

7th Annual Educator Confidence Report



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2021



Welcome to the 7th Annual Educator Confidence Report



HMH's Educator Confidence Report (ECR) continues to give voice to our nation's educators. In a year defined by unpredictability, one thing is certain—the pandemic has forever altered the face of K–12 education. This year's findings offer critical insights into the state of education, the teaching profession, the use of technology, students' needs, and more. Against the backdrop of the ongoing pandemic, this year's reporting gives us a glimpse into the future.

Despite another tumultuous year, we are seeing clearly that education technology is moving from promise to proof. Over 1,200 frontline educators from across the country responded to the survey, and while their optimism has fallen (only 38% of educators reported a positive view of the state of their profession—down from 49% last year), confidence in mastery and the benefit of learning technologies is growing. In fact, educator confidence in using EdTech is at an all-time high since HMH® began this survey six years ago and provides a bright spot, paving the way for more purposeful use of digital solutions.

Unsurprisingly, amid the stress of our current circumstances, we are seeing that the emotional well-being of students is educators' top concern. Eighty-two percent of teachers agree that a well-crafted, fully integrated social and emotional learning approach will make an impact.

We know that technology alone will not bring about education's new era. The potential benefit of EdTech has been unlocked at an exponential rate over the past year, but the future of the classroom is not merely high-tech. It is high-touch too. When we asked educators what they are most looking forward to post-pandemic, the answer was clear: being together, face-to-face, with their student community. We all recognize that the relationship built and nurtured between teacher and student is foundational to academic, social, and emotional growth and drives engagement.

Ultimately, we can benefit from a best-of-both-worlds approach that fuses the power of technology with the proven benefit that comes with the social gathering inside school buildings. It is critical that we leverage digital solutions with a community-oriented, connected, and human mindset.

We've lost a great deal over the last year, but we've also gained important ground—and we can continue that momentum. I believe that we are poised to usher in a new era of learning, one powered by tech and innovation but forever defined by the community of teachers and students at its heart.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jack Lynch".

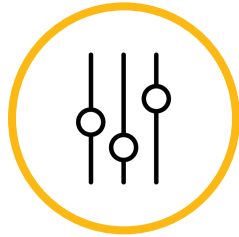
Jack Lynch, CEO

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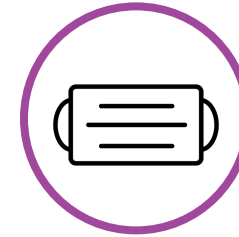
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Executive Summary



Executive Summary

HMH's 7th Annual Educator Confidence Report (ECR) shines a light on how educators feel about the state of education amid a global pandemic. In May 2021, we asked over 1,200 educators nationwide about what worries them and what gives them hope.



72%

of educators cited students' social and emotional needs as a top concern during the past school year.

82% said that an integrated approach to SEL in the classroom can improve student outcomes.

95%

of teachers have experienced benefits from using EdTech.

77% said technology will make them more effective teachers.

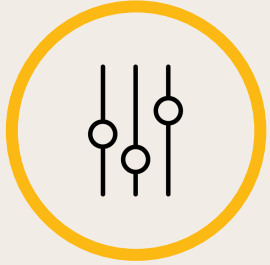
38%

of educators reported a somewhat or very positive view of teaching, down from 49% in 2020.

What's more, just 37% of educators said the pandemic would increase respect for teachers, down from 63% in 2020. Optimism for the profession has fallen.

