

Pulse of Professional Learning Research Report

First Annual Survey 2026

Sponsored by Corwin

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Survey Methodology & Respondent Overview

1. Response Summary

711	129	582	10 min
Total responses	Customers 18% of total	Prospects 82% of total	Avg. completion SD = 8.11

Completion time caveat

The average is based on respondents who finished in under 60 minutes. Some completed the survey across multiple visits or days, making precise time interpretation difficult.

Partial completions (~10%)

Approximately 10% of respondents completed less than 80% of the survey. Most dropped off after Q26 ($n = 50$) or Q48 ($n = 11$). Partial responses are retained in the dataset; unanswered items are treated as missing data.

2. Priority Rating Scale

Ratings on the survey used a 4-point scale, where higher scores indicate higher priority. Missing responses indicate no opinion.

4	Very High Priority
3	High Priority
2	Low Priority
1	Very Low Priority
0	No Opinion

3. Overview of Respondents

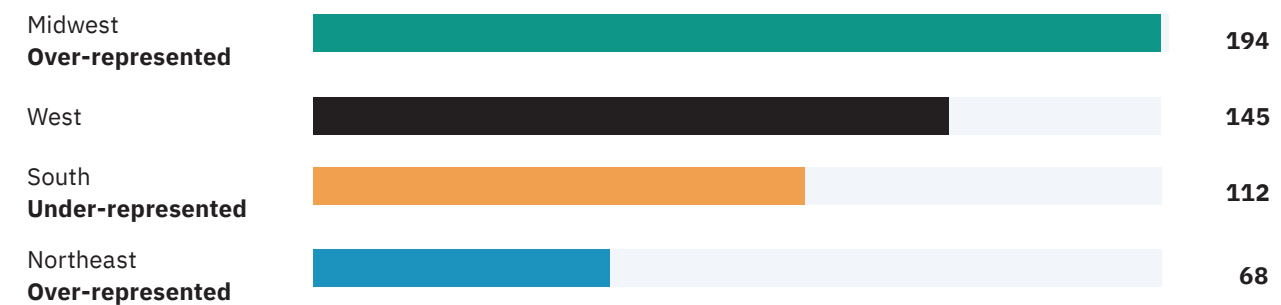
Geography

Respondents were primarily US-based, with 26 international participants spanning 18 countries.

Political Distribution



Regional Distribution



4. School & District Demographics

Title I Schools

	PPL Survey	National
Title I schools/districts	57% (n = 402)	65–68%

School Setting

Setting	Respondents	Survey %	National %	Representation
Rural	187	30%	20%	Over-rep.
Suburban	262	42%	53%	Under-rep.
Urban	167	27%	27%	In line

District Size

District Enrollment	Respondents	Survey %	National %	Representation
< 2,500	183	31%	9%	Over-rep.
2,500–9,999	178	31%	19%	Over-rep.
10,000–49,999	135	24%	37%	Under-rep.
50,000+	80	14%	32%	Under-rep.

School Grade Configuration

Grade Level	Respondents	Survey %	National %	Representation
PreK–5	222	35%	35%	In line
K–8	46	7%	10%	Under-rep.
Gr 6–8	90	14%	15%	In line
Gr 6–12	23	3%	6%	Under-rep.
Gr 9–12	181	28%	22%	Over-rep.
K–12	75	12%	5%	Over-rep.

Respondent Role

Role	Respondents	Survey %	National %	Representation
Teacher	342	56%	88%	Under-rep.
School Coach/Specialist	133	21%	3%	Over-rep.
Principal/Asst. Principal	47	7%	5%	In line
District Curriculum Admin/Dir.	45	7%	1%	Over-rep.
District PL Admin/Dir.	21	3%	1%	Over-rep.
School PD Coach/Director	21	3%	2%	In line
Superintendent	5	1%	3%	Under-rep.

Years of Experience

District Enrollment	Respondents	Survey %	National %	Representation
1–3 years	11	1%	13%	Under-rep.
4–7 years	31	5%	20%	Under-rep.
8–15 years	108	17%	32%	Under-rep.
16+ years	468	76%	32%	Over-rep.

Survey Questions

The first annual Pulse of Professional Learning Survey asked respondents to rate professional learning topics across 14 categories on a four-point scale, from very low to very high priority. To identify patterns in the responses, John Hattie applied a maximum-likelihood factor analysis with an oblique (Promax) rotation, a rigorous statistical method that groups related survey items, revealing 8 interpretable domains.

