inaugural TalentIndex in 2016, conducted the 2017 survey and joined the PowerSchool family in 2018. Together, the combined companies help power the entire education ecosystem with unified technology and remain committed to delivering valuable data and insights – such as those in this report – under the PowerSchool name.*

K-12 education staffing report

K-12 education recruitment data – measured using the nation’s largest K-12 applicant tracking solution (ATS) database, and a sample size of approximately 1,700 schools and districts – indicates year-over-year hiring demand has continued to grow. School districts increased the number of teacher positions posted by 14 percent from 2016 to 2017, following the upward trends measured in the 2015-2016 and 2014-2015 school years.**

Rate of increase in job posting volume (January – June)**



Substitute and coach job postings increased by 20 percent each in 2017, and job posting rates for administrators saw the most growth – a staggering 33 percent increase. Fortunately, the number of administrative applicants grew 8 percent per job posting, outpacing the increased demand.

Yet again in 2017, the volume of teacher applicants did not keep up with the volume of new job postings, though the gap is smaller. PowerSchool’s applicant tracking system (ATS) data show a 6 percent decrease in the average number of teacher applicants and an 8 percent drop in substitute applicants per job posting from 2016 to 2017. There was no significant change in the average number of applicants for coaching positions.

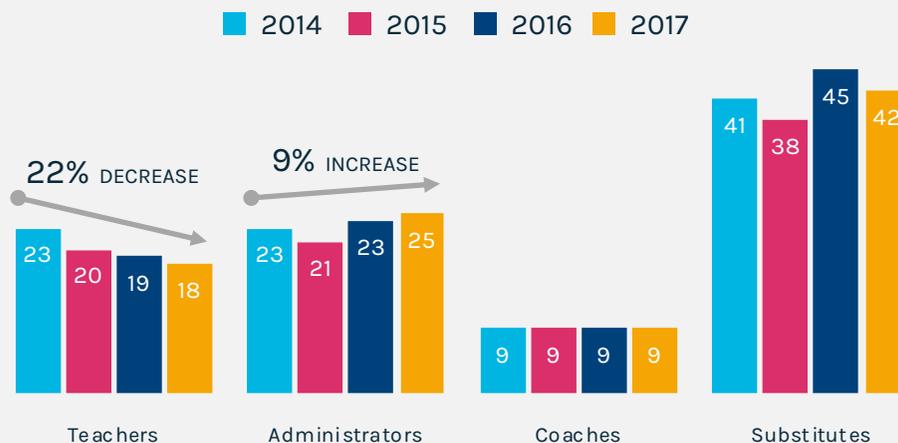
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Over a three-year period from 2014 to 2017, the number of teacher applicants dropped 22 percent – while the average number of applicants for other positions have remained the same or increased slightly.

This signifies a trend with the growing number of job postings outpacing the number of teacher applicants. However, the ratio of teacher applicants to teacher positions is 18:1, so the shortage is not yet critical.

****Note:** The TalentIndex measures job posting and applicant volume data available from the first six months of the calendar year, which has proven an accurate predictor of annual growth, with a variation of just 2 percent.

Average number of applicants per posting (January – June)**



What does this mean?

Increasing demand for teachers and year-over-year decreases in applicants suggest that the often-debated teacher shortage may be real ... and not likely to end soon. If the trend continues, finding qualified teachers will become even more difficult.

To keep up with the growing demand for qualified educators and meet high standards for student achievement, education leaders must find ways to expand recruiting and improve candidate screening, hiring efficiency and employee retention.

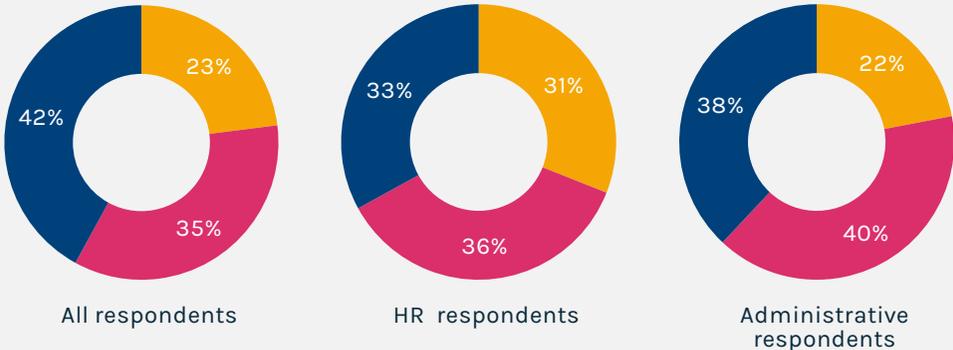
K-12 talent management performance benchmarks

Education leaders who struggle to recruit and hire quality educators – or to onboard, manage, develop and retain employees in general – will likely also struggle to identify the specific causes of these employee-related challenges because only 23 percent of districts measure talent management performance.

