



K-12 Principals' Assessment of Education: 2019 EDITION



MCH 
Strategic Data®

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year, MCH Strategic Data reaches out to K-12 principals across our nation's public schools to get a temperature check on the state of K-12 education. Because our survey is confidential, we receive candid responses to our questions. MCH can anticipate trends and anticipate the impact of changes in our schools and districts. This year, we received responses from nearly 800 principals – with representation nationally.

Over the years, we have found that not all K-12 principals struggle with the same issues, but all are key players in deciding how districts invest their limited resources. Districts prioritize spending based on expressed needs from principals, teachers, students, and parents. Principals often share similar concerns, and this year's survey found that the top three concerns are:

1. Adequate funding

2. Attendance

3. Teacher morale



Not all principals share the same concerns

Therefore, segmenting this audience is key in order to match your value proposition to the appropriate decision makers or influencers in the district. Helping principals and districts define how they can overcome their challenges is a critical component in selling to today's schools.

This year's report also highlights that most schools and districts have a good understanding of ESSA impacts, which shows positive momentum from prior years. Another theme that emerged this year was centered around safety and security of faculty and staff. Many schools are taking a proactive approach to training faculty and staff on how to make their environments safer places to learn. In addition to training, schools are installing technology and enhancing facilities to provide for a safer environment.

Key takeaways for sales and marketing professionals include these factors:

- Segment the audience, as every district has different needs.
- Shape the message to offer a solution to a problem.
- Match the right message to the right buyer or influencer.
- Choose a quality data partner to identify opportunities and grow your business.



CREATING EFFECTIVE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS

Issues that impact effective education environments

The issues that most impact a principal's ability to create an effective learning environment this school year are essentially the same issues they dealt with last year. Principals were asked to rank issues from 1 to 5 with 5 having the most impact on their ability to create effective learning. Compared to last year, principals who responded to this question are less positive about funding than they were a year ago. Most of the principals indicate that they have inadequate funding to fulfill the needs of students in their schools.

Please rank the following issues in order of their impact on your ability to create an effective education environment. (1 least important, 5 most important).

	1	2	3	4	5
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Inadequate funding	5.30%	6.80%	21.80%	27.80%	38.30%
Insufficient student readiness	2.40%	10.10%	24.30%	31.60%	31.50%
Inadequate professional development	5.80%	19.10%	37.90%	25.00%	12.20%
Lack of technology	15.60%	25.00%	33.70%	17.30%	8.30%
Transition to new standards	11.30%	21.20%	39.30%	20.30%	7.90%
Online assessments	13.90%	21.40%	38.50%	18.90%	7.30%
Enough bandwidth	24.60%	19.00%	24.10%	18.80%	13.50%
New teacher evaluations	15.70%	20.70%	35.20%	17.40%	11.00%
Lack of district support	21.90%	21.80%	26.00%	16.00%	14.30%
Teacher morale	5.50%	12.30%	26.10%	29.30%	26.80%
Economic fragility of families	4.10%	11.00%	22.60%	27.80%	34.40%

PRINCIPALS' TOP CONCERNS

Most critical issues for principals in 2019

Behavior issues in students is of great concern to most principals who responded to our survey. Principals specifically called out the need for adequate staff and resources to care for students who have social and emotional learning needs, mental health issues, or other customized needs. The lack of resources and funding also contributes to low teacher morale and fewer qualified teachers entering the profession. Being able to increase pay for teachers, provide greater professional development opportunities, and purchase additional resources would help tremendously with these issues. However, principals still struggle with finding adequate funding and resources to provide the educational opportunities and school culture required to address the learning challenges of their student bodies.

Please rank the following the following critical issues in order of importance (1 least important, 5 most important).

	1	2	2	4	5
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Behavior issues in children	2.50%	9.20%	18.60%	31.00%	38.70%
Aligning assessments to standards	2.00%	7.20%	22.10%	36.10%	32.60%
Adequate funding	1.70%	5.30%	12.90%	26.60%	53.40%
Attendance	2.50%	7.10%	18.00%	30.20%	42.10%
Bullying	5.20%	21.80%	32.40%	23.40%	17.10%
Class size	6.60%	15.00%	38.10%	24.80%	15.40%
Teacher morale	1.90%	6.40%	17.20%	33.80%	40.60%
Teacher professional development	1.50%	5.60%	22.60%	38.30%	32.00%
Adequate technology	3.10%	12.90%	31.60%	34.30%	18.20%
ESSA impacts	6.20%	13.80%	35.60%	32.20%	12.20%
Improving test scores	5.10%	6.80%	23.80%	34.90%	29.40%

