

Tech in education

Reducing staff workloads and improving student outcomes





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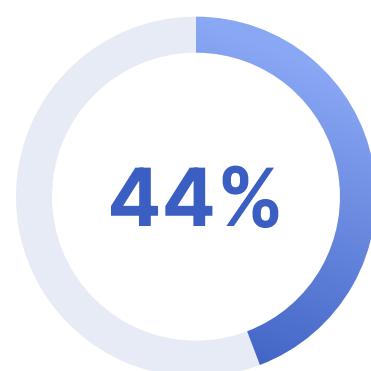
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K-12 and higher education staff have the highest burnout rates in the US



44% of K-12 professionals suffer from burnout.

At every level of education, industry professionals have to collect and manage an enormous amount of data, from student registration information to employee leave requests. Often, staff spend so much time managing this data, it leads to burnout.

A [2022 Gallup poll](#) found that those who work in K-12 suffer from the highest burnout rate of any sector, at 44 percent. Those in higher education are No. 2, at 35 percent. According to a study published in the [International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#), a heavy workload is one of the most common causes of stress in education. The study states that “burnout among professionals such as teachers can result from excessive demands on their energy, strength and resources.”

According to a study in [RSIS International](#), clerical tasks are a key component of the heavy workloads in education that lead to burnout and create a barrier to effective teaching and learning.

“The shifting landscape of education has expanded the role of teachers to encompass administrative responsibilities, such as data analysis, record-keeping, scheduling, and communication. However, the increasing burden of clerical work has been found to hinder the teaching process and negatively impact student learning, resulting in less time for lesson planning, individualized attention, and cultivating a positive learning environment.”

— RSIS International

Excessive administrative tasks have led to [disagreement among principals, vice principals, and teachers](#) about who is responsible for this burdensome work. Staffing issues are also a factor.

The [National Center for Educational Statistics](#) (NCES) reports that 8 percent of public school teachers leave the profession every year. In addition, [86 percent of K-12 public schools](#) in the US reported challenges hiring teachers, and 83 percent had difficulty hiring for non-teaching positions for the 2023–24 school year.

As schools and universities struggle to remain fully staffed, the potential for burnout rises further. But there is hope. Despite common classroom issues — students' mental health, apathy, and behavior issues, among others — what K-12 teachers enjoy most about their job is working with their students.

The same holds true for college and university instructors. According to a survey by [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), 57 percent of professors reported burnout. However, 95 percent of professors agreed with the statement, "working with students is the best part of my job."

How can the education industry address these issues? Institutions of all sizes can use emerging technologies to automate an array of administrative tasks, reduce workloads, and improve educational outcomes.

How no-code tech can alleviate burnout

Increasingly, institutions are turning to [no-code technology](#) hosted in the cloud to automate data collection for administrative tasks like school registration. This technology can automate classroom tasks as well. Teachers can create online forms, generate interactive quizzes, and use AI to engage with students and parents.

[Anaheim Union High School District \(AUHSD\)](#), which has 26,000 students, moved from paper forms to online forms hosted on a cloud server. This upgrade helped staff cut 40 hours of clerical work each week.

Erik Greenwood, chief technology officer at AUHSD, spearheaded the shift to online forms and cloud software for data management. He and his colleagues have worked together to modernize operations by automating approval flows, collecting payments online, finalizing contracts with e-signatures, and more.

Cloud software trending up

"It's definitely saving a lot of clerical time. Otherwise, you would be having other people compile all of this information, putting it into some type of usable format. [Now] everybody puts in their information and it's basically compiled. Then we can report on it as needed," he says.

Adding digital forms to AUHSD's registration process paid immediate dividends. "It has probably cut down the parent's time in that process at least in half," Greenwood says.

AUHSD is leveraging one of the [top 5 trends in education](#): cloud computing. Using Software as a Service (SaaS) products moves data storage from file cabinets and onsite servers to the cloud, making the data available anywhere there's an internet connection.