Perhaps the most effective way to measure talent management performance is by tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) such as time-to-hire, substitute fill rates, professional development registration and attendance, return rate of contract renewals and more. However, more than a third of survey respondents report not tracking even a single KPI or talent management performance metric quarterly; 42 percent of respondents admit they're uncertain if anything is measured at all.

Talent management KPIs

Tracking Not tracking Not sure



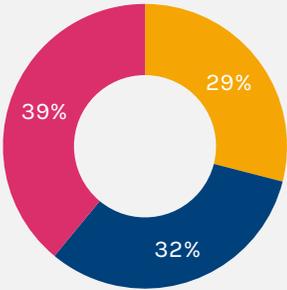
These figures don't change significantly when reviewing only HR and administrative employees' feedback. In fact, these respondents – who are most likely to manage this data – confirm at a higher rate that talent management KPIs are not measured.

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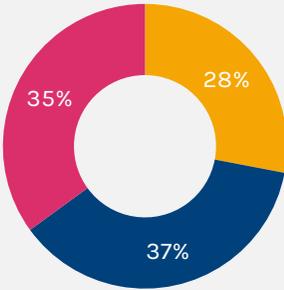
Difficulty with reporting may be the reason why institutions don't measure performance, as only about a third of institutions say generating, analyzing and using data is easy. Unfortunately, reporting doesn't seem to get easier year-over-year – in 2017, 23-39 percent of respondents said reporting, analyzing or using data is difficult, which is similar to the 28-36 percent who indicated reporting difficulty in 2016.

Ease of generating reports and analyzing district's talent management data

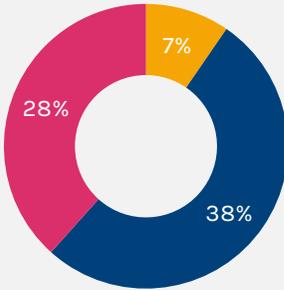
■ Easy ■ Neutral ■ Difficult



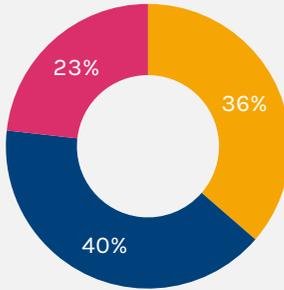
Using predictive insights to make organizational changes



Using summaries of data to predict future activity



Analyzing data and producing summaries



Generating reports on your institution data

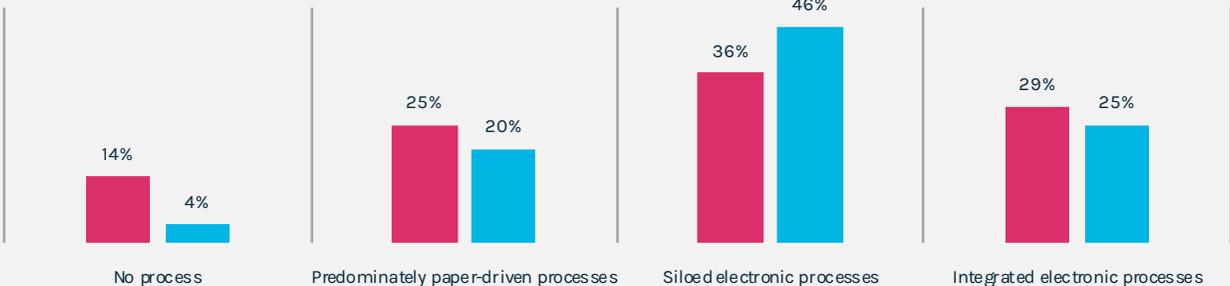
Schools and districts continue to struggle with using data to predict activity and guide decision-making, likely because few K-12 institutions have mature technology designed to deliver meaningful data insights.

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Technical maturity refers to how technology is involved in specific processes. When asked to describe the technical maturity of talent management reporting and analytics processes, fewer than 30 percent of respondents reported using highly mature “integrated electronic processes.” Most used siloed electronic processes, while some reported using paper processes or had no defined process at all.