STUDENTS' SPECIALIZED NEEDS

The complexity of student needs at both the school and district level has resulted in an increase of specialized services or focused attention on specific issues. For example, at the district level MCH has captured new job titles and roles in many of our nation's schools. Some of these positions include:

- **Chief Accountability Officer** Responsible for student and program research, performance measurement and reporting results for all parts of the district. Ensures the district remains in compliance.
- **Chief Innovation Officer** Leads continuous school improvement initiatives by monitoring and evaluating school effectiveness, student achievement and curriculum implementation.
- **Director of Pupil Personnel** Responsible for collaborating with others to support school principals and other school personnel in working with students who experience personal, social and/or emotional issues that prevent academic success in the classroom. Supports the monitoring of academic milestones such as attendance/truancy, disciplinary actions, dropout rates, child abuse and neglect reporting, parental involvement, residency compliance, Section 504 issues, and homelessness. Assists in staff needs related to crisis intervention, policy and procedural clarification, and prevention of violence in schools through mediation and problem solving. Analyzes performance data and unit performance measures to develop professional development and appropriate supports for pupil personnel workers.

Other specific job titles include: Director of Social Emotional Learning, Academic Interventions Director, and Director of Family and Community Engagement.



TEACHER MORALE

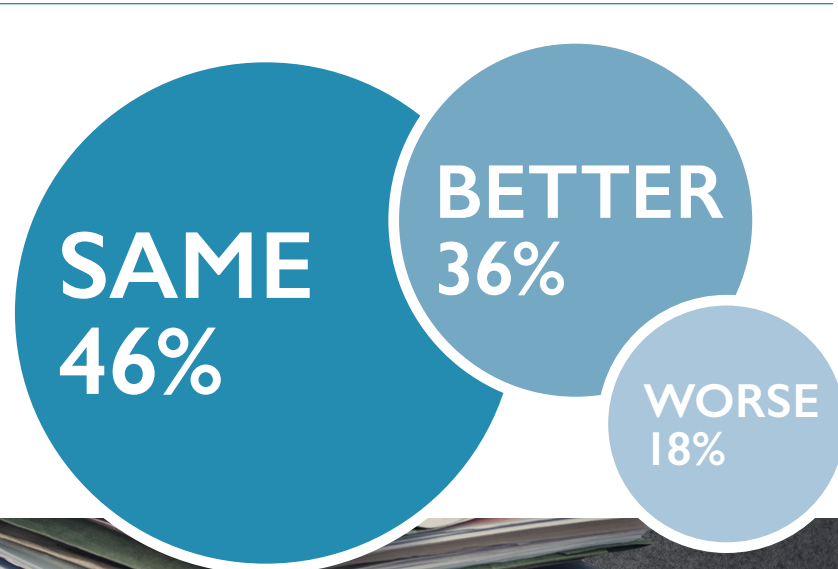
Principals still struggle with improving teacher morale. Almost 20% of the principals who responded to our survey believe that morale is worse than the prior year.

How is teacher morale at your school compared to last year?

For those principals who are still challenged with teacher morale issues, the issues at stake sort themselves into the following categories:

- Inadequate resources to meet complex student needs
- Teachers feeling burdened and overwhelmed
- Disappointing compensation

How is teacher morale at your school compared to last year?