1. Professional Learning Topics 8 Factor Analysis

Learning Topic	Equity	Assess	Digital	Leadership	Policy	ECE	Family	Student-centered
DEGender inclusivity in schools	1.03	0.00	-0.02	-0.03	0.15	-0.09	-0.10	-0.13
DELGBTQ+ student support	1.03	0.00	-0.03	-0.02	0.12	-0.07	-0.13	-0.14
DEAnti-bias and anti-racism education	0.95	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	0.08	-0.09	-0.03	-0.08
DEAddressing systemic inequities; supporting students in poverty	0.76	0.02	0.02	-0.05	0.13	0.02	0.02	-0.05
TLCulturally responsive teaching	0.66	-0.03	0.00	-0.02	-0.05	-0.10	-0.02	0.34
LSLeading equity and inclusion initiatives	0.57	-0.05	-0.07	0.44	0.03	0.01	-0.02	-0.07
SCEquity and access in education	0.56	0.07	-0.05	0.06	0.07	0.01	-0.07	0.24
SCCulturally sustaining pedagogy	0.55	-0.01	0.09	0.13	-0.13	-0.09	0.02	0.28
IDCreating culturally relevant lesson plans	0.52	0.13	0.13	0.09	-0.13	0.01	0.08	0.03
SCTrauma-informed teaching practices	0.51	0.01	-0.07	-0.14	0.10	-0.04	0.07	0.37
SCInclusive education for students w/disabilities	0.45	0.16	-0.13	0.00	0.09	-0.09	-0.01	0.31
SCSupporting multilingual learners	0.40	0.16	-0.08	-0.01	-0.13	-0.01	0.11	0.27
SMStudent mental health; crisis response	0.36	-0.14	0.05	-0.04	0.19	0.15	0.00	0.24
AFData-driven decision-making	-0.02	0.68	-0.05	-0.01	0.10	-0.19	-0.01	0.07
CCReading-focused professional learning	0.05	0.60	-0.16	-0.03	0.10	0.13	0.14	-0.08
CCCurriculum alignment with standards	0.04	0.58	-0.13	0.00	0.14	0.04	-0.08	0.00

Learning Topic	Equity	Assess	Digital	Leadership	Policy	ECE	Family	Student-centered
TLEvidence-based teaching strategies	0.02	0.57	−0.11	−0.07	−0.05	0.05	−0.05	0.21
AFFormative/summative assessment strategies	−0.08	0.55	0.04	0.05	0.02	−0.10	−0.02	0.09
CCWriting-focused professional learning	0.04	0.55	−0.12	−0.02	0.06	0.23	0.11	−0.10
CCMath-focused professional learning	0.00	0.53	−0.05	−0.02	−0.04	0.05	0.30	−0.15
IDDesigning engaging and rigorous lesson plans	0.02	0.53	0.12	0.04	−0.14	0.02	0.07	0.01
AFAssessment literacy for educators	0.02	0.52	0.22	−0.01	0.01	0.01	−0.02	0.09
AFStandards-based grading; rubric design	0.04	0.52	0.13	−0.07	0.03	0.01	−0.13	0.08
AFAssessment literacy for students	−0.09	0.43	0.22	−0.04	0.15	0.08	−0.05	0.10
AFEffective feedback practices	0.02	0.42	0.16	0.05	−0.15	0.11	−0.05	0.24
IDUsing dashboards and metrics for school improvement	0.08	0.40	0.29	0.20	0.14	−0.17	−0.10	−0.11
SCDeveloping assessment-capable learners	−0.07	0.35	0.07	0.09	0.13	−0.04	0.00	0.05
IDBackward design (UbD framework)	0.05	0.31	0.25	0.17	−0.23	0.01	0.02	0.00
TIAugmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)	0.02	−0.05	0.71	−0.11	0.13	−0.11	−0.02	0.02
TIGamification in education	0.03	0.03	0.69	−0.17	0.08	−0.15	−0.02	0.05
ETMicro-credentialing global competencies	0.02	−0.10	0.67	0.08	−0.05	0.06	0.03	−0.11
TIVirtual and remote learning best practices	−0.03	0.00	0.61	−0.02	0.20	−0.17	0.04	0.00
ETInternational education	0.11	−0.19	0.60	0.05	−0.09	0.17	0.05	−0.07
TIBlended and hybrid learning models	−0.10	−0.05	0.60	0.06	0.23	−0.16	−0.06	0.04
TILearning Management Systems (LMS) training	−0.01	0.02	0.58	−0.04	0.26	−0.05	−0.01	0.01
TIArtificial intelligence in education	−0.02	0.05	0.54	0.03	−0.18	−0.10	−0.04	−0.01