Technical maturity

■ Reporting ■ Analytics



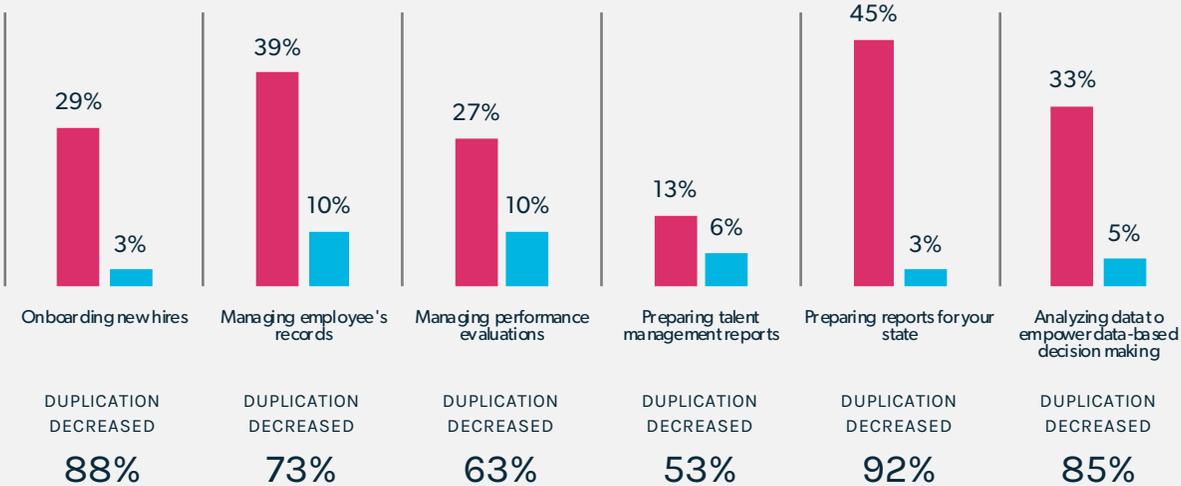
Technical immaturity not only makes it difficult to measure effectiveness, it also contributes to overall inefficiency at K-12 institutions. For example, 45 percent of respondents say they duplicate the work of others when preparing reports for their state, but that number drops to just 3 percent among respondents with technical maturity (also known as “integrated electronic processes”).

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Using technology designed to electronically integrate talent management tasks consistently resulted in more efficient workflows – consider these process improvements:

Work already completed by others is duplicated when ...

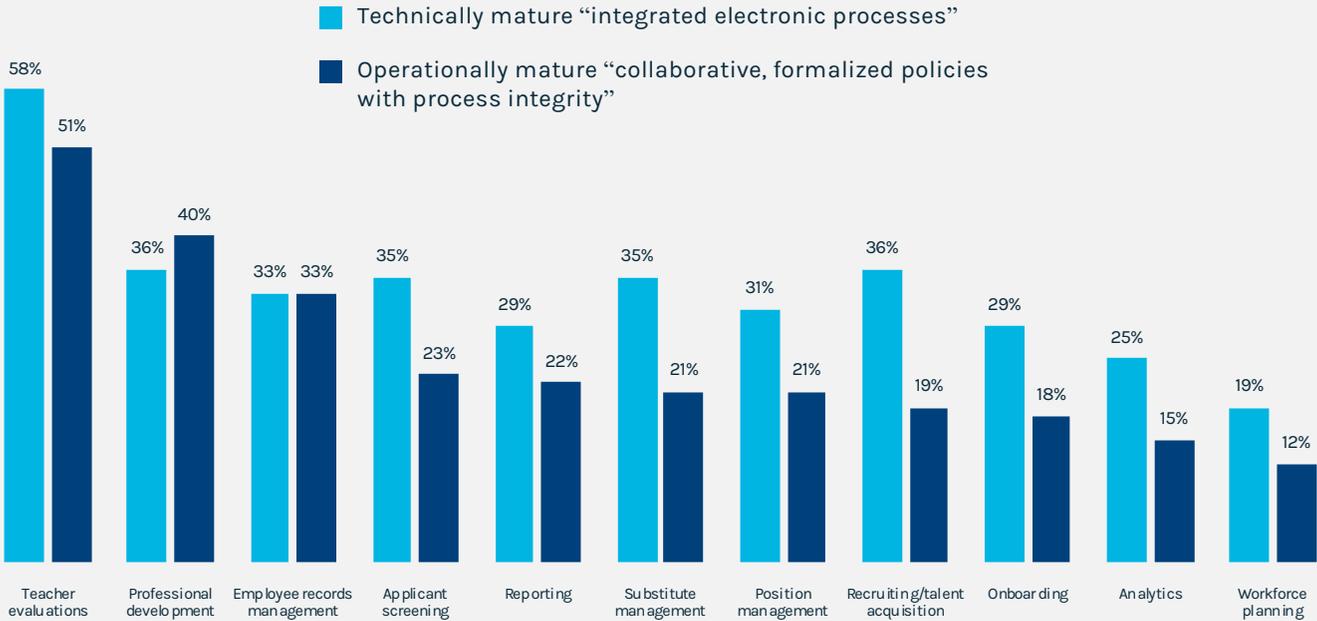
■ All Respondents ■ Respondents who use technically mature processes