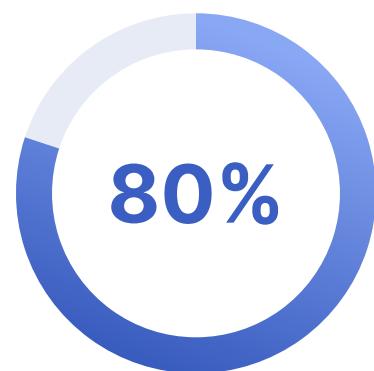
“Cloud computing is revolutionizing educational organizations by offering scalable and cost-effective solutions. Institutions are increasingly adopting Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) learning management systems and leveraging cloud resources from providers like Amazon and Microsoft. This trend not only reduces on-premises infrastructure costs but also enhances accessibility and collaboration among students and educators.”

— Ivana Ortiz Recalde, “Top 5 Trends in Educational Technology to Watch in 2025,” EdTech Digest, September 10, 2024

When teachers and instructors don't have to complete so many administrative tasks, they can focus on student instruction. And when data is stored in one secure location, it saves administrators time. Both help reduce stress levels.

Moving an entire school, district, or higher education institution to a comprehensive cloud computing solution can reduce burnout at every level.

Security and more: Perceived obstacles to tech conversion



Nearly **80%** of IT leaders in education have experienced a ransomware attack.

Given that technology offers a way to automate processes and reduce workloads in education, why hasn't every school, district, and university shifted to a completely digital solution?

Security is one factor. The vast majority of educational institutions adopted some sort of cloud computing out of necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic. But as digitally enabled campuses have become more common, data breaches have as well. Risk increases further when data is stored using a personal cloud service that isn't meant for large organizations and often has less stringent security measures.

In a 2023 survey, Sophos found that [approximately 80 percent](#) of IT leaders in both K-12 and higher education had been victims of a ransomware attack the previous year. Schools and higher education institutions are considered rich targets for cyber attacks, since online data storage is new for many of them. In addition, the sheer volume of potential users (instructors, students, and parents) adds to the likelihood of a breach.

