

K-12 Principals' Assessment of Education: 2018 Edition



Table Of Contents

Introduction	3
K-12 Influencers.....	4
Principals' Top Concerns	5
Impacts of ESSA	7
Students' Specialized Needs.....	8
Impacts of Workforce on Higher Standards.....	9
K-12 Trends	11
Technology	13
Media Influences.....	16
How Principals Research Products and Services	17
Conclusion.....	18
About MCH	19



Introduction

The 2017-2018 Principals' Assessment of Education report is an annual temperature check of K-12 public education. The survey was conducted in January of 2018, and over 1,000 principals across the nation responded. The report addresses concerns, successes and trends in our public schools. Our survey is confidential, and the respondents provided candid feedback to our questions. The data gathered is a combination of qualitative and quantitative responses, with the ultimate goal of providing insight and intelligence into our nation's schools and districts. This year's report provides relevant information on how principals view funding, critical issues that affect learning, technology and marketing.



Influencers Play a Key Role in District Spending Decisions

Not all districts struggle with the same issues, nor do they have the same needs. This year, we're finding that state and local governments will play a larger role in the funding of school programs and initiatives. While funding amounts and needs differ across the nation, we did find similarities

regarding how funds are prioritized and spent. Responses to this study reveal that principals, teachers and parents are the primary influencers of how dollars are allocated. It's important for sales and marketing professionals to understand these segments and clearly define value

propositions that resonate. Engaging with influencers, understanding their needs and offering the right solutions to their challenges is a critical component in selling to today's schools.



While funding amounts and needs differ across the nation, we did find similarities regarding how funds are prioritized and spent.

Today's Most Prevalent Concerns

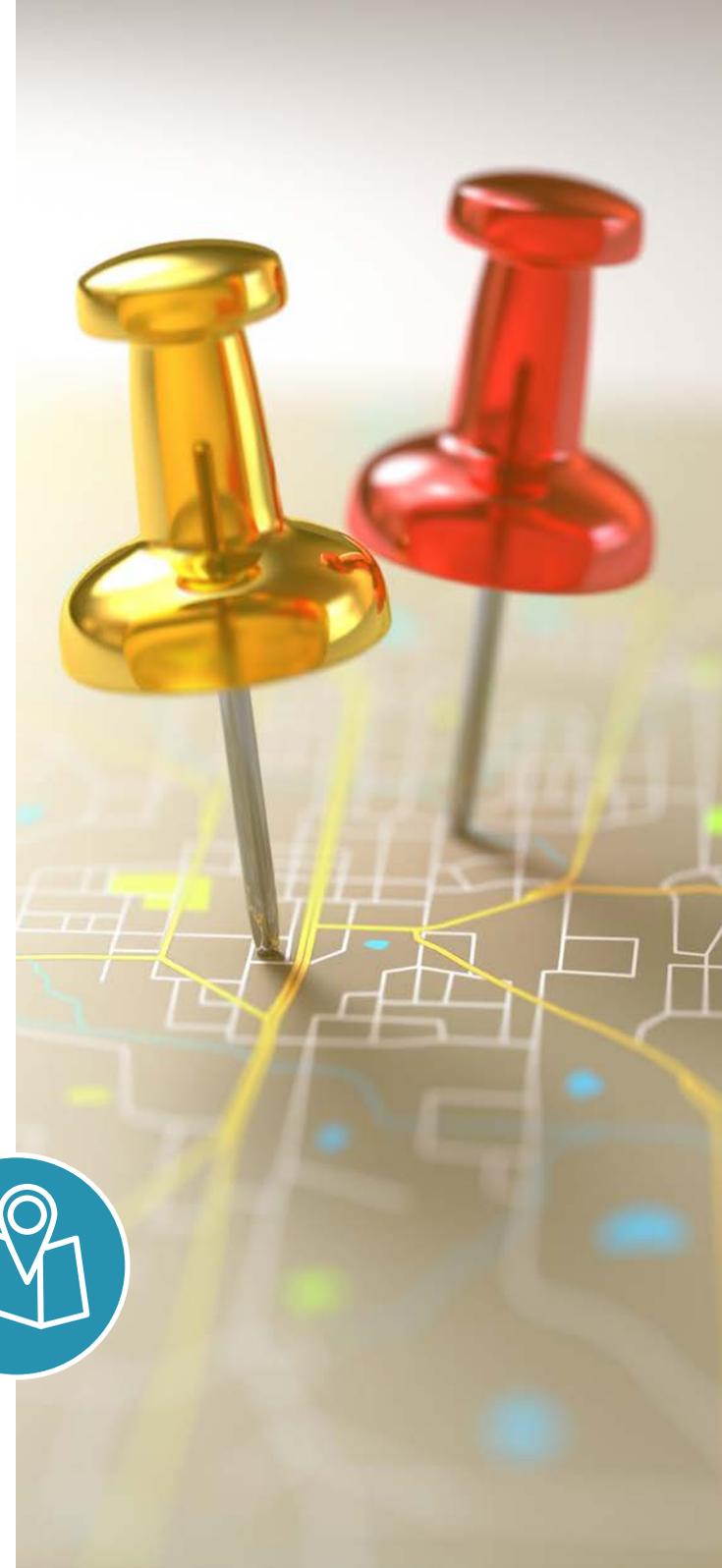
Principals share a common mission of providing an education environment where students of all facets of life can learn. Year over year, we capture feedback on principals' top concerns with delivering on that mission.