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Despite these significant struggles with reporting and efficiency, schools are effectively and efficiently facilitating educator evaluation. Teacher evaluations are executed at K-12 schools with more technical and operational maturity than every other process, with professional development a somewhat distant second.

Prevalence of mature talent management processes



This represents a change since 2016, when K-12 leaders said recruiting/talent acquisition processes were most mature, evaluations were completed using stand-alone electronic systems and educator learning was most often paper-based. It's also worth noting that recruiting and talent acquisition was still one of the top three most technically mature processes in 2017.

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What does this mean?

Schools and districts are managing teacher evaluation tasks more efficiently than any other talent management processes, possibly because states frequently require reports on teacher performance, and evaluation maturity was a major focus in the Race to the Top initiatives of the last 10 years.

Unfortunately, immature processes for reporting and data analysis hinder data-driven decision-making.

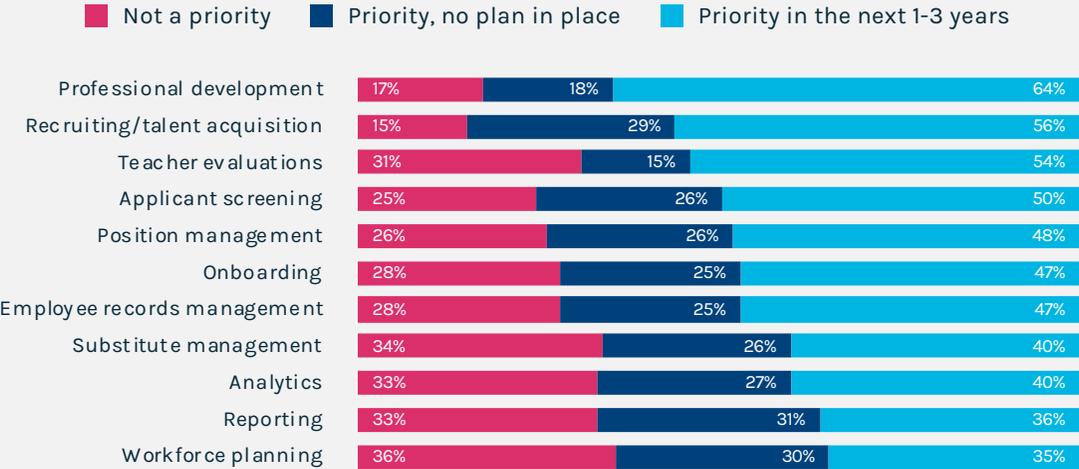
Mature technological and operational processes have proven effective at improving overall talent management efficiency and drastically reducing duplication of efforts, but most K-12 schools and districts have not progressed beyond siloed electronic processes to reap the benefits of technology and process integration. Similarly, failure to track or measure talent management KPIs makes it difficult to objectively demonstrate the specific needs and unique opportunities districts have to benefit from process improvement.

K-12 education leaders who want to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of talent-related processes must invest in integrated electronic solutions with robust analytics capabilities to help their team members deliver efficient, comprehensive, streamlined and measurable talent processes.

K-12 education trends

Since schools seem to be executing teacher evaluations better than other talent-related tasks, it's a little surprising that evaluations are also one of the top four processes education leaders plan to improve in the next 1-3 years.

Top priorities to improve with a talent management solution



This is a change from the top four processes to improve in 2016 – only teacher evaluations and talent acquisition remained a top priority year-over-year. Perhaps this is because schools delivered their planned improvements to records management and onboarding in 2016, or perhaps it's because school leaders recognize that improvements to professional development and applicant screening can have a more direct and positive influence on student achievement, and so have shifted focus.