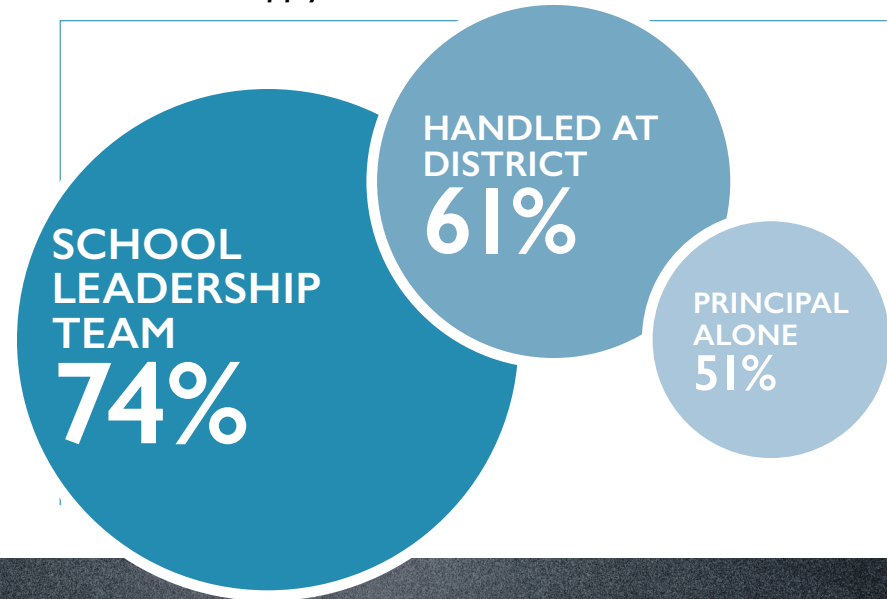


SAFETY AND SECURITY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Schools use a variety of practices and procedures to promote the safety of students, faculty, and staff. Certain practices, such as locking or monitoring doors and gates, are intended to limit or control access to school campuses, while others, such as the use of metal detectors and security cameras, are intended to monitor or restrict students' and visitors' behavior on campus.

In addition, over 40% of the principals surveyed say that their schools have a dedicated sworn law enforcement officer on premise. Forty percent of the schools that have a dedicated sworn law enforcement officer on premise have formalized policies or written documents that outline the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of these officers at the school.

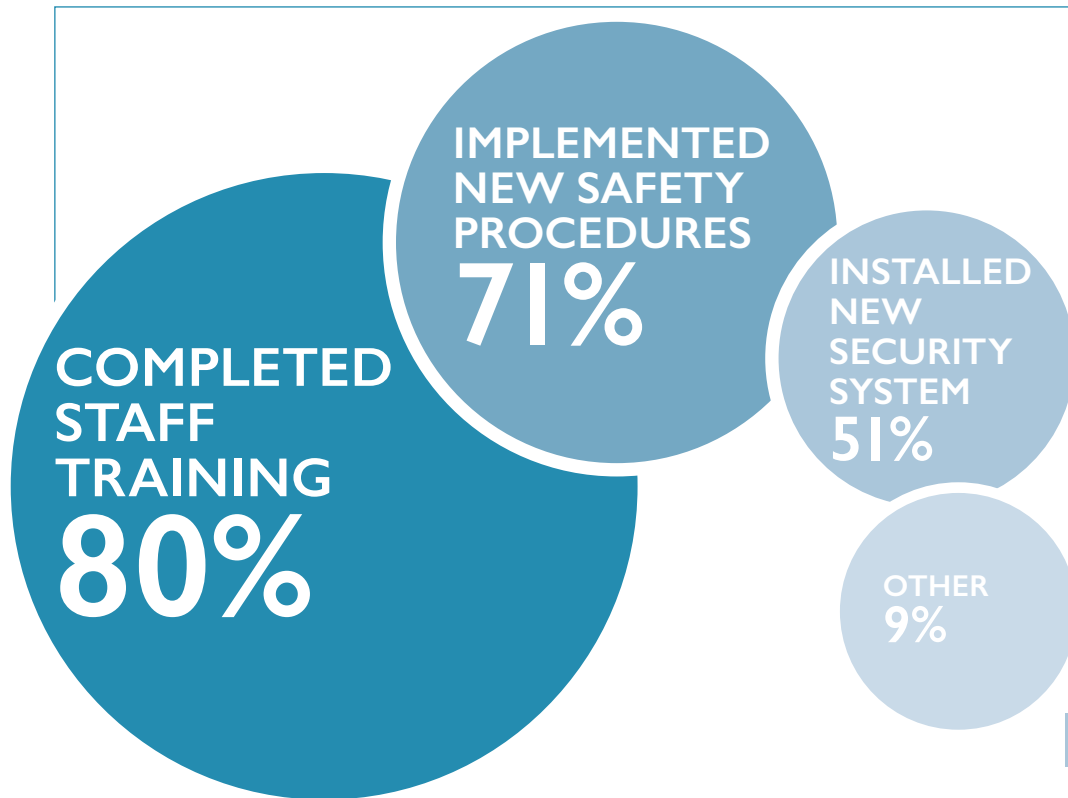
*Who makes decisions regarding safety and security?
Check all that apply.*



HOW IS SAFETY AND SECURITY FUNDED?

