What's the Role of Education Companies in Supporting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

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New Demands for K-12 Products and Company Practices

| About This Report |

Over the past year and a half, many school districts have gone through a vast reappraisal of their policies and perspectives on race and equity issues, as the killing of George Floyd and massive public protests compelled them to address enduring shortcomings in how they’re meeting the needs of the diverse populations they serve.

During that time, teachers have been asked to teach differently.

School discipline and behavior policies have been rethought.

Course content has been reexamined for bias and errors of omission.

Much has been written about how K-12 districts are responding to the demands of their communities by supporting an array of new efforts focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. In this special report, EdWeek Market Brief looks at the role that a critical segment of the school community — education companies working in schools — needs to play, to make DEI a reality.

The report is based on a nationally representative survey conducted in August and September of 931 district administrators, school principals, and teachers. They were asked what specific types of products and product features — in areas such as curriculum, assessment, and professional development — they believe will support their DEI goals.

In addition, district administrators and classroom educators were surveyed about their expectations for education company leadership, hiring, and public messaging about diversity, equity, and inclusion. We contrast those findings with the results of surveys EdWeek Market Brief has conducted of K-12 company officials over the past year and a half about the expectations that districts have put upon businesses for addressing inequity and racism, and the impact those standards have had on their operations, and their bottom lines.

Overall, the survey finds few meaningful differences among district administrators, principals, and teachers in their perceptions of companies’ work on DEI issues. They see many of the same unmet needs.

EdWeek Market Brief’s reporting team lends insights to the survey results with stories that draw upon the experiences of district leaders, as well as companies that are trying to bring DEI into their products and work environments.

This special report also gets at the backlash that has come with district efforts to promote DEI — including a recent surge in state policies aimed at restricting discussions of race in schools. In some communities, parents have angrily protested district approaches to teaching about racism (as well as COVID mask mandates) at local school board meetings.

Our hope is that education companies across the K-12 market will come away from reading this report with a sense of the possibilities for supporting DEI through improved products and policies — and with a commitment to rise to districts’ expectations.

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Executive Summary

- A strong majority of K-12 officials surveyed, 72 percent, say their districts are putting at least some effort into promoting DEI, though the commitment varies by the type of district. While 80 percent of officials from suburban districts say their school systems are supporting DEI, just 54 percent of their peers from rural/town districts indicate that.

- In districts where NO efforts are being put forward on DEI, the top reason for no action being taken, cited by 33 percent of those surveyed, is controversy around “critical race theory,” the academic concept that is not a part of mainstream K-12 curricula but which has nonetheless become a talking point in recent efforts to limit discussions of racism in schools.

- Asked which factors negatively impact their districts’ ability to promote DEI, the highest portion of respondents, 43 percent, say teachers are worried about taking on topics deemed controversial in class. The lack of support given to teachers to navigate difficult topics is a recurrent theme in this special report.

- When it comes to what steps a company could take to convince K-12 officials they’re taking DEI issues seriously, the highest portion of administrators and educators, 41 percent, say they would be impressed by data/results showing a positive impact on DEI stemming from the vendor’s specific product or program.

- K-12 officials offer mixed views in terms of whether they would be convinced that a company is taking DEI seriously based on the diversity of its staffing. A relatively high portion of those surveyed, 34 percent, say they would be impressed if a company’s product developers/content writers include people of color. But just 10 percent would be convinced a company is committed to DEI because the business’ CEO is a person of color.

- When asked about where instructional materials fall short in addressing DEI, the greatest portion of K-12 officials surveyed, 42 percent, point to lack of support for teachers in addressing those topics. But others see flaws in the written content itself: 38 percent say historical stories/references involving people of color are neglected.

- District officials and educators see classroom/formative assessments — strategies designed to help teachers guide classroom instruction — as the most valuable form of assessments in promoting DEI — much more so than summative tests or interim/benchmark tests. Measures of social-emotional learning are also regarded as a critical DEI tool, the survey found.

- In terms of specific types of assessment features they believe support DEI, more than 4 in 10 K-12 officials point to having assessments that can be delivered via a wide variety of tech platforms.

- Teachers and principals are regarded by K-12 officials as taking the most active roles in promoting DEI in their districts, with 56 percent and 53 percent of survey respondents, respectively, calling them leaders on those issues. More than 40 percent see superintendents as taking prominent roles, and 31 percent say the same thing about school board members.
District administrators and teachers strongly believe that professional development for classroom educators is the tool provided by education companies with the most potential to help bridge gaps among students of color and their white counterparts.

A new EdWeek Market Brief survey asked district administrators, school principals and teachers which products offered by education vendors are best suited to enhance efforts around racial diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The nationally representative survey finds that about half of K-12 officials say professional development has the most potential to reduce disparities among students of different races and backgrounds.

Educators also point to products and programs meant to support students’ well-being and facilitate communication with families as critical to supporting DEI.

More broadly, the survey reveals a deep anxiety among teachers about provoking a backlash among those who oppose DEI efforts. And it shows a hunger for curriculum, assessment, and PD tools attuned to the needs of diverse student populations, and to the educators trying to help them.