2016 improvement priorities

1. Teacher evaluations
2. Talent acquisition
3. Records management
4. Onboarding

2017 improvement priorities

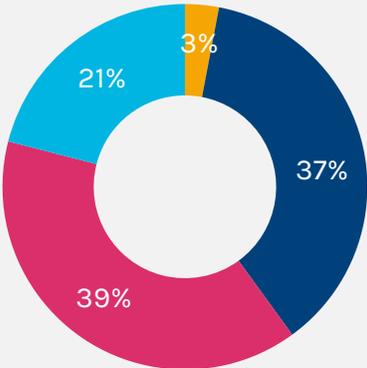
1. Professional development
2. Recruiting/talent acquisition
3. Teacher evaluations
4. Applicant screening

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Ninety-seven percent of K-12 leaders agree that research-based educator screening assessments are valuable, and 60 percent say they're very or extremely valuable.

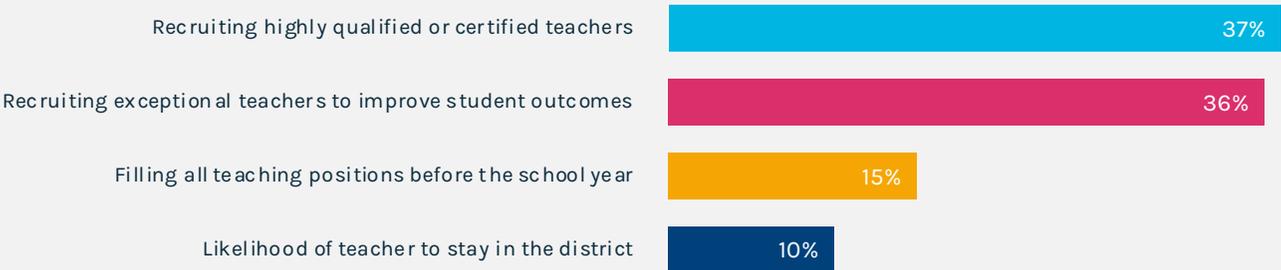
Value of research-based teacher hiring assessments

- Not valuable
- Somewhat valuable
- Very valuable
- Extremely valuable



This aligns with hiring priorities, which indicate a preference for recruiting highly qualified or certified teachers, and recruiting exceptional teachers to improve student outcomes – the two fields that research-based hiring assessments identify effectively.

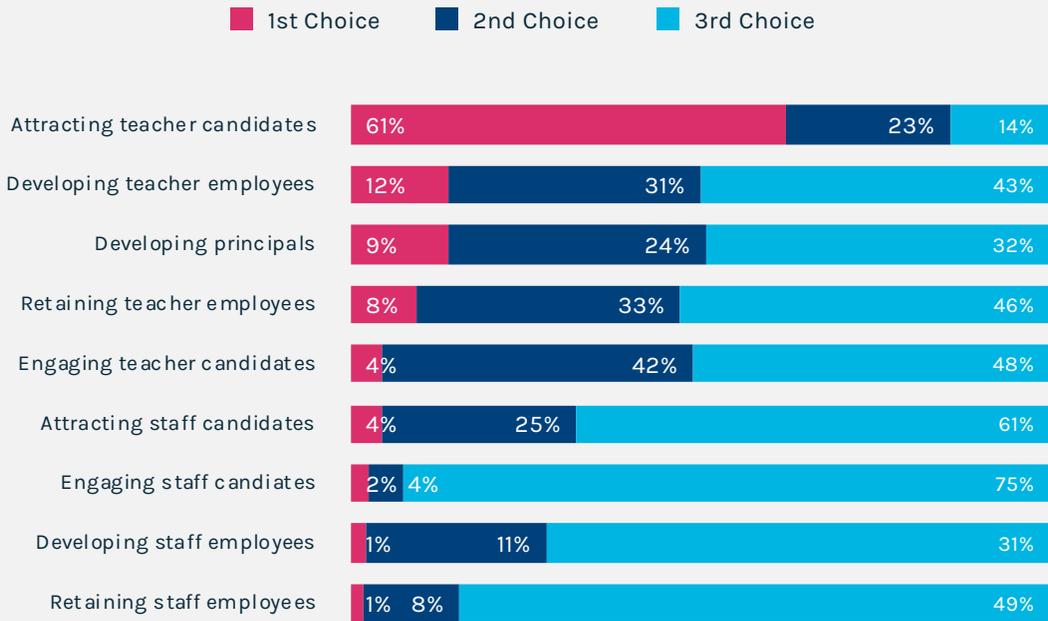
Most important factors when recruiting new teachers



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In fact, school leaders overwhelmingly prioritize attracting teacher candidates over other hiring, development, engagement and retention activities; 61 percent said it was their first priority, and 84 percent said it was in their top three priorities.