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Learning Topic	Equity	Assess	Digital	Leadership	Policy	ECE	Family	Student-centered
AFDigital tools for assessment	-0.21	0.15	0.53	0.02	0.19	-0.15	-0.14	0.13
CCCross-curricular teaching; interdisciplinary projects	0.03	-0.02	0.41	-0.04	-0.12	0.15	0.21	0.11
ETEnvironmental and sustainability education	0.31	-0.11	0.41	0.01	-0.07	0.30	0.01	-0.08
CCSTEM/STEAM professional learning	0.05	0.20	0.40	-0.07	0.01	0.06	0.17	-0.12
TLInquiry-based learning	-0.02	0.04	0.40	-0.10	-0.08	0.18	0.00	0.20
AFSelf-peer-assessment	0.07	0.21	0.39	0.05	-0.18	0.04	-0.04	0.16
TIDigital citizenship and online safety	0.21	0.05	0.36	-0.12	0.02	0.12	0.01	0.14
TLCompetency-based education	-0.04	0.01	0.34	-0.10	0.10	0.13	-0.06	0.20
ETPreparing students for future careers	-0.14	0.06	0.22	0.07	0.18	0.21	0.09	-0.03
LSDistributed leadership practices	0.13	-0.11	0.07	0.83	-0.02	-0.08	-0.04	-0.09
LSCollaborative leadership models	0.04	-0.10	-0.07	0.78	-0.01	0.00	0.00	0.09
LSChange management in schools	-0.02	-0.10	0.01	0.73	-0.08	0.02	0.09	-0.06
LSStrategic planning for school improvement	-0.05	0.11	-0.07	0.71	0.06	-0.08	0.06	-0.10
LSProfessional Learning Communities (PLCs)	0.02	0.19	-0.04	0.68	-0.09	-0.03	-0.12	-0.08
LSInstructional leadership; strategic planning	-0.01	0.15	-0.06	0.63	-0.05	0.15	-0.02	-0.09
LSTeacher coaching & mentoring	0.03	0.03	-0.11	0.61	-0.08	0.08	0.02	0.04
LSBuilding a positive school culture	0.02	-0.07	-0.16	0.49	0.04	0.21	0.06	0.09
WGTeacher-leadership schools	-0.07	0.02	0.12	0.48	0.13	-0.06	0.06	0.15
WGEffective collaboration and teamwork	-0.02	0.15	-0.08	0.43	0.11	0.02	0.01	0.22
WGCareer pathways; professional development	-0.10	0.01	0.17	0.33	0.30	0.04	-0.05	0.17

Learning Topic	Equity	Assess	Digital	Leadership	Policy	ECE	Family	Student-centered
WGTime management and productivity	−0.08	0.11	0.08	0.28	0.30	−0.09	0.03	0.23
LSNew teacher onboarding/training	0.00	0.05	−0.12	0.28	0.10	0.29	0.10	−0.03
IDConducting school climate surveys	0.04	0.12	0.28	0.19	0.17	−0.05	0.07	−0.11
SMSchool safety pLans and crisis preparedness	0.15	0.08	−0.01	−0.07	0.54	0.09	0.01	0.01
PACompliance with IDEA, ESSA, and other mandates	0.17	0.10	−0.05	−0.07	0.52	0.10	0.08	0.03
PAFunding and budgeting for school programs	0.04	−0.04	0.10	−0.08	0.52	0.20	0.13	0.00
SMCybersecurity in schools	0.10	−0.03	0.27	−0.03	0.44	0.06	−0.04	0.03
PAUnderstanding education policy and Law	0.02	0.00	0.13	0.03	0.43	0.18	0.08	0.03
IDTracking and improving graduation rates	−0.01	0.23	0.21	0.05	0.37	0.09	−0.02	−0.12
PAAdvocating for students and schools	0.21	−0.15	0.06	0.00	0.37	0.20	0.11	0.08
SMBullying prevention and conflict resolution	0.23	−0.05	0.08	0.06	0.25	0.07	0.01	0.20
WGTeacher self-care, burnout prevention, & resilience building	0.14	−0.12	0.02	0.17	0.25	0.04	0.05	0.21
ECLanguage development in young children	−0.11	0.10	−0.17	0.01	0.12	0.91	−0.15	−0.02
ECEarly intervention for developmental delays	−0.09	−0.01	−0.15	−0.05	0.21	0.79	0.03	−0.02
ECPlay-based learning strategies	0.03	−0.06	0.05	−0.05	0.07	0.73	−0.11	0.01
ECSupporting transitions from preschool to primary school	−0.12	0.02	−0.04	0.17	0.12	0.71	−0.18	−0.05
PCBuilding strong school-home partnerships	−0.07	0.04	−0.04	0.02	0.10	−0.15	0.93	0.00
PCEngaging parents in student learning	−0.15	−0.03	−0.02	0.05	0.10	−0.14	0.92	0.02
PCEffective communication with diverse families	0.18	0.02	−0.04	−0.04	0.06	−0.06	0.71	0.03