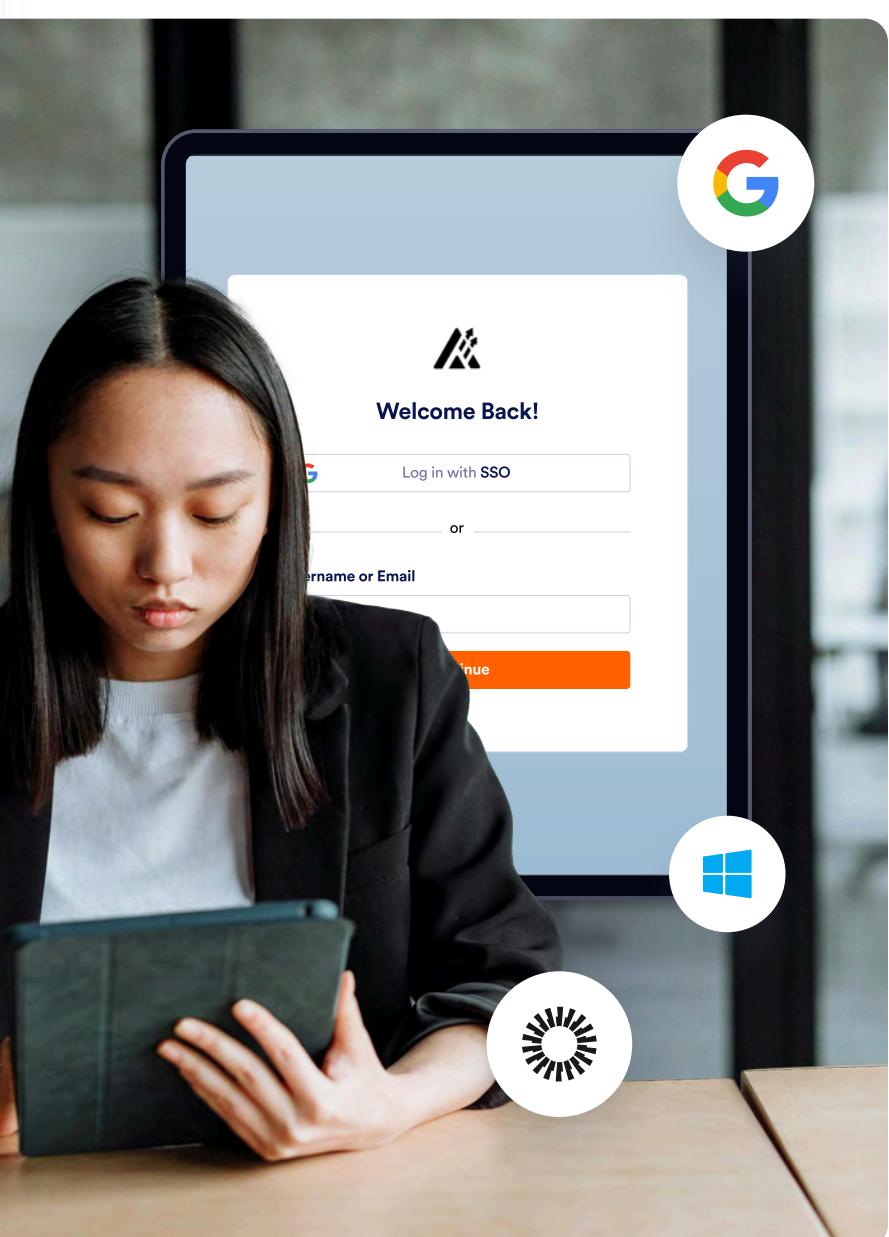
According to [Education Week](#), the best time for an institution to protect its data is before it signs up for a technology company's services. Schools, districts, and universities should scrutinize the company's reputation and security features before committing to using its services.

Once schools, districts, and universities commit to a tech service, they should establish a communication plan in the event of a hack. This plan should outline the procedure for notifying community members who may be affected. Institutions also need a backup plan to ensure that education can continue during a service disruption.

Avoid a data breach: Essential security features to look for

In December 2024, a well-known technology company announced that the data of [16,000 clients who serve 50 million students](#) in the United States had been compromised. The breach was caused by a compromised login credential.

It's important to hold routine training sessions on security best practices — such as creating a unique password, the danger of sharing passwords, and the risks of using the same password for multiple accounts. Also, share best practices for recognizing phishing attempts, which are



commonly emails from bad actors posing as a trusted individual or organization in an attempt to acquire login credentials. Don't limit this effort to staff; include students as well.

Such security training might have prevented the data breach in late 2024, but educational institutions shouldn't leave security up to chance. To be safe, IT professionals in education should look for specific security measures when choosing a cloud computing service.

Two-factor, or multifactor, authentication is valuable in combatting cyber attacks. Single sign-on (SSO) allows employees to access their cloud service provider using a single set of login credentials. They don't need to create their own unique account, username, or password, reducing the likelihood of a data breach.

Industry standard security features like a 256-bit SSL connection should also be on your checklist, as should SOC 2 compliance features and tools that meet the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If your institution needs to collect health data like students' vaccination status, you will also need a solution that provides a HIPAA server.

It's important to vet any potential software solutions. However, the data breach in December 2024 involved one of the largest education cloud services in the US, which shows that a company with a sterling reputation isn't enough.

These tips provided by the University of Tennessee's Office of Innovative Technologies can help your organization keep data safe:

- Strong passwords
- Data encryption
- Data classification and access control
- Regular backups
- Staying informed about the latest security trends
- Monitoring for suspicious activity
- Complying with regulations
- Implementing an incident response plan
- Regular security audits

An open line of communication with your cloud service provider will ensure you can resolve any data security issues in a timely manner.