Prioritization of talent management activities:



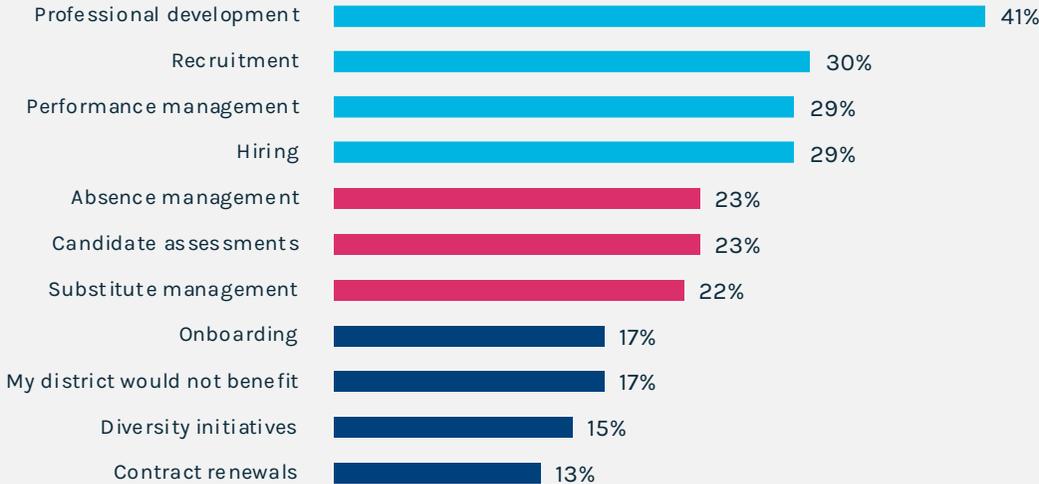
To help empower recruitment, the majority of education leaders believe there's value in data that identifies current performance effectiveness and opportunities to improve – 83 percent said this information had value in at least one talent management process, but they don't seem to agree on which process can benefit most.

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More than 40 percent of respondents said their school or district would benefit most from easy access to professional development performance data. Recruitment, performance management and hiring seemed valuable to nearly a third of respondents, and just 17 percent of respondents said their district would not benefit from easy access to actionable reports and data analysis.

My school would benefit from easy access to reports and data analysis to identify performance effectiveness and opportunities to improve

(Select all that apply)



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What does this mean?

Though recruiting and hiring quality teachers is an ongoing priority, education professionals are interested in strengthening their abilities to identify the right person for the job and provide professional learning supports that educators need to succeed – and they're interested in leveraging new tools to ensure the success of these initiatives.

Still, education leaders have not yet identified exactly which elements to look for in these new tools ... there's agreement that data is useful, but no clear recognition of which processes can benefit from data, or how.

When considering technology to help improve hiring and educator effectiveness, education leaders should consider data analysis and reporting to be standard features – to make better decisions based on data, school leaders need solutions powerful enough to analyze data into actionable information, not simply facilitate smoother processes.