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Learning Topic	Equity	Assess	Digital	Leadership	Policy	ECE	Family	Student-centered
PCLeveraging community partnerships for student success	0.02	-0.07	0.14	0.09	0.02	-0.07	0.59	0.05
TLPersonalized learning	0.03	-0.12	0.32	0.00	0.06	-0.07	0.01	0.43
SCSocial-emotional learning (SEL)	0.35	-0.07	-0.06	0.00	0.12	-0.05	0.07	0.42
TLDifferentiated Instruction	0.14	0.30	-0.03	-0.11	-0.05	0.01	0.01	0.37
TLScaffolding/gradual release of responsibility	0.07	0.32	-0.08	0.02	0.09	-0.02	-0.09	0.36
TLEffective classroom management	0.04	0.25	-0.25	-0.09	0.33	-0.03	0.05	0.35
SCGrowth mindset and fostering resilience	0.13	0.11	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.35
SCBuilding student agency and voice	0.27	0.13	0.11	0.12	-0.21	0.07	-0.01	0.31
SCAddressing needs of gifted/talented students	-0.02	0.13	0.25	-0.05	0.02	0.07	0.02	0.22
SMConflict resolution strategies	0.11	-0.12	0.19	0.06	0.20	0.10	0.07	0.20

2. Inter-Domain Correlation Matrix

Factor	Equity	Assess	Digital	Leadership	Policy	ECE	Family	Student-centered
Equity	1.00	0.26	0.51	0.49	0.27	0.51	0.50	0.40
Assess	0.26	1.00	0.42	0.55	0.24	0.31	0.34	0.36
Digital	0.51	0.42	1.00	0.58	0.34	0.45	0.49	0.45
Leadership	0.49	0.55	0.58	1.00	0.44	0.48	0.54	0.49
Policy	0.27	0.24	0.34	0.44	1.00	0.26	0.35	0.29
ECE	0.51	0.31	0.45	0.48	0.26	1.00	0.61	0.39
Family	0.50	0.34	0.49	0.54	0.35	0.61	1.00	0.48
Student-centered	0.40	0.36	0.45	0.49	0.29	0.39	0.48	1.00

3. The 8 Professional Learning Domains: A Closer Look

The analysis revealed 8 domains, each representing a cluster of professional learning topics that educators tend to think about and prioritize together:

1. Equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive practice
2. Assessment, curriculum, and evidence-informed instruction
3. Digital, innovation, and future-focused learning
4. Leadership and school improvement
5. School systems, safety, and policy
6. Early childhood education
7. Family and community engagement
8. General student-centered pedagogy/relational practice

1. Equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive practice

are among the most clearly defined themes in the data. Respondents consistently grouped topics such as social justice, identity-inclusive practices, culturally responsive teaching, and support for historically marginalized learners—suggesting they see these not as separate concerns but as interconnected parts of what inclusive education looks like in practice.

2. Assessment, curriculum, and evidence-informed instruction

reflect foundational dimensions of effective teaching practice. This theme brings together evidence-based strategies, standards alignment, content-focused professional learning, and data-informed assessment—the foundational building blocks of strong classroom practice.

3. Digital, innovation, and future-focused learning

go beyond simply "using technology." Respondents grouped ed-tech alongside emerging teaching models, interdisciplinary learning, global competencies, and formats like blended and virtual learning—reflecting a broader orientation toward innovation in how and what students learn.

4. Leadership and school improvement

capture what it takes to lead and sustain change at the school level. Topics include strategic leadership, organizational change, professional learning communities, coaching and mentoring, and building positive school cultures—the conditions that enable lasting improvement.

5. School systems, safety, and policy

are the most administrative of the eight themes. This domain covers safety, policy compliance, funding, budgeting, and broader system governance—the operational responsibilities required to keep schools running effectively and accountably.

6. Early childhood education

is the tightest, most clearly defined theme in the entire analysis. Topics cluster cleanly around play-based learning, early language development, preschool-to-primary transitions, and early intervention—reflecting a well-established and coherent body of practice centered on children's developmental foundations.

7. Family and community engagement

is equally cohesive. It captures the relationships that surround schools: home–school partnerships, parent involvement in learning, communication with diverse families, and community partnerships that support student success.

8. General student-centered pedagogy/relational practice

is the broadest and least sharply defined of the eight domains. It includes personalized learning, social-emotional learning, differentiation, scaffolding, and classroom management. Because many of these practices also connect to equity and instructional improvement, this theme functions more as a general category of supportive teaching than a tightly bounded domain in its own right.