Digital literacy concerns for school staff

For an industry accustomed to using paper for tests, worksheets, homework assignments, permission slips, and more, converting to a digital solution might seem unrealistic.

Before the pandemic, that was a much more legitimate concern. According to [a 2019 study](#) by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, just 57 percent of teachers were confident in using digital tools to collaborate online.

But COVID-19 changed things. According to a [Brookings report](#), the pandemic accelerated the use of technology in education. The research revealed that what was once a daunting task for some instructors has become an essential part of their daily responsibilities.

Having spent months gaining expertise with educational software, more teachers find it natural to integrate those programs into their classrooms today. Those teachers who used ed tech before report doing so even more now.

— Brian A. Jacob and Cristina Stanojevich, Rewiring the classroom: How the COVID-19 pandemic transformed K-12 education

Whether schools implement technology at an administrative level, in the classroom, or to improve communication with parents, instructors are more prepared to embrace technology than ever before.

Implementing artificial intelligence

When ChatGPT arrived in late 2022, it was easy for some to assume the worst-case scenario: Artificial intelligence would make it easier for students to cheat and perhaps even replace some human personnel. The reality is that AI is far from perfect, let alone ready to replace employees in education.

It is, however, a tech tool worth being excited about. [Education Week](#) reports that 68 percent of parents believe AI will have a positive effect on education, and 85 percent of students feel the same way.

K–12 teachers and administrators are overwhelmingly optimistic that AI can help combat burnout. Ninety-seven percent of teachers, principals, and administrators surveyed by the EdWeek Research Center [expect AI to change the teaching profession](#) within the next five years.

One high school science teacher says it used to take her as long as [10 hours to create a test for her students](#). With AI assistance, that same task takes just 40 minutes to complete. She says that she doesn't "get burnt out as much" anymore.

[Multiple teachers](#) surveyed by *Education Week* recommend trying a variety of AI tools to learn firsthand how helpful they can be. These teachers also say that teaching students how to leverage AI correctly is essential.

"The more you play with it, the more you'll be able to see its capabilities," says [one teacher](#). "The more teachers do that, the more they'll recognize that it's not something that's going to replace people. It's not something that's going to stop students from learning or stop the need for teachers. It's just going to be another tool."

Cost management

We already know that digitizing paper forms and documents can reduce costs. An added benefit is reducing paper waste.

According to [research from Adobe](#), converting paper documents to a digital format can save 1,530 gallons of water, 533 pounds of wood, 534 kilowatt-hours of energy, 84 pounds of waste, and 1,287 pounds of carbon dioxide for every 1,000 students.

The cost of cloud computing can vary greatly depending on district size, the type of tools needed, the service provider selected, and more. But clearly, transitioning to a digital solution will incur an additional cost.

Of course, a digital conversion could also potentially save institutions time and money.

An Adobe [report on implementing digital document solutions in education](#) calculated the savings for each paper document converted to digital, making these potential savings easier to quantify. Including the cost of printer cartridges, staples, envelopes, and more, the report estimates that savings can reach \$6 per document. That adds up to \$3,000 saved when a school sends the same document to about 525 students.

Potential savings at the district level are greater still. A report from [HeliosEd](#) states that a district with 1,000 employees can save roughly \$277,530 and 788 hours each year by going paperless.

Going digital will also likely save time and improve working conditions for staff. The new software platform will make it easier for staff to do their jobs, reducing burnout and the likelihood of turnover.

Each organization looking to convert to a cloud service provider should weigh potential savings against the cost of a new software service. Larger organizations should consider cloud services that provide unlimited access to automation tools, while smaller organizations may have more modest needs.

How to leverage a digital platform

Moving school operations online with a cloud service provider can save time and reduce burnout among teachers, administrators, and other school staff. Converting paper documents into a digital format is where most organizations start.

But the best no-code cloud software platforms offer much more. They can facilitate complicated workflows, organize data, foster seamless internal collaboration, improve communication with parents and students, and more.