Challenges

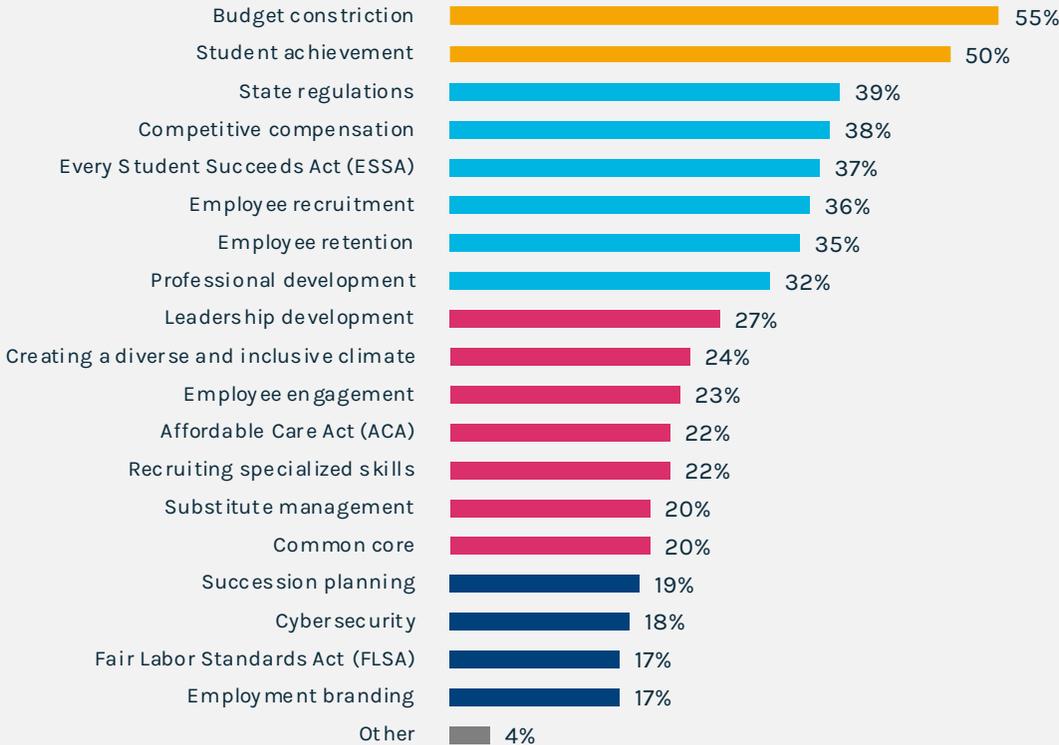
The top factors that respondents believe will impact their academic and administrative operations are:

1. Budget constrictions
2. Student achievement

About a third of respondents agree that their secondary challenges fall into the categories of state regulations, competitive compensation, ESSA, employee recruitment, employee retention and professional development.

Top challenges influencing academic and administrative operations

(Select three)

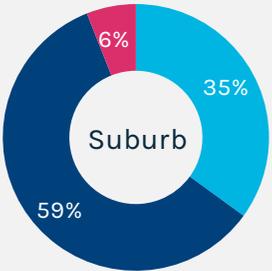
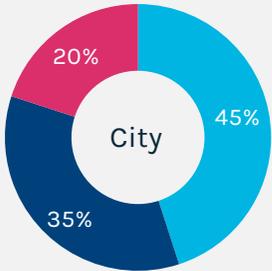
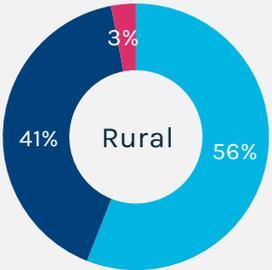
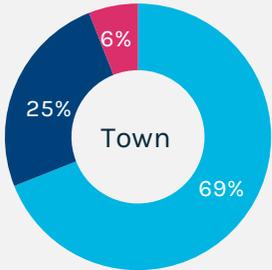
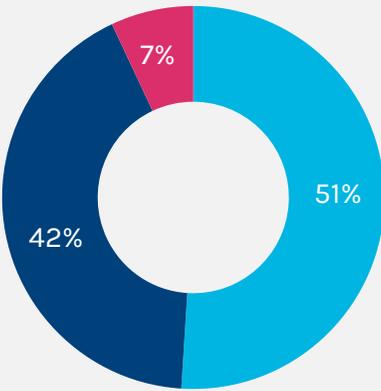


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The prior year's *TalentIndex* identified budget constrictions, teacher shortages and student achievement as top challenges, but we left the “teacher shortage” option off of this year's answer list, opting instead to approach the subject directly by asking whether schools and districts are experiencing a shortage in qualified teachers. The nationwide results were somewhat inconclusive, as 51 percent said yes, 42 percent said no and 7 percent were unsure.

Is your district experiencing a teacher shortage?

■ Yes ■ No ■ I'm not sure



However, when reviewing responses by school or district region, it's easy to see that less populated areas are more likely to experience a teacher shortage – defined as not having enough teachers available to hire, or not enough quality teachers applying for positions.

More than two-thirds of districts located in towns report difficulty hiring teachers, and 56% of rural districts say the same. Respondents who work in districts in more populated cities and suburbs report less difficulty hiring teachers, and 59% of districts in suburbs say this isn't a problem for them at all.

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Whether there's a shortage of teachers or not, education leaders find the most qualified candidates through local sources, such as partnerships with colleges and universities, personal referrals and job fairs.