Findings: Professional Learning Priorities

1. Means, Standard Deviation, Number of Respondents/Topic

Professional Learning Priority	No.	Mean	SD
LSBuilding a positive school culture	586	4.49	0.87
ECLanguage development in young children	532	4.42	0.97
ECEarly intervention for developmental delays	524	4.36	1.02
TLEvidence-based teaching strategies	711	4.32	0.92
LSTeacher coaching; mentoring	591	4.22	1.06
LSNew teacher onboarding/training	592	4.20	1.03
SCGrowth mindset and fostering resilience	711	4.17	1.03
AFEffective feedback practices	709	4.15	1.05
IDDesigning engaging and rigorous lesson plans	646	4.15	1.06
ETPreparing students for future careers	634	4.15	1.08
ECPlay-based learning strategies	534	4.15	1.21
CCCurriculum alignment with standards	658	4.15	1.05
PCBuilding strong school-home partnerships	646	4.13	0.99
LSInstructional leadership; strategic planning	588	4.13	1.10
SMStudent mental health; crisis response	646	4.12	1.23
LSCollaborative leadership models	589	4.11	1.10
WGEffective collaboration and teamwork	658	4.11	1.10
AFData-driven decision-making	709	4.10	1.09
TLEffective classroom management	711	4.10	1.19
TLDifferentiated Instruction	711	4.09	1.04
CCReading-focused professional learning	658	4.08	1.06
PCEffective communication with diverse families	646	4.05	1.10
SCInclusive education for students w/disabilities	711	4.01	1.07
CCWriting-focused professional learning	658	4.01	1.12
PCEngaging parents in student learning	646	3.99	1.10

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Professional Learning Priority	No.	Mean	SD
AFFormative/summative assessment strategies	710	3.97	1.10
SCBuilding student agency and voice	711	3.96	1.13
SCEquity and access in education	711	3.96	1.20
WGTeacher self-care, burnout prevention; resilience building	658	3.95	1.26
ECSupporting transitions from preschool to primary school	514	3.94	1.26
LSStrategic planning for school improvement	589	3.94	1.17
TLScaffolding/gradual release of responsibility	711	3.90	1.14
DEAddressing systemic inequities; supporting students in poverty	658	3.90	1.31
PCLeveraging community partnerships for student success	646	3.86	1.15
PAAdvocating for students and schools	646	3.85	1.18
SCSupporting multilingual learners	711	3.84	1.21
SCSocial-emotional learning (SEL)	711	3.82	1.18
CCMath-focused professional learning	658	3.81	1.24
AFAssessment literacy for educators	710	3.80	1.17
TIDigital citizenship and online safety	658	3.80	1.24
SMConflict resolution strategies	646	3.79	1.36
CCCross-curricular teaching; interdisciplinary projects	658	3.77	1.29
LSProfessional Learning Communities (PLCs)	592	3.73	1.35
WGTeacher-leadership within schools	658	3.73	1.26
SCAddressing needs of gifted/talented students	711	3.70	1.23
SMBullying prevention and conflict resolution	646	3.70	1.36
SMSchool safety plans and crisis preparedness	646	3.68	1.41
AFAssessment literacy for students	710	3.67	1.14
LSChange management in schools	566	3.65	1.29
TLInquiry-based learning	711	3.63	1.22
AFStandards-based grading rubric design	709	3.63	1.23
TLCulturally responsive teaching	711	3.61	1.27
LSDistributed leadership practices	570	3.61	1.31
IDCreating culturally relevant lesson plans	646	3.60	1.28
SCTrauma-informed teaching practices	711	3.60	1.30

Professional Learning Priority	No.	Mean	SD
DEAnti-bias and anti-racism education	658	3.59	1.38
SCDeveloping assessment-capable learners	711	3.56	1.23
IDBackward design (UbD framework)	646	3.56	1.30
PAFunding and budgeting for school programs	646	3.56	1.37
WGTime management and productivity	658	3.55	1.30
SCCulturally sustaining pedagogy	711	3.51	1.32
TLCompetency-based education	711	3.50	1.18
PACompliance with IDEA, ESSA, and other mandates	646	3.49	1.35
TLPersonalized learning	711	3.47	1.30
LSLeading equity and inclusion initiatives	587	3.47	1.40
TIArtificial intelligence in education	658	3.43	1.43
SMCybersecurity in schools	646	3.40	1.48
AFSelf-; peer-assessment	709	3.38	1.25
CCSTEM/STEAM professional learning	658	3.37	1.29
WGCareer pathways; professional development	658	3.35	1.34
PAUnderstanding education policy and law	646	3.33	1.30
AFDigital tools for assessment	711	3.27	1.31
IDTracking and improving graduation rates	646	3.27	1.34
DEGender inclusivity in schools	658	3.17	1.47
IDUsing dashboards and metrics for school improvement	646	3.17	1.27
ETEnvironmental and sustainability education	634	3.12	1.43
DELGBTQ+ student support	658	3.10	1.49
IDConducting school climate surveys	646	3.07	1.32
TIBlended and hybrid learning models	658	2.84	1.35
TILearning Management Systems (LMS) training	658	2.74	1.30
ETMicro-credentialing; global competencies	634	2.66	1.34
TIGamification in education	658	2.56	1.29
ETInternational education	634	2.49	1.29
TIVirtual and remote learning best practices	658	2.37	1.30
TIAugmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)	658	2.22	1.22