Like in previous years, adequate funding for schools is a concern overall. This was mentioned several times throughout the survey. In fact, some verbatim answers to the question of top concerns include:

- "Less federal funding or the move to choice under the current political climate."
- "Politics infringing upon funding."
- "Decrease in funding and devaluing of public education by policy makers."

The proposed 2019 Department of Education budget eliminates, streamlines or reduces several discretionary programs that overlap with other programs, are deemed ineffective, or are more appropriately supported with state, local, or private funds. This means states will have a larger role in funding school programs.

Not all states share the same needs, so it will be critical for sales and marketing outreach plans to understand the differences in needs, curriculum and overall priorities of schools and districts at the state level.



Teacher morale is also on the minds of many principals across the country. Teachers who are highly engaged and have positive outlooks on education are more effective in providing the necessary learning environments for their students. Last year, the principals who were surveyed cited a slight improvement in teacher morale compared to previous years. However, this year, more principals have cited it as a top concern. Student safety, budget restrictions and lack of resources are all factors that are contributing to poor morale.

Despite the concerns with funding and morale, principals who responded to this year's survey did point out that the local economy has shown signs of improvement. Over the past several years, the economic fragility of families was considered a top concern. This year, principals are noting the positive impacts that the economy is having on families. As economic conditions of families improve, more students receive better nutrition at home, suffer from less anxiety and stress and come to school more prepared to learn.

Key takeaways for sales and marketing professionals include these factors:

- Principals are more apt to invest in products or services that address their most noted concerns.
- Shape the message to offer a solution to a problem.
- Include influencers in sales and marketing outreach efforts.
- Match the right message to the right buyer or influencer.
- **Choose a quality data partner to help you identify opportunities and grow your business.**

Principals' Top Concerns

(1-Least important 5- most important)

	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate funding	1%	1%	15%	28%	52%
Teacher morale	3%	3%	17%	35%	38%
Attendance	5%	5%	20%	32%	33%
Aligning assessments to standards	2%	2%	23%	35%	32%
Behavior issues in children	5%	5%	23%	33%	31%
Bullying	7%	7%	32%	24%	18%
Class size	8%	8%	33%	25%	16%



Understanding the Impacts of ESSA

Last year was a transition year. Districts were uncertain how the incoming administration would manage the education agenda and how the new ESSA legislation would impact their school's funding. Last year, only 56% of schools and districts felt that they had a good understanding of how ESSA would impact their schools. This year, we site a 9% increase over last year in leaders understanding the impacts of ESSA. With the ESSA legislation brings more accountability and decision-making at the state and local level. The intent of the legislation is to encourage innovation at the local level while also increasing accountability for lower performing schools.



With the ESSA legislation brings more accountability and decision-making at the state and local level.



Specialization and Complexity of Student 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. This year, we've seen the creation of Makerspaces and have seen new positions such as Makerspace Coordinators emerge. Districts are continuing to focus on Social

and Emotional Learning, College and Career Readiness and STEAM as well as STEM initiatives. The principal, however, is still responsible for ensuring that all students are receiving the specialized attention they require by finding adequate resources either from the district or the local community. Because roles and job functions

have become much more specialized, it's important to build your brand with the right individuals. MCH's comprehensive K-12 database includes a vast number of descriptive attributes that help companies enrich and define segments and target messages with a precise value proposition.



MCH has identified over 1500 schools and 1000 districts with Makerspaces.

Transitioning to Higher Standards

Fewer principals are concerned about the transition to higher standards this year. Approximately 60% are “less concerned” than last year, and almost 20% feel “about the same” year over year. The remaining 20% of principals polled are more concerned about the transition.