Taking a closer look at the capabilities of cloud software services can give you ideas about how your organization can best leverage a chosen service provider. There are four main ways technology can help:

- Improving data collection
- Boosting efficiency for all school staff
- Enhancing communication with students and families
- Maximizing school funding

1. Improving data collection

Once forms and documents are online, your organization can start automating routine and mandated processes using automation tools from your service provider.

[Miami-Dade County Public Schools](#) uses automation to facilitate staff member requests for paid time off, professional development, and more. Once the online request form is submitted, the entire approval process is automated on the back end, so staff no longer have to send multiple emails to approvers and track the process manually.

Another tool that can streamline workflows is [single sign-on](#) (SSO). At AUHSD, multiple forms must be submitted for each student every school year. Administrators used [form prefill](#) to streamline this process. Forms are now prefilled with information, like the student's name and contact info, using SSO data stored in the district's cloud server.

[Collecting electronic signatures](#) via online form also streamlines data collection. [Odyssey Charter Schools](#) includes e-signature elements in its online forms. This makes the process of sending a document to parents and getting them to sign and return it easier and faster. Plus, the signed document is stored in the school's cloud server.

2. Boosting efficiency for all school staff

Reducing or eliminating repetitive tasks allows your organization to get more done. Software like Jotform Enterprise can reduce the time school staff spends sending and receiving email by [automating email notifications and confirmations](#).

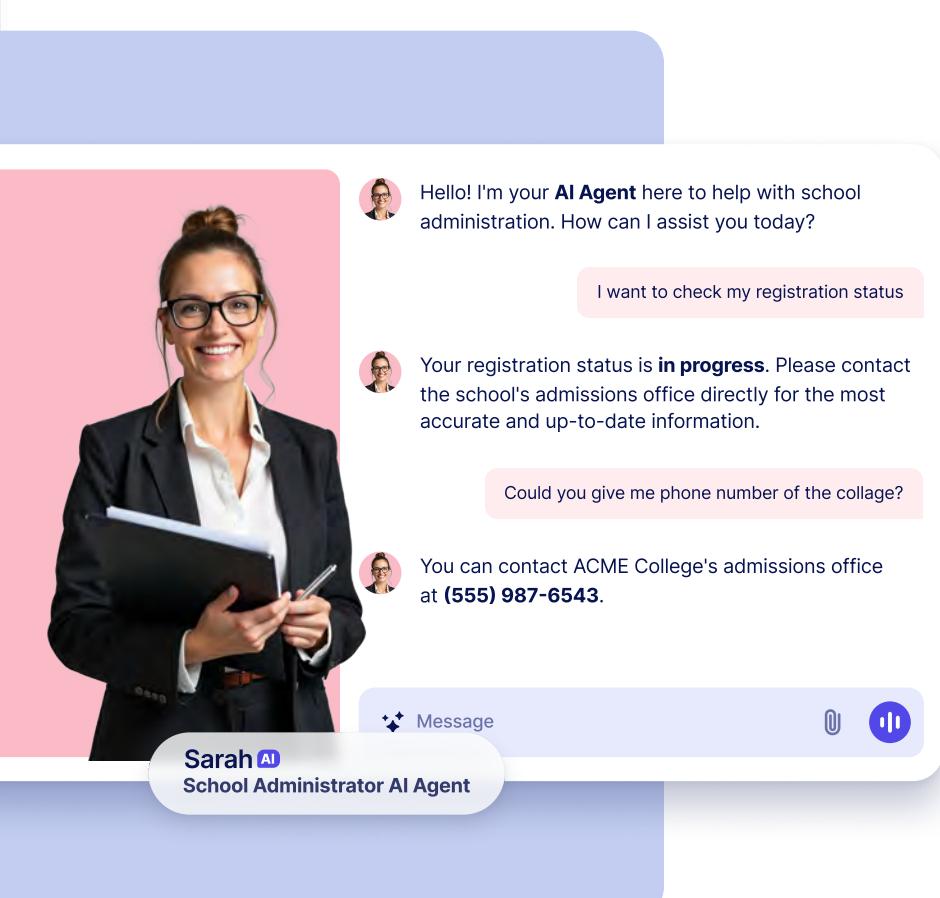
Another way for a school, district, or university to achieve peak efficiency is by enhancing collaboration among all staff members. The best cloud services offer [team workspaces](#) that are easy for everyone to use.