2. High & Low Professional Learning Priorities

Core Findings

Educators prioritize human and instructional factors over technological or structural innovations. Improvements in student learning are seen as coming from strong teaching, leadership, collaborative cultures, and student well-being, not from new technologies or emerging trends.

High-demand PL is:

- Close to the classroom
- Immediately actionable
- Relational and cultural
- Focused on impact on students

Low-demand PL is:

- Distal from classroom practice
- Structural, technical, or compliance-driven
- Innovation-oriented without clear impact
- Focused on systems, tools, or trends

Educators are not asking for more strategies—they are asking for better judgment about when and how to use them. High-demand items create the conditions for evaluative thinking; low-demand items offer tools without an embedded evaluative purpose.

Overarching Message

The hierarchy is clear: Human and instructional factors come first.

- **At the top:** strong teaching, effective leadership, early childhood development and coherent curriculum.
- **In the middle:** organizational structures that sustain improvement
- **At the bottom:** technology-driven innovations and specialized systemic tools.

3. Professional Learning Topics Hierarchy

Highest Priority

Foundational conditions for learning: direct, daily impact on teaching quality and student outcomes. These priorities share a common thread: They are close to the classroom, relational in nature, and have a clear, direct link to student learning outcomes.

CORE CLASSROOM PRACTICES

- Evidence-based teaching strategies
- Effective feedback
- Engaging lesson design
- Classroom management
- Differentiated instruction

SCHOOL CULTURE & RELATIONSHIPS

- Building a positive school culture
- Growth mindset & resilience
- Teacher collaboration
- School-home partnership

LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

- Teacher coaching & mentoring
- Instructional leadership
- New-teacher onboarding

EARLY LEARNING FOUNDATIONS

- Language development in young children
- Early intervention for developmental delays
- Play-based learning

Upper-Middle Priority

Coordinated instructional improvement and student support are important, but one step removed from daily classroom work. Educators view student support and belonging as integral to effective schooling, placing these well above system-level and technology concerns.

INSTRUCTIONAL COHERENCE & COLLABORATION

- Curriculum alignment with standards
- Data-driven decision-making
- Content-focused PL (reading & writing)

STUDENT WELL-BEING & INCLUSION

- Mental health support
- Inclusive education
- Equity & access
- Support for multilingual learners

Middle Priority

Supporting structures and specialized approaches are valued as mechanisms that sustain improvement, not the primary drivers of it.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

- Professional learning communities
- Distributed leadership
- Change management
- School safety planning
- Budgeting

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

- Culturally responsive teaching
- Trauma-informed practices
- Inquiry-based learning
- Backward design
- Standards-based grading

Lowest Priority

Technology-driven innovations and specialized systems, which educators view as distal from everyday classroom teaching. They are perceived as emerging innovations rather than established practices with clear links to student learning.

EMERGING & ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

- Augmented & virtual reality
- Gamification
- Virtual and remote learning models
- Blended learning systems
- Micro-credentialing
- International education

SYSTEMIC & MEASUREMENT TOOLS

- LMS training
- Digital assessment tools
- Dashboards & metrics
- Graduation tracking
- Environmental/sustainability ed.

Findings: The 8 Professional Learning Domains

1. Overview of Domain Rankings

Professional learning demand is highest where educators can most directly shape student outcomes: early childhood development, family engagement, leadership, and assessment. Digital innovation and technology sit clearly at the bottom, viewed as useful tools but not central to the core work of improving teaching and learning.