Most schools are still working on the transition and all of the challenges that surround that. But their efforts clearly include efforts to improve college and career readiness.

Even with the national shift to more rigorous standards, there are still too many high school graduates who find themselves unprepared for college work or to enter the workforce. The shift to higher learning standards is one of the factors that will strengthen our national economy. It will also help us remain competitive in a global marketplace.

70% of principals interviewed cite that their states are altering standards to increase college and career readiness.

There is currently a mismatch between job requirements in unfilled positions across the country and the qualifications of the young people interested in applying for those jobs. As we’ll see in the next section, principals are well aware of the importance of both College and Career Readiness (CCR) and the need to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities.

Too many high school graduates find themselves unprepared to enter the workforce.



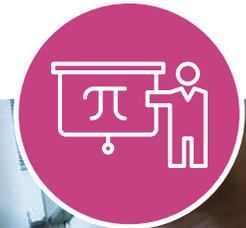
College and Career Readiness

Expanding the possible career choices for high school graduates actually begins in middle school when students begin to explore potential careers. Today career and technical education has moved far beyond what used to be called Vocational Education. There are thousands of jobs that require

technical training but do not require a college degree. On the other hand, there are still too many high school graduates who arrive at college unprepared for college level instruction.

Principals are aware that strengthening college and career options for students will

give many young people a stronger future. Given their optimism about the benefits of more career and technical education, it will be interesting to see if these efforts lead to higher graduation rates and postgraduate careers without a college degree.



There are thousands of jobs that require technical training but do not require a college degree.

K-12 Education Trends

This year's survey reflects a greater overall satisfaction with the implementation of new standards, improvements in instructional practice such as student-directed learning and problem-based inquiry, and standards-aligned curriculum and resources. At the same time, there are still principals struggling to implement or improve all of these things.

However, there is clearly a positive shift on these issues. There are also improvements in technology with more teachers integrating technology into their teaching as well as students having greater access to technology. Additionally, there are indications of improvements in school culture with benefits to relationships between teachers, students, parents, and the wider community.

Some of the newer issues of concern for principals include increasing out-of-school and home access to the Internet, providing resources for the number of students with learning challenges, mental health issues, and the continual challenge of managing change.



**More teachers
integrating technology
into their teaching as
well as students having
greater access to
technology.**



Pre-K programs:

Over half of the principals surveyed have Pre-K programs at their schools. Thirty percent are for 3 and 4-year-olds, while 20% are for 4-year-old only. Of those that do not currently have Pre-K programs, 3% say they are planning to implement within the next year.

Nearly all of the respondents to the survey are satisfied with the outcome of their current program and are not looking into additional curriculum.



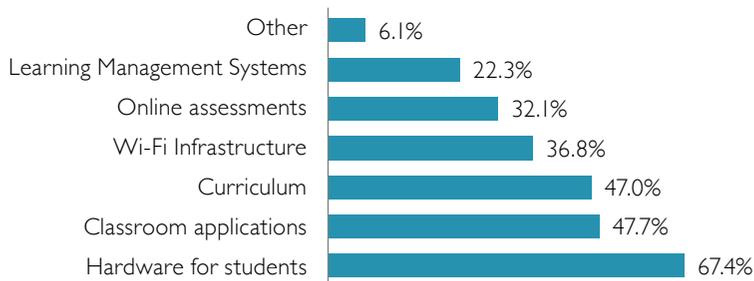
The State of Technology

What are driving principals' technology purchases? What types of technology are principals purchasing? The answers to these questions are sought after by many solutions providers. This year, principals helped paint a clear picture of what their technology needs are and how they have changed.

The top priorities for technology spend include hardware for students. Almost 70% of the respondents surveyed were planning on making hardware purchases that include laptops, tablets and other hardware products for student use. This is up from last year's survey at 48.5%. Classroom applications and curriculum were additional priorities.

Compared to last year, the need for additional technology to support online assessments has risen from 14% to 32%. This increase was a surprising jump, given that we saw a decrease last year.

What kind of Technology purchases are you making?