According to the respondents of this year's survey, 80% of the principals cite that funding for safety and security are funded with general district funds. Only 20% cite they receive local funding.

***What additional measures are schools taking to make their environments safer
Check all that apply.***



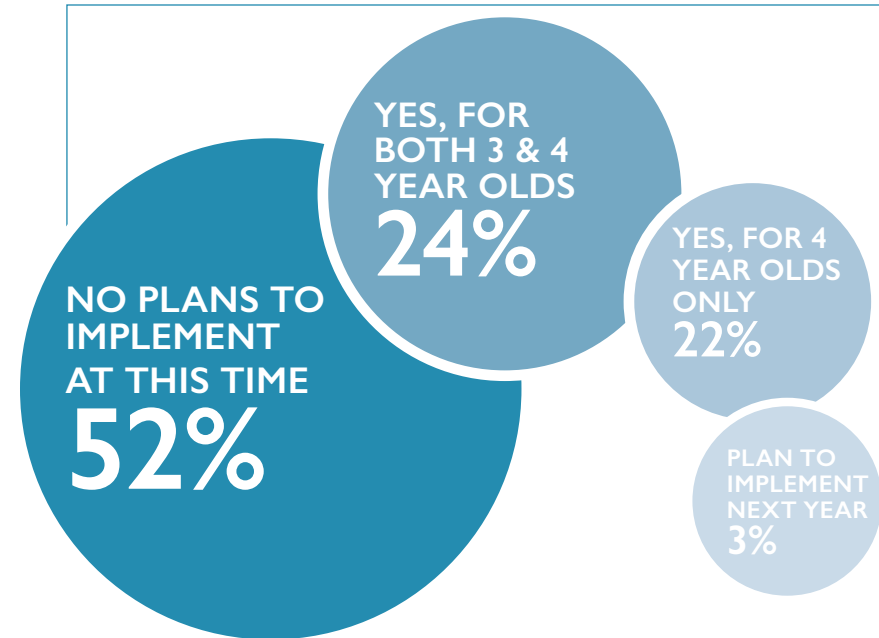
IMPORTANCE OF CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Quality early childhood education is critical to achieving the outcomes children need to be successful in school and life. Unfortunately, less than half of low-income children have access to high-quality early childhood programs that could dramatically improve their opportunity to live productive lives. Research shows both short- and long-term beneficial outcomes in children who attend high-quality programs. Some of the benefits include improved social and emotional skills as well as higher IQ levels. These increases prepare children to live healthier, more productive lives, raise stronger families, and even avoid incarceration.

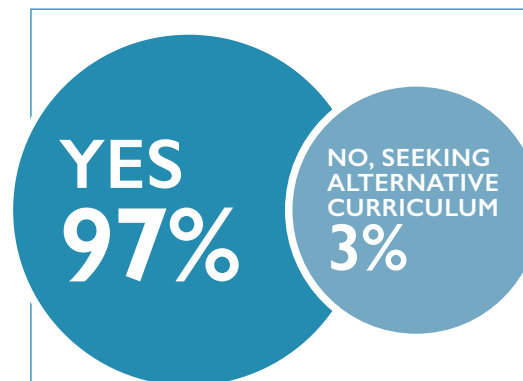
There hasn't been much movement in the number of schools and districts that offer early childhood programs. Roughly half of the interview respondents say they currently offer some type of program or plan to offer a program in the next year.

An overwhelming majority of principals who currently have early childhood programs in their schools are satisfied with their programs and the outcomes of their programs. Those that aren't satisfied are seeking new curriculum and opportunities to enhance their offerings.

Do you have a Pre-K program at your school?



Are you currently satisfied with the outcome of your program?



IMPACTS OF ESSA – EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the primary law for K–12 public education in the United States. It replaced No Child Left Behind. Compared to previous years, principals are less concerned about the impacts of ESSA.

Approximately 70% of the principals surveyed believe they have a solid understanding of how ESSA will impact funding in their schools.

Funding at the federal and state level has largely not recovered since the recession — and in many cases, it has continued to decline. Under ESSA, states and districts will have more control over how they use their funding, but the law also presents new possibilities.



THE STATE OF TECHNOLOGY

Schools and districts are making significant technology purchases. However, there has been a shift or an uptick in hardware purchases compared to previous years' survey responses. Over 65% of principals said they are purchasing hardware for students. In the past, the top three categories for technology purchases included wi-fi infrastructure, bandwidth, and devices. This year, money is being spent on hardware for students, curriculum, and classroom applications.