Various nationwide job boards such as Indeed.com, SchoolSpring.com and others were listed as the fourth through eighth best recruitment sources, and write-in answers included:

- Newspaper/advertising
- School/district website
- State employment boards
- Recruitment agencies

Top 3 sources to find the best candidates



23%

Partnerships with colleges and universities



22%

Referrals from local connections



18%

Job fairs

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Respondents also say completing various talent management processes efficiently is a challenge – with schools struggling the most to complete data analysis and struggling least to facilitate contract renewals.

Efficiency when completing talent management processes



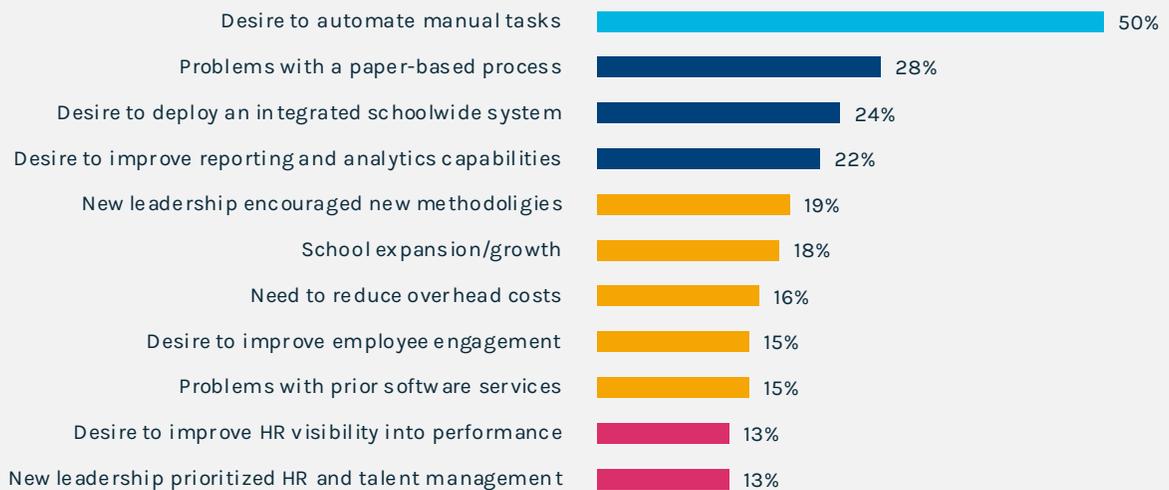
It's also worthwhile to note that for all talent management categories, the majority of respondents indicate at least some room to improve processes.

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School leaders seem to be taking action to overcome this struggle, as half of survey respondents say their schools have implemented talent management systems to automate manual tasks.

Factors motivating deployment of current talent management system

(Select three)



What does this mean?

Advancing student achievement is the priority of K-12 professionals, and educators remain committed to supporting student success notwithstanding the tightening budgets that remain their biggest challenge. Meanwhile, the teacher shortage debate continues to have strong support on both sides, and schools are completing tactical work – such as contract renewals – much more easily than critical analysis tasks.

For those familiar with the state of K-12 education, these matters are no surprise but there has been very little progress demonstrated in addressing the major challenges, debates and strategic improvements uncovered in past years. The ability of administrators and educators to significantly influence student achievement will continue to see challenges as K-12 education finds ways to embrace and progress in these areas of talent management.

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Demographics

In fall 2017, PowerSchool surveyed more than 300 K-12 professionals from all institution types and sizes across the U.S. Below is a breakdown of respondents.



School or district size

- Fewer than 500 students: 21%
- 501-2,000 students: 30%
- 2,001 – 10,000 students: 33%
- 10,001-25,000 students: 8%
- More than 25,001 students: 8%



Department representation

- Administration: 43%
- Human resources: 16%
- Curriculum: 12%
- Finance: 12%
- Other: 12%
- Information technology (IT): 5%



38%

of respondents are school or district leaders – principals, assistant principals, superintendents, assistant superintendents.

30%

of respondents are directors or managers.

About PowerSchool

At PowerSchool, we believe in the simple truth that every student deserves the best opportunities in life. That's why our mission is to power the education ecosystem with unified technology that helps educators and students realize their potential, in their way. From the back office to the classroom to the home, PowerSchool helps schools and districts efficiently manage instruction, learning, grading, attendance, assessment, analytics, state reporting, special education, student registration, talent, finance and HR. Today, we're proud to be the leading provider of K-12 education application technology supporting over 45 million students in over 70 countries.

Visit www.powerschool.com or call (877) 873-1550 for more information.