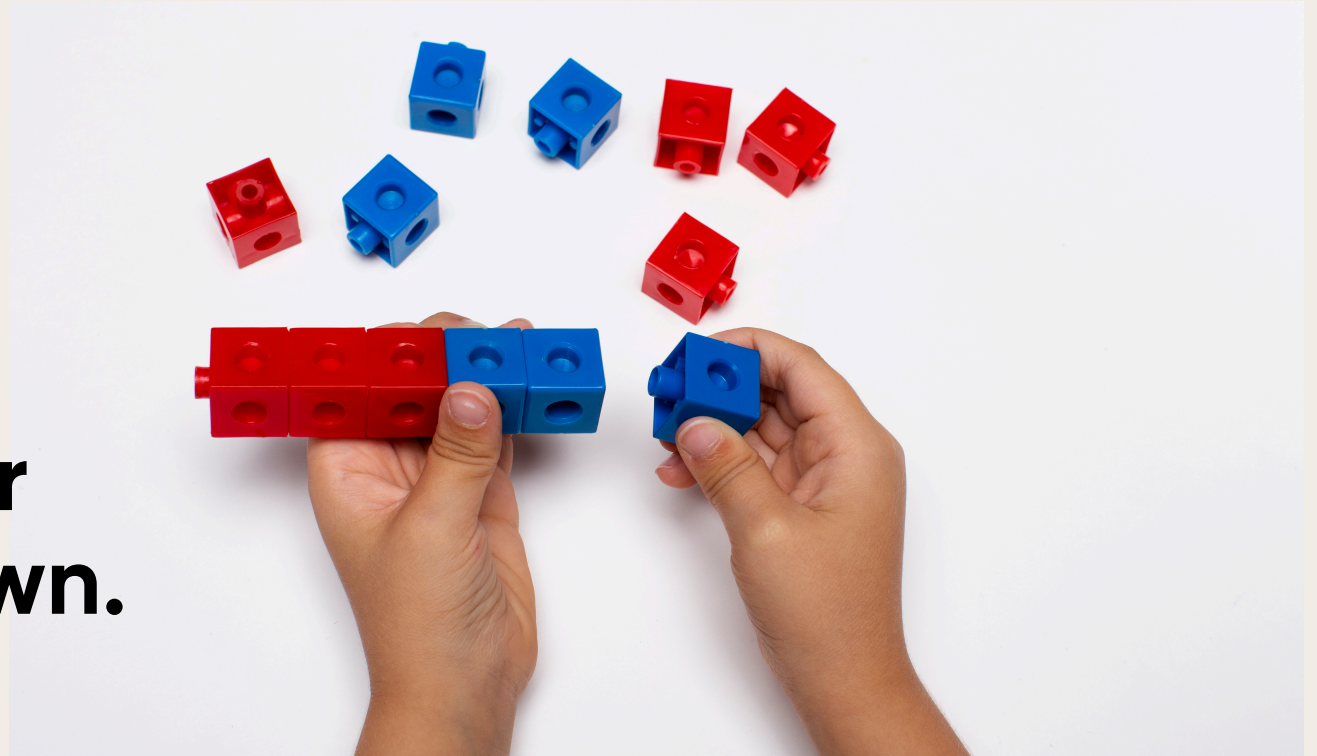
Still, educators are looking forward to a new era.

They say the pandemic has changed the future of education forever. As they head back to the classroom, they will be taking the lessons of remote learning with them. Personalized learning and connected solutions accessible on a single learning platform will be essential.



KEY INSIGHT

Overall, educator confidence is down.





Educator Confidence on the Decline

The Educator Confidence Index, a measure of overall confidence (out of 100), fell from 49.0 in 2020 to 42.7, a return to 2019 levels.