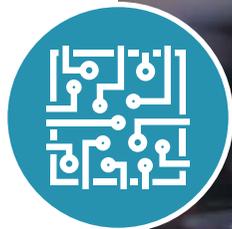
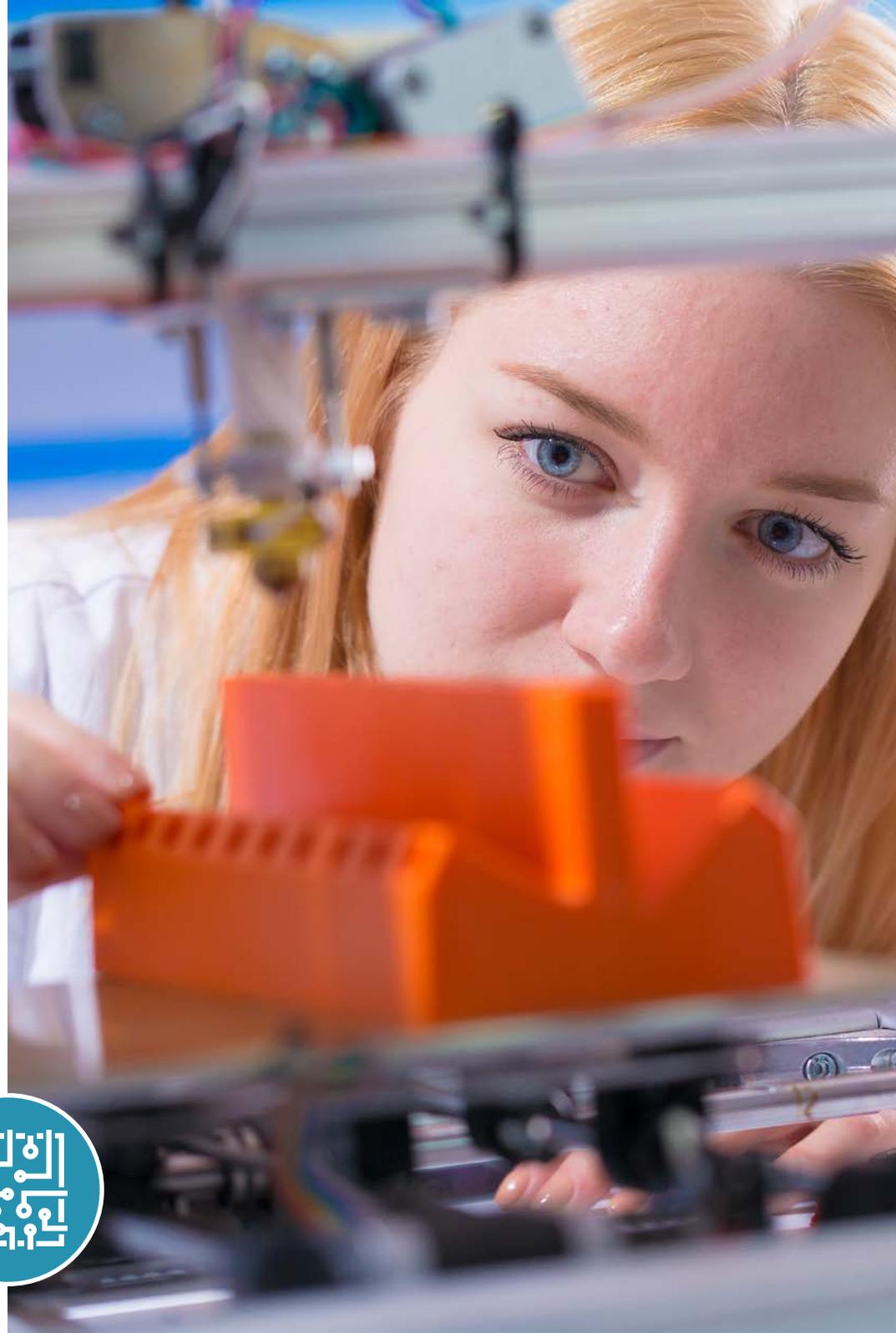


Almost 70% of the respondents surveyed were planning on making hardware purchases that include laptops, tablets and other hardware products for student use.

A sample of verbatim responses to technology purchases:

- 3D Printers
- Chromeboxes
- Chromebook carts
- Diagnostic and Prescriptive technology for individual learning
- ActivePanels
- iPads
- High tech manufacturing equipment
- Intuitive software
- Expendable supplies such as ink

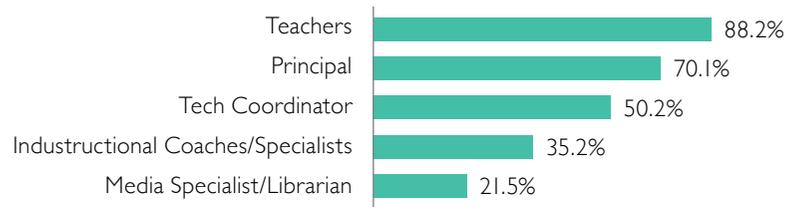
MCH has also revealed that while teachers are the primary influencers in technology applications, there are many other influencers involved when prioritizing the other technology categories mentioned. There are a couple of different strategies that would allow companies to dive deeper into the technology spending. One is to develop an account-based marketing strategy for districts, using all available supporting data to identify both school-based and district level technology opportunities on a district-by-district basis. The second strategy is to deploy a survey, using MCH data, to determine priorities by district type or size and use the information to fine-tune marketing language for both existing customers and prospects.