Domain	Priority Score	Mean	SD	Alpha	N
Early childhood education & development		4.22	0.88	$\alpha = 0.81$	544
Family and community engagement		4.01	0.90	$\alpha = 0.85$	646
Leadership and school improvement		4.00	0.77	$\alpha = 0.89$	613
Assessment & evidence-informed instruction		3.99	0.69	$\alpha = 0.85$	711
Student-centered & relational pedagogy		3.93	0.69	$\alpha = 0.58$	711
Equity, inclusion, & culturally responsive		3.60	1.01	$\alpha = 0.93$	658
Policy, governance, & school operations		3.51	0.96	$\alpha = 0.84$	646
Digital innovation & future-focused learning		2.90	0.81	$\alpha = 0.85$	658

Domain Rankings—Mean Priority Score (4-Point Scale)

Note: The internal consistency estimate (alpha) for Student-Centered & Relational Pedagogy is low ($\alpha = 0.58$), as this was the final factor to emerge in the solution. Composite scores for this scale should be interpreted with care.

2. Findings by Domain

Domain: Early Childhood Education & Development

Rating: 4.22

- Language development
- Early intervention
- Play-based learning
- Preschool-to-primary transitions

Educators strongly believe that **the early years are foundational**. They view early childhood education as one of the most powerful long-term investments schools can make in improving outcomes.

Domain: Family & Community Engagement

Rating: 4.01

- School-home partnerships
- Parent involvement in learning
- Communication with diverse families
- Community partnerships

Educators recognize that **strong relationships** between schools, families, and communities play an important role in supporting student success. A clearly defined, coherent domain.

Domain: Leadership & School Improvement Systems

Rating: 4.00

- Positive school culture
- Teacher coaching & mentoring
- Instructional leadership
- Collaborative leadership structures

Educators agree that leadership was rated most highly when **focused directly on teaching and learning**, reinforcing a consistent research message: School culture, collaboration, and coaching are key contributing conditions. Rated highly overall.

Domain: Assessment & Evidence-Informed Instruction

Rating: 3.99

- Evidence-based teaching strategies
- Effective feedback
- Curriculum alignment
- Data-driven decision-making
- Differentiated instruction

Educators see these practices as the **core of the instructional engine of improvement**: strengthening teaching through thoughtful use of assessment, feedback, and curriculum coherence. Some of the highest individual item ratings in the entire dataset.

Domain: Student-Centered & Relational Pedagogy

Rating: 3.93

- Personalized learning
- Social-emotional learning
- Differentiation
- Classroom management
- Scaffolding
- Student agency

Educators see these practices as important complements to strong instruction—supporting **relationships, engagement, and responsiveness to student needs**. Rated in the upper-middle range. The low internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.58$) suggests this factor is more diffuse than the others; composite scores should be interpreted with care.

Domain: Equity, Inclusion, & Culturally Responsive Practices

Rating: 3.60

- Inclusive education for students with disabilities
- Equity & access
- Addressing systemic inequities

An important domain, though not among the very highest priorities. Notable for the highest standard deviation of any factor ($SD = 1.01$), indicating more variability in how educators perceive and prioritize these topics. Strongest items focus on **instructional access and support for diverse learners**. Items related to gender inclusivity and LGBTQ+ student support received somewhat lower ratings, suggesting equity is viewed primarily through the lens of learning access rather than broader identity-based initiatives.

Domain: Policy, Governance, & School Operations

Rating: 3.51

- Policy compliance
- School safety planning
- Funding & budgeting
- Education law

Educators recognize the importance of these responsibilities while seeing them as **background structures** that support, rather than directly shape, classroom learning. Rated more moderately.

Domain: Digital Innovation & Future-Focused Learning

Rating: 2.90

- Augmented & virtual reality
- Gamification
- Virtual learning models
- Micro-credentialing

Educators may view these approaches as developing or less established, but generally think they are **peripheral to the central work of improving teaching and learning**. Educators appear to place greater confidence in strengthening instructional practice than in adopting new technological tools. Many items in this domain received the lowest ratings in the entire dataset.

3. Domain Priorities Across Respondent Groups

Customers vs. Prospects

Customers appear more focused on refining enacted practice and direct classroom impact. Prospects emphasize system conditions and ideals, with the largest divergence around policy, which is seen as most important by those not yet embedded in the day-to-day work.

A MANOVA showed statistically significant differences in domain scores between Customers ($n = 129$) and Prospects ($n = 582$). The diverging bars below show the direction and magnitude of each difference (Cohen's d).