EdWeek Market Brief regularly conducts surveys of district officials on their buying priorities, and what kinds of products, services, and support they want from companies.

The new survey that anchors this report looks at the market from a different perspective. It asks administrators and educators what policies and practices convince them an education company is taking DEI seriously, and which products and services are most effective at helping districts curb inequities and create more inclusive learning environments.

As expected in the survey about which categories of products have the strongest potential to reduce disparities between white and non-white students, the biggest portion of those surveyed, 50 percent, point to professional development for teachers.

Another 43 percent say social-emotional learning programs can be effective in closing those gaps, and 35 percent choose parent-communication tools.

A Critical Weakness: Lack of Classroom Support

School districts and the companies working with them have faced enormous pressure over the past few years to more adequately serve diverse communities that feel their needs have been long ignored or misunderstood.

Racial unrest swept the country last year stemming from the killing of George Floyd, prompting many...
education companies to re-evaluate their products, make new public pledges of support for inclusivity in learning materials, and promote broader equity strategies.

Much of that activity is being driven by demands from districts. School systems have placed an increased emphasis on racial inclusivity and overcoming inequities and potential biases.

Yet, that district impetus is now colliding in some states and communities with a movement, led by conservative-run state legislatures across the country, aimed at restricting what schools can teach about race, gender, and identity.

“The market is just getting whipsawed,” said Arun Ramanathan, the CEO of Pivot Learning, an Oakland, Calif.-based education nonprofit that advocates for low-income students of color.

**Need for ‘Constant’ Commitment**

EdWeek Market Brief’s nationally representative survey was conducted online of 931 district administrators, principals, and educators in August and September by the Education Week Research Center. About 68 percent of those surveyed identified themselves as teachers. Another 18 percent identified themselves as district leaders and about 13 percent as principals.

In the survey, administrators and school leaders were provided with a list of types of products and services—from assessments to curricula to data analytics to special needs-focused resources—and asked which ones have the most potential to support district DEI goals, and to reduce disparities between white students and students of color.

That professional development ranks so high in the responses isn’t a surprise, said Tiffany Young, a former chief equity officer with the Washoe County School District in Nevada.

She cautioned that professional development with an emphasis on DEI shouldn’t be a “one-off and a checkbox.” When done properly, she said, it can be one of the most effective paths to helping school systems level the playing field for all students.

“There needs to be a constant approach,” said Young, who now runs a consulting firm that advises educational institutions and private companies about diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competency.

*Academic research has shown* that although districts are experimenting with different anti-bias training, the results are often ineffective or have a mixed record of success.

In most situations, the evidence suggests that training programs are helpful when they’re part of a comprehensive district strategy designed to address bias in a school system.

Nancy Gutiérrez, the president and chief executive officer of the Leadership Academy, an organization that helps schools evaluate equity, said all too often districts opt for a “one-and-done” approach when it comes to DEI training. That won’t work, she said.

A more effective strategy for education companies focuses on providing training and support to emphasize the need for multi-year strategies with their district partners, she said. It’s also important that vendors avoid a series of pitfalls when it comes to DEI training, Gutiérrez said.

“Ensure it’s interactive, ensure it’s experiential. Ensure there’s time for application,” she said. “There also needs to be an amazing facilitator who understands diversity and adult learning to deliver it. Otherwise they’re not going to learn it.”

**On-Demand Training Preferred**

In Minneapolis, the roughly 36,000-student school district last year approved new funding of $1 million annually for professional development specifically rooted in diversity and equity, said Eric Moore, the district’s senior accountability, research and equity officer.

“What I see in districts oftentimes is a commitment to do diversity work, but it’s not funded properly,” said Moore, whose community was at the center of protests over George Floyd’s killing last year.
“This type of PD is challenging because it has to be consistent and ongoing.”

EdWeek Market Brief’s survey reveals differences in how K-12 administrators and teachers want support delivered to classroom educators.

Asked which topics or approaches companies should emphasize when providing professional development around DEI, half of those surveyed point to recognizing and correcting unconscious bias in teaching.

Recognizing and addressing bias/stereotyping in academic resources follows closely behind, selected by 49 percent of survey respondents. And 43 percent say vendors should emphasize working with parents from diverse backgrounds when training teachers.

Asked in a different question about what form of PD or training is most valuable in supporting their DEI goals, the largest portion of respondents, 39 percent, say that face-to-face training in which all participants are from their school or district.

Nearly as many, 37 percent, say online resources that are available on-demand are the most beneficial for DEI-based professional development. One out of five — 20 percent — point to on-demand, asynchronous online training modules available to educators from multiple districts or schools.

And just 12 percent of respondents say that pre-scheduled, live, online training in which all participants are from the same school or district would be of high value for DEI training.

Unmet Language Needs

For Todd Davis, the chief academic officer in the 65,000-student Aldine Independent School District in Texas, instructional materials continually fall short when it comes to delivering on DEI in a number