There's An App for That

Each year survey questions are analyzed to determine whether there is a more effective way to ask a question. This year we revisited the question about who makes the decision to approve apps for classroom use – changing it to get a broader understanding of everyone involved in making the decision. The results reveal that multiple faculty and staff can be involved. However it solidifies the primary decision maker as the teacher as seen in the table below. The response indicates that it is often a collaborative decision, but ultimately determined by teachers.

Who decides which apps will be used in the classroom?



Media influences:

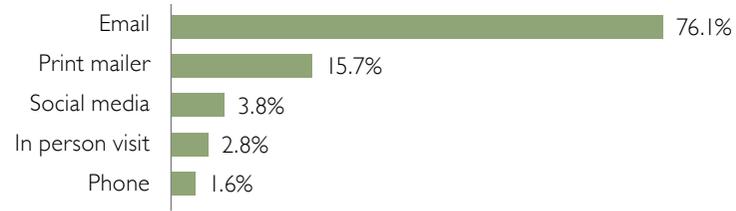
Building relationships with educators is important for any company offering products or services to schools. Understanding what types of media are most effective in building trust will help define a well-crafted multi-channel outreach program.

According to over 1,000 principals across the nation who responded to our survey, they perceive media differently, and these perceptions have an outcome on how they make decisions on products and services.

MCH asked which forms of communications principals prefer companies to use when contacting them about new products and services. Similar to last year, email is the most preferred channel while direct contact by phone is the least.

MCH also asked how principals research new products and services. Many take the time and visit company websites to find the information needed. District influences and word of mouth are also important. One could assess that a common theme throughout this report is the role that influencers play when making important decisions. This is supported again by the importance of word of mouth and turning to districts prior to making decisions.

How do you prefer to be contacted to learn more about new products and services



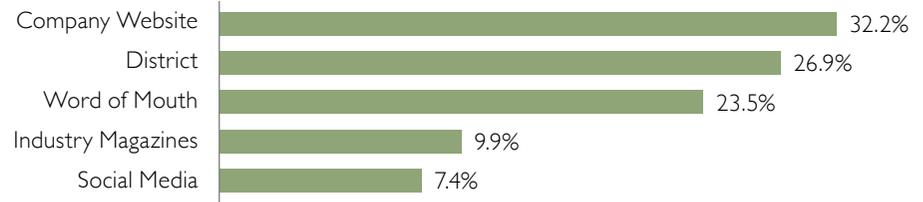
How Do Principals Research New Products and Services?

Trust in media is also important when developing an outreach program and building a brand. When asked what media types are the most trustworthy, email and company websites were noted as most trustworthy, while digital advertising and social media ranked among the least trustworthy.

Implications for sales and marketing professionals:

- Company websites should contain a clear value proposition that ties solutions to the needs of principals and schools.
- Email is not only a trusted medium, but the preferred method of communication for learning about new products and services.
- Educators are less likely to trust content on social media and digital advertising than other forms of media.

How do you research new products and services?



Principals Rank Most Trustworthy Forms of Media (1 = Most Trustworthy, 5 = Least Trustworthy)

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



Conclusion

There is genuine concern that the administration in Washington will not be as much of an advocate for public education as in the past, especially as it relates to funding. However, ESSA pushes much of the decision making and accountability for K-12 back to the states, so it is imperative that sales and marketing professionals understand the needs of schools and districts at a local level. A one-size-fits-all strategy will not be as effective as a targeted, segmented approach.



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 and information company that commits the same care and quality to our B2B clients as we did directly with schools and families. There are a lot of data choices today, and for some folks, data is data. At MCH, we know having quality information you can trust is what keeps your business a step ahead of opportunities. Every accurate data element you have to power your operations, sales engagements, and marketing programs improves your results. You'll stay on top of market changes by working with MCH as we track trends, opportunities and data developments in the K-12 market.

Our years of experience helps you target the right people in which to build strong relationships. MCH's passion doesn't stop there. We invest to create the best Education information data systems that include districts, schools, contacts, email and more.

For more information, please contact us at

info@mchdata.com or visit www.mchdata.com.