EDUCATOR
CONFIDENCE INDEX

49.0

2020

42.7

2021

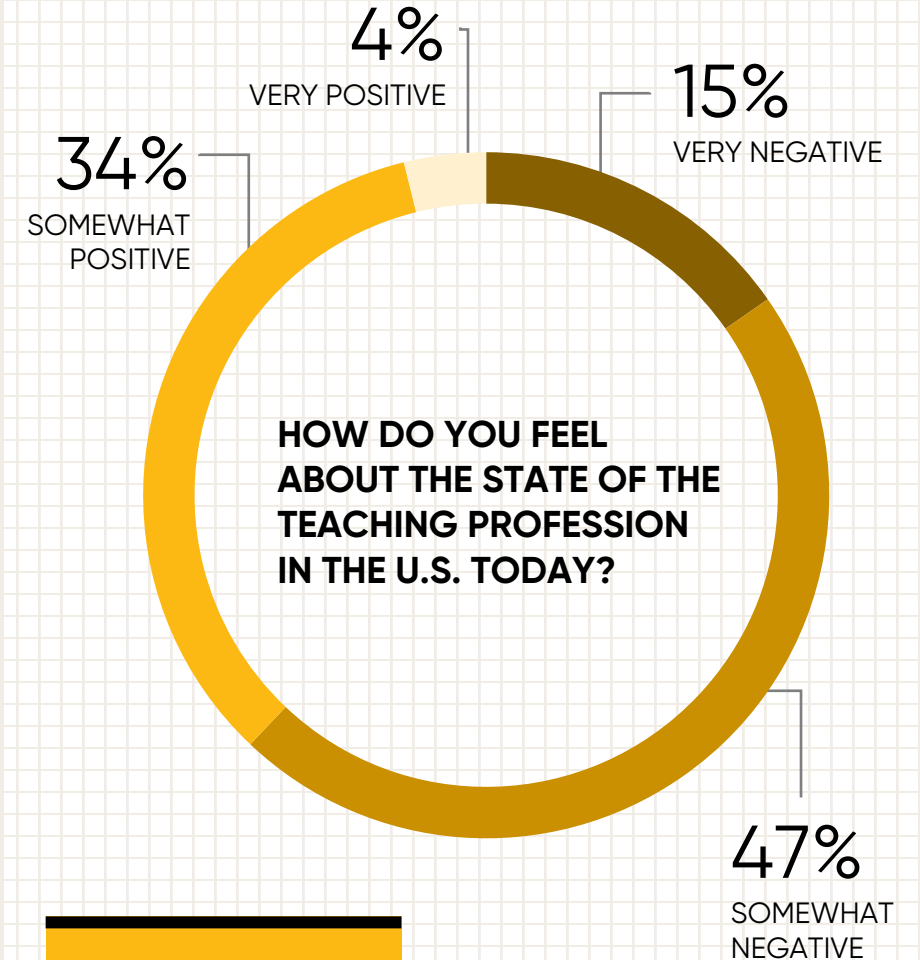


Educators' confidence in the profession is at a low.

The challenges of a year defined by the uncertainty of the pandemic have had a profound impact. Optimism for the profession is down from 2020 with only 38% of educators having a somewhat or very positive view of education, the second lowest it has been since the ECR began six years ago.

When asked to report potential positive outcomes from the pandemic, 37% of educators reported increased respect for the profession as a potential outcome, down from 63% the previous year.

While 36% of educators in 2020 reported no interest in leaving the profession, in 2021 only 26% of educators reported this sentiment. This value is similar to pre-COVID values, suggesting some of teachers' optimism last year has faded after an initial surge at the beginning of the pandemic.



2021 MARKS THE SECOND LOWEST REPORT IN CONFIDENCE—ONLY SURPASSED BY 2019, A YEAR OF TURMOIL IN THE PROFESSION.



The Support Teachers Need Most



TOP 3 MOST HELPFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATOR WELL-BEING

- 1 More time for myself during the day (84%)
- 2 More personal resources to support mental and physical health (57%)
- 3 More clearly delineated job responsibilities (51%)

TOP 3 THINGS THAT EDUCATORS NEED FROM FAMILIES

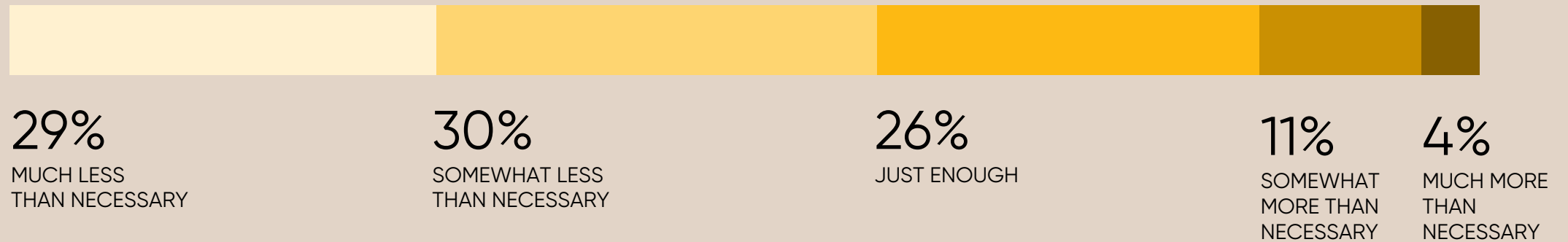
- 1 Understanding that our priority is their child (33%)
- 2 Acknowledgment that we are doing our best (33%)
- 3 More family-teacher interaction (20%)





Considering the ongoing pandemic, it is not surprising that educators reported they did not spend enough time on their personal well-being last year.