If you are looking to gain additional insight beyond our survey data into how technology budgets are allocated, MCH Strategic Data can provide you with **technology spending information for districts by category.**

Category Budget Breakout

Hardware	Monitors, DVDs, Storage Devices
Other Hardware	Projectors, TVs, Keyboards, Mouse
PC	Desktop, Laptop, Macs, Specialty Computers
Services	Repair, Maintenance, Leases
Software	SaaS, On-premise software
Storage	Capacity to hold information and hosting
Total IT	Total IT expenditures

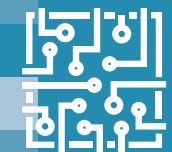
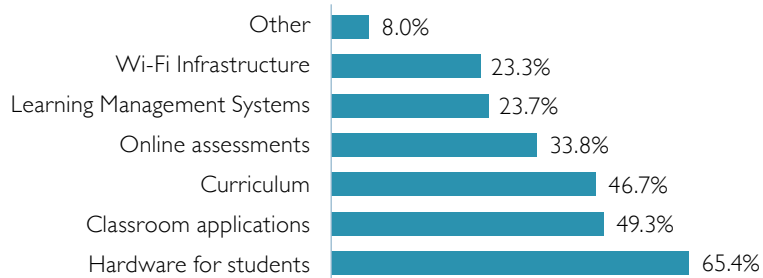


TECHNOLOGY PURCHASES

Many technology-focused companies are using this data to develop account-based sales and marketing strategies to introduce new technology products and services to schools based on need and market opportunity. MCH can provide additional supporting data to identify both school-based and district-level technology opportunities to help companies connect with those schools with the greatest needs and budgets.

The benefits of using data-driven insights to drive outreach strategies is that companies will increase efficiencies and reduce time and effort on outreach programs that are less likely to fulfill a need.

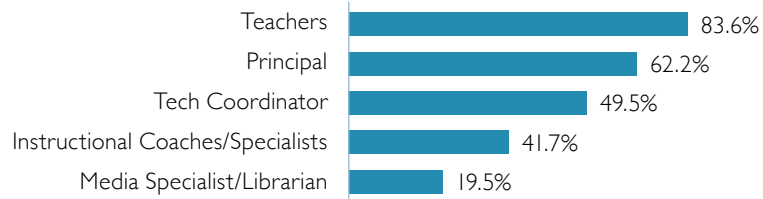
What kind of Technology purchases are you making?



THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Using technology applications in the classroom brings several advantages for learning. From greater student engagement, to an expansion of the learning environment beyond normal school hours, applications can open new educational doors. When it comes to making decisions on who decides what applications are purchased or used in the classroom, teachers are the primary decision-maker. Many times, they will make these decisions on their own, or will make them in conjunction with technology coordinators, principals, or instructional coaches or specialists. There is no question, though, that teachers are great influencers, and often make the final decisions regarding which technology applications to use.

Who decides which apps will be used in the classroom?



PREPARING FOR BEYOND K-12 EDUCATION

Are our students ready for college or careers?

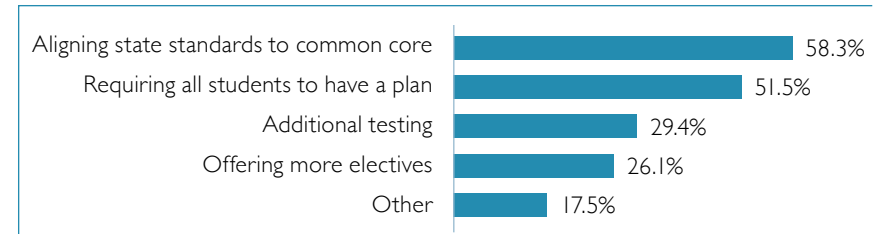
Recently, there has been a great deal of discussion about the skills gap—the discrepancy between the skills U.S. workers have and the skills required by U.S. businesses to remain globally competitive. Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes are helping our nation meet the very real and immediate challenges of economic development and global competitiveness. According to the national skills coalition, jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree account for 54 percent of U.S. labor market, but only 44 percent of the country's workers are trained at that level.

There is a tremendous opportunity for schools and districts with CTE programs to prepare a pipeline of workers that possess the technical competencies and workplace skills to succeed in the most in-demand areas, including health care, information technology and skilled trades.