Access control within your team workspace also boosts efficiency. [The University of Michigan](#) assigns different levels of access for online documents, indicating which teammates can create them.

Similarly, a comprehensive cloud software system can eliminate data silos by consolidating the various software tools currently in use. This also improves security. With fewer tools, there are fewer logins, reducing the likelihood of a data breach.

The best cloud software is [no-code software with a simple drag-and-drop interface](#). AUHSD administrators enjoy building workflows, because they say it's so easy to do, it [can even be fun](#).

Artificial intelligence that's now built into most software can boost efficiency in a variety of ways. [AI Agents](#) can guide students and parents through the registration process, share information about an institution, and answer frequently asked questions, allowing staff to focus on their core responsibilities.



3. Enhancing communication with students and families

Cloud software can improve communication with students and families. Unlike static paper forms, online forms can display tailored messaging for different audiences.

Conditional logic hides portions of your online form until they are relevant to the person submitting it. Just set up predefined conditions as you build the form.

For example, a university could require a signature from a parent if the student is under 18 years of age. The signature portion of the form will either appear or stay hidden after the student provides their age.

No-code software is also ideal for creating mobile apps. Customized apps that contain all relevant forms, links, and information can keep the lines of communication open for every department. Apps also provide an invaluable, easily accessible resource for students and parents.

To enhance communication with students and families as a whole, take advantage of software that provides reports on incoming data. These reports can give you a holistic view of what students and parents are saying.

AI Agents can play a role here too. Once trained by a teacher or administrator to answer questions, take messages, provide resources, and more, they will be a source of information for students and parents 24 hours a day.

4. Maximizing school funding

We already know that moving paper workflows to a digital platform can save money and benefit the environment. With current trends in public school funding, it's even more important to reduce the impact on your organization's bottom line.

States provide 90 percent of funding annually for K-12 schools in the US. *Education Week* reports that state school funding can be "wildly complex," and school districts often get less than they need.

As for philanthropic funding, grant requests from K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions outpace available funds. The disparity is especially stark for postsecondary education, according to [Grantmakers for Education](#).

Cloud software can help schools, districts, and universities maximize their funds, better positioning these organizations in an uncertain financial environment.



SCISA saved \$7,000-\$10,000 per semester with Jotform Enterprise.

After the South Carolina Independent School Association (SCISA) moved to a digital platform, the organization automated 40 hours of clerical tasks each week. What's more, the association [reported savings of \\$7,000 to \\$10,000 per semester](#). Overall, SCISA says it experienced a 100-fold increase in productivity by moving to the cloud.

Mountain West Conference, an NCAA athletic conference that consists of 11 league members, spends [50 percent less time gathering and managing data](#) after switching to forms with conditional logic. Staff uses software to process reimbursement requests for third-party contractors, automate the hiring process, send feedback surveys, collect ticket sales, and more.

Conclusion

The data is bleak: 44 percent of K-12 professionals and 35 percent of higher education professionals suffer from burnout. It's getting even harder to hire and retain staff. Budgets continue to shrink.

But there are rays of hope. Vast majorities of both K-12 and higher education instructors enjoy working with students. And technology offers a good opportunity to eliminate mindless, repetitive work that, in many cases, prevents teachers from spending time on lesson plans and individualized instruction.

[Jotform Enterprise](#) is a versatile technology platform that can help educational institutions meet their needs today while preparing for the future. With robust team collaboration and automation tools, the platform makes it easy to collect information, gather e-signatures, streamline workflows, and more — all while keeping student data safe and secure. 



Learn more about how Jotform Enterprise helps healthcare organizations

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