TIME SPENT ON WELL-BEING





KEY INSIGHT

**EdTech is moving
from digital promise
to digital proof.**

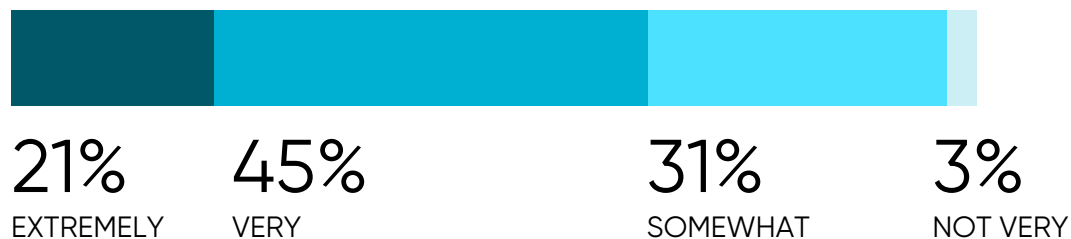




Despite a tumultuous year, teachers report they are more confident in their use of technology, a positive outcome that paves the way for a high-tech, high-touch classroom of the future.

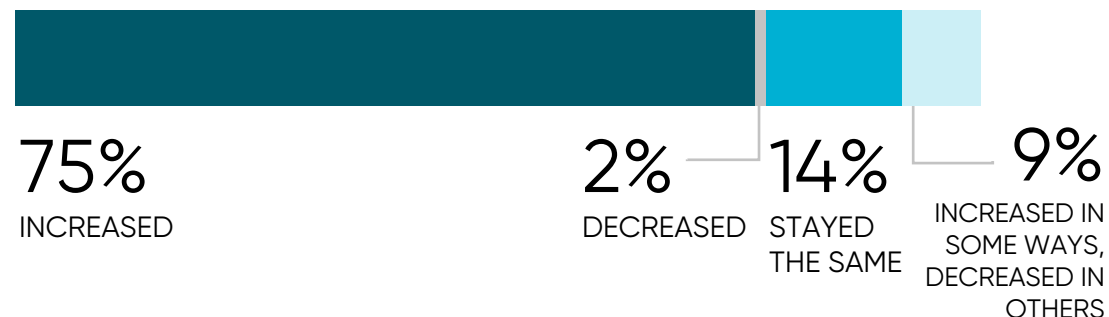
Teacher confidence in using EdTech was the highest it has been over the past 6 years, with 66% of teachers being very or extremely confident in their ability to use EdTech.

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU IN YOUR ABILITY TO USE EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES IN AN INSTRUCTIONALLY EFFECTIVE WAY?



The rise in confidence using EdTech can be attributed to teachers' remote learning experience during the pandemic.

HAS YOUR CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY TO USE EDTECH INCREASED, DECREASED, OR STAYED THE SAME AS A RESULT OF THE REMOTE LEARNING EXPERIENCE BROUGHT ABOUT BY COVID-19?





Teachers report using technology in new ways due to the pandemic.



While overall EdTech use remained largely unchanged in 2021, we did see an increase in the use of online assessments.

73%

of educators reported using online assessment tools in their classroom, up dramatically from 49% in 2020.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE DIGITAL MATERIALS TEACHERS REPORTED USING:

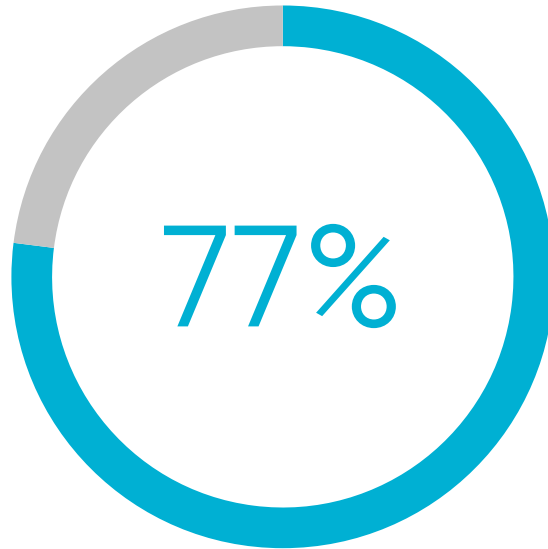
- 1 Digital versions of print materials (43%)
- 2 Videos (40%)

46%

of educators relied on publisher-provided digital resources in 2021, compared to only 34% in 2020.



Tech is making teachers more effective.



OF TEACHERS BELIEVE TECHNOLOGY WILL HELP THEM BE MORE EFFECTIVE POST-PANDEMIC.



THE MAJORITY OF TEACHERS (71%) SAID THEY EXPERIENCED AT LEAST ONE OF THESE THREE BENEFITS OF USING EDTECH:

- 1 Improved student engagement
- 2 Differentiated, individualized instruction
- 3 Flexible access to instructional content

DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND TOOLS ENABLE TEACHERS TO BETTER:

- 1 Streamline Assessments (43%)
- 2 Communicate More Effectively with Students (42%)
- 3 Customize Learning Plans (37%)

Even with technology playing a larger role in the classroom, critical barriers to tech integration remain.



64%

of educators said the biggest barrier was a lack of devices or internet.

57%

of educators said lack of student engagement with technology was an issue.

54%

of educators said a lack of time to plan for integrating digital resources with instruction was a top challenge.





KEY INSIGHT

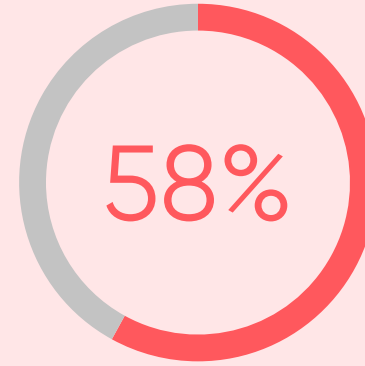
Students' emotional well-being is the top concern of educators.





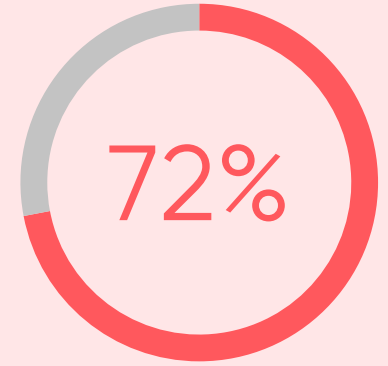
In light of the pandemic's effect on students' mental health, teachers are concerned that students will have increased social and emotional needs this fall.

LOOKING FORWARD



of educators are concerned students will have increased social and emotional needs post-pandemic.

LOOKING BACK



of educators struggled to meet the social and emotional needs of their students this past school year.

TOP 3 CONCERNS

1

Students' Social and Emotional Needs (72%)

2

Low Teacher Salaries (65%)

3

Students Falling Behind (62%)



Educators agree that nurturing students' social and emotional well-being will lead to better outcomes.

In fact, 56% of educators ranked SEL resources as the most critical for getting students on track post-pandemic.

RESOURCES EDUCATORS NEED THE MOST

Resources to support SEL



Easy-to-use technology that can be used in classroom and remotely



Tools designed to address pandemic learning disruptions



Resources dedicated to solving instructional inequality



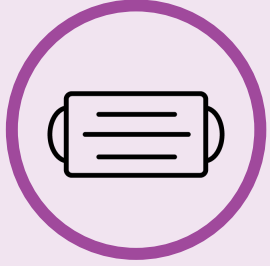
Technology to help educators teach more efficiently



Individualized assessments



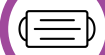
82% OF EDUCATORS INDICATED THAT A FULLY INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SEL WOULD HAVE A MODERATE OR LARGER IMPACT ON ACHIEVING DESIRED OUTCOMES



KEY INSIGHT

Interrupted learning took a toll on students' progress, and teachers are working hard to address learning gaps.





What has the impact of COVID-19 been on students' academic growth, and how can we address that challenge?



While educators reported seeing positive impacts from digital learning, many reported that students made less progress than usual last school year.

66%

of educators indicated students displayed somewhat less or much less academic growth last school year.

72%

of educators are concerned that more students than usual will be academically behind this school year.

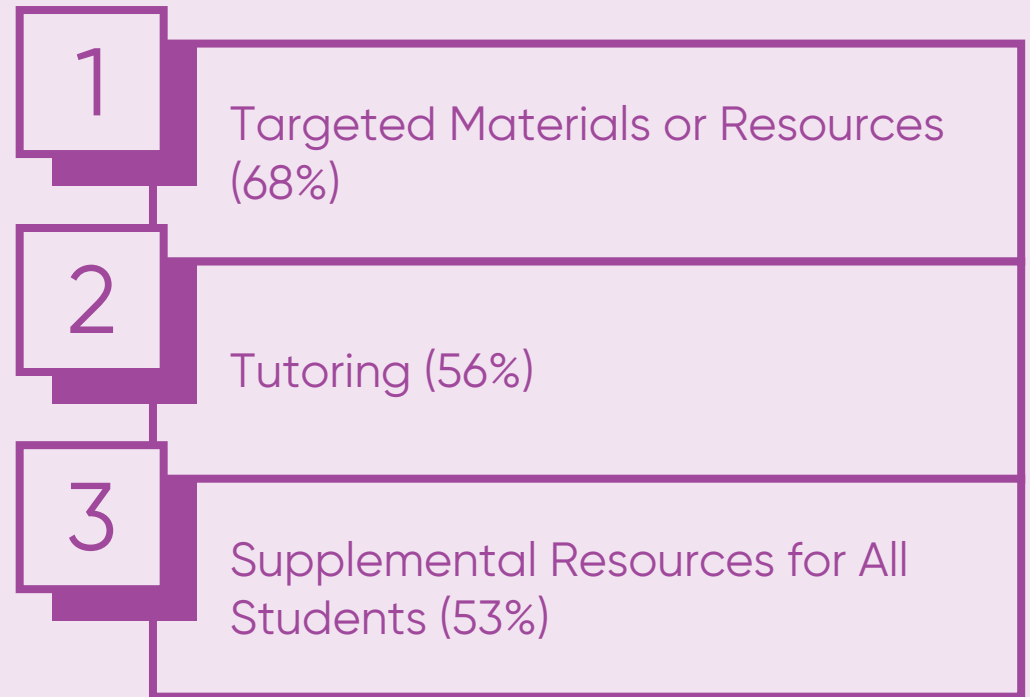
48%

of educators are concerned that students will have a difficult time adjusting to in-person and hybrid teaching models this school year.



7 out of 10 educators believe that intensive or supplemental resources will be necessary to address learning gaps for incoming students this school year.

TOP 3 RESOURCES NEEDED TO ADDRESS LEARNING GAPS





KEY INSIGHT

Educators gave us a glimpse into the classrooms of the future. These look nothing like the classrooms many of us remember.





The lessons of remote teaching during the pandemic will shape the future of education.



95%

of educators believe teaching and learning will be changed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

5%	Unchanged
40%	Modestly Changed
39%	Significantly Changed
13%	Very Significantly Changed
3%	Completely Transformed





Positive Outcomes Post-COVID



1

Implementation of
New Online
Teaching Methods

2

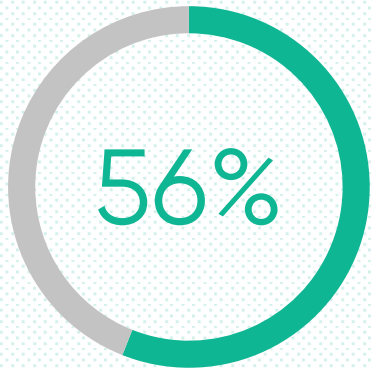
Increased Attention
to Students' SEL

3

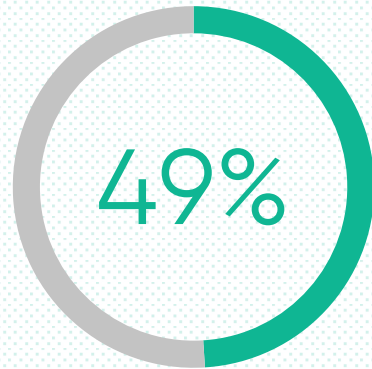
Use of Digital
Platforms That
Improve Student
Engagement



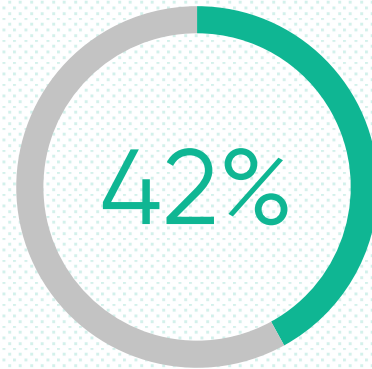
What Educators Want to Focus on Post-COVID-19



Resources for Student SEL Needs



Easy-to-Use Technology for both in and out of the Classroom



Tools Created to Address Learning Loss





The future of education is high-tech and high-touch.

80%

of teachers ranked customized learning as one of the top 3 items that will transform teaching and learning in the future.

75%

of teachers ranked technology solutions that connect instruction and assessment on one platform as one of the top 3 items that will transform teaching and learning in the future.

77%

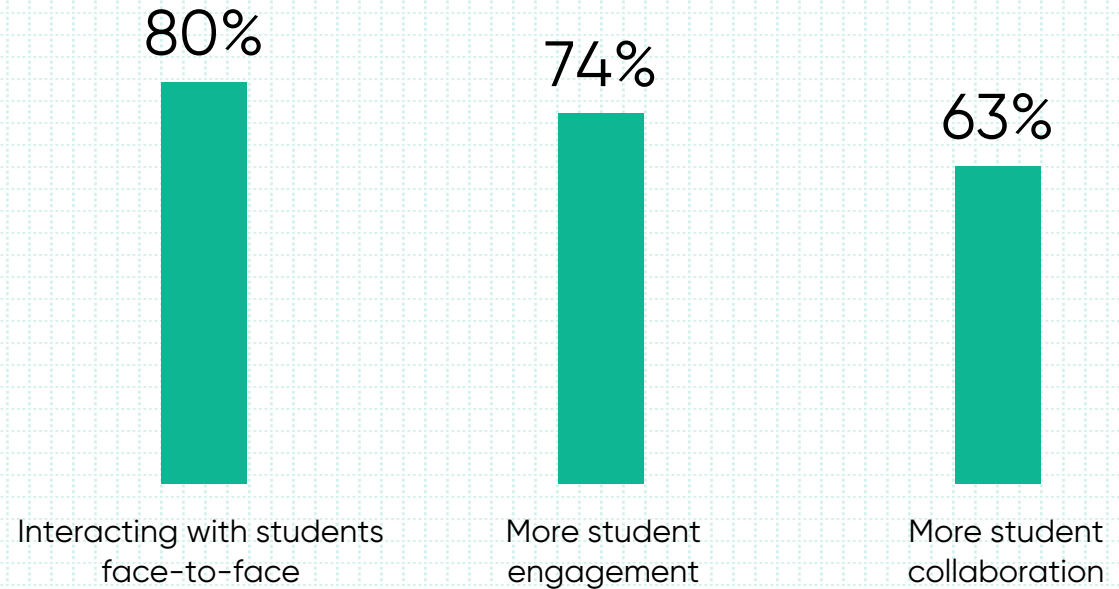
of teachers believe tech will help them be more effective teachers.



Last school year was difficult, but the future remains bright.

Educators can hardly wait to get back into classrooms and engage—in person—with their students. There is no question that classrooms are much more than a vehicle for learning. They offer friendship and community, and they give many students a safe place to socialize and grow.

WHAT ARE EDUCATORS MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO WHEN SCHOOLS RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION?



Methodology



A total of 1,282 educators including 1,126 teachers and 156 administrators participated in the study.



Educators were sourced from MDR's (Market Data Retrieval®) educator database.



Data was collected between May 6 and May 27, 2021.



The survey was carried out online, and the average survey length was 15 minutes.



Data was weighted to be nationally representative.



When charts and text reference "teachers," the data is among teachers only. When the word "educators" is used, the data is among both teachers and administrators.

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