	Customers	SD	Prospects	SD	d
Leadership and School Improvement Systems	4.12	0.62	3.99	0.77	0.19
Digital Innovation and Future-Focused Learning	2.98	0.84	2.83	0.77	0.18
Student-Centered and Relational Pedagogy	4.01	0.58	3.90	0.68	0.18
Assessment and Evidence-Informed Instruction	4.04	0.64	3.95	0.69	0.13
Family and Community Engagement	3.92	0.96	4.02	0.86	-0.10
Early Childhood Education and Development	4.15	0.88	4.25	0.87	-0.12
Equity, Inclusion, and Culturally Responsive Practice	3.44	0.95	3.61	0.98	-0.17
Policy, Governance, and School Operations	3.21	1.06	3.56	0.92	-0.35

Customers rate higher

- Leadership and school improvement ($d = +0.19$)
- Student-centered pedagogy ($d = +0.18$)
- Digital innovation ($d = +0.18$)
- Assessment and instruction ($d = +0.13$)

Prospects rate higher

- Policy and governance ($d = -0.35$, largest gap)
- Equity and inclusion ($d = -0.17$)
- Early childhood education ($d = -0.12$)
- Family and community engagement ($d = -0.10$)

Grade Level

Significant differences were observed by grade level. The table below summarizes the relative priority of each domain across grade spans.

Domain	PreK–5	K–8	Gr 6–8	Gr 6–12	Gr 9–12	K–12
Leadership & improvement	High	High	High	High	High	High
Assessment & instruction	High	High	High	High	High	High
Early childhood	Very High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Equity & inclusion	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Family engagement	High	High	High	High	Moderate	High
Student-centered pedagogy	High	High	High	High	High	High
Policy & governance	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Digital innovation	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

Patterns Across Grade Levels

- Leadership and assessment-informed instruction are rated among the most influential domains across all grade levels, suggesting these are universal anchors of professional learning.
- Early childhood and developmental foundation receive particularly high ratings among PreK–5 educators, but are valued across all grade levels, reflecting a shared recognition that early learning shapes later outcomes.
- Ratings for equity and inclusion are moderate and fairly consistent, with slightly higher emphasis among K–12 respondents.
- Family engagement and student-centered pedagogy hold steady mid-to-high across grade levels.
- Digital innovation receives the lowest ratings across all groups, confirming that educators view technology and emerging innovations as useful tools but not primary drivers of improvement.

Variables With No Significant Differences

There are no statistically significant differences between state political affiliation (Republican/Democrat), geographic regions, Title I status, district type, or enrollment size.

What's Missing: Open-Ended Responses

Most respondents felt the survey covered the major professional learning areas well. Where they identified gaps, the themes clustered consistently around practical, classroom-close concerns rather than entirely new content areas.

Overall pattern: The missing topics cluster around behavior and mental health support, literacy intervention, special education systems, teacher sustainability, and research-to-practice translation. The message is consistent: educators want professional learning that is practical, grounded in classroom reality, and supportive of both teachers and students.



Classroom behavior and student mental health. Respondents called for more PL on managing disruptive behavior, supporting students experiencing trauma, and understanding behavior through developmental and neuroscience lenses. Conflict resolution, restorative practices, and strategies for re-engaging disengaged students also came up frequently.



Literacy intervention beyond the early grades. The science of reading and literacy intervention at the middle and high school levels was notably absent from respondents' current PL. Several also flagged writing development and disciplinary literacy as underserved areas, particularly for students working below grade level during Tier 1 instruction.

**Special education, learning disabilities, and**

MTSS. Respondents wanted deeper training in special education systems, accommodations, sensory supports, and learning disabilities. MTSS/MLSS structures, progress monitoring, and clearer guidance on instructional roles for special education teachers were also mentioned.

**Teacher well-being and career sustainability.**

Burnout and the long-term sustainability of teaching emerged as recurring concerns. Respondents suggested that PL should focus on workload management, self-care, career pathways, and building structures that make teaching a viable long-term profession.

**Leadership and organizational culture.**

Respondents emphasized PL for school leaders, particularly in supporting teachers, strengthening coaching and mentoring systems, improving school culture, and building more collaborative relationships between administration and staff.



Curriculum design and deeper learning. Several responses pointed to gaps in PL for curriculum design when no textbook exists, for project-based and interdisciplinary learning, and for designing authentic, real-world learning experiences.



AI and emerging technologies. Although technology appeared in the survey, respondents wanted more specific PL on AI literacy—including responsible use, risks and benefits, and how AI can support critical thinking and personalized learning without replacing teacher judgment.



Arts, humanities, and broader curriculum. Social studies, arts integration, environmental literacy, and the role of creativity in student development were seen as underrepresented, both in the survey and in professional learning more broadly.



Student motivation and real-world learning. Respondents highlighted a need for PL to help students build motivation, stamina, and self-regulation, and to connect these to authentic assessment, career readiness, and project-based approaches.



Translating research into practice. A recurring frustration was the gap between research and implementation. Respondents wanted PL that helps educators apply findings in practical, sustainable ways, not just understand them.