Principals are also working with their schools to better prepare students who are seeking college degrees after high school. Administrators are paying close attention to student achievement on standardized exams, as well as social and academic behaviors. To successfully assess college readiness, educators are moving toward assessment practices that align with the inclusion of soft

skills into academic curriculum. Through project-based learning, students engage in meaningful, long-term projects to develop and demonstrate essential skills. Not only do projects require students to apply soft skills, but they also provide educators with opportunities to directly assess student progress in established standards related to soft skill development.

How is your school or district altering standards to increase college and career readiness?



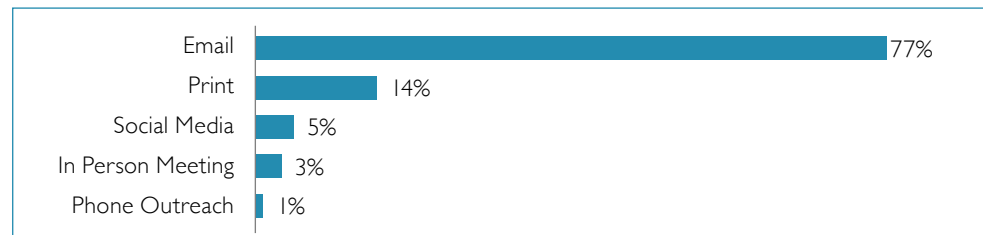
HOW PRINCIPALS LEARN OF NEW PRODUCTS

Most often, principals leverage district personnel to research new products or services. However, company websites and word of mouth are also important. An important insight for any brand trying to establish relationships with K-12 educators is that they need to establish trust. Principals look for credible resources, testimonials and success stories when evaluating new products and services.

Insights for Sales and Marketing Professionals:

- Principals look for brands they can trust. Testimonials, case studies, and a proven track record are important.
- Company websites are one of the first places principals will look to research a product or service.
- Sales and marketing professionals should build their brands with both district personnel and principals.

How do you research or learn about new products and services to purchase?



PRINCIPALS' TRUST IN ADVERTISING

Like last year, email is the most trusted media channel among principals, while digital ads and social media are the least trusted.

Insights for Marketing Professionals:

- Using email as a primary message-driver can be effective. Adhering to email best practices is critical for maintaining trust.
- Brands may want to consider a multi-channel marketing approach consisting of email, prominent messages on their company's website, and credible industry trade publications.
- Targeted direct mail, although expensive, may also prove to be beneficial if sent with the right message at the right time.

Principals Rank Most Trustworthy Forms of Media

Email	1
Industry Magazines	2
Company Website	3
Direct Mail	4
Print Advertising	5
Digital Advertising	6
Social Media	7



QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

Excerpt of verbatim responses from principals

Students **not being held accountable for their behavior** or academics.
The only person NOT being held accountable for test scores is the student taking them.

Increased **focus on social emotional health and wellness** of our students.

Lower enrollment, more testing, **parents that don't care about testing outcomes.**

Continued **inequity in funding.**

The district **does not invest in teachers** or facilities.

No textbook money.

Incorporating **technology as a tool** to support student learning.

Students mental health and their ability to deal with struggles academically or socially.

The deterioration of functioning families.

Difficulty with **access for inclusion.**

Mainstreaming for special education students.

CONCLUSION

Each year's survey provides insights to the current mindset of principals across the country. Recent years have illuminated the struggles with implementing new standards, new technology, and new assessments. This year, principals are more optimistic about technology and adhering to higher standards. However, having the adequate funds and resources to create a safe and effective learning environment for students has been a burning issue this year.



ABOUT MCH STRATEGIC DATA

MCH knows education. After decades of helping educators, students and families, the K-12 and childcare markets are near to our hearts. Founded on the publishing and distribution of children's books, MCH has grown into a data solutions provider that commits the same care and quality to our B2B clients as we did directly with schools and families.

MCH helps organizations turn data into value. The best sales, marketing, and analytical programs mean nothing if they are built with inaccurate data. MCH will meet you where you are on your journey to becoming a data-driven organization. Our relationship managers can provide you advice and guidance on how to build effective targets, or if you are ready to transform holistically, our data scientists and engineers can design and build an infrastructure that meets your needs. For over 90 years, MCH has helped businesses harness the power of data to achieve complex business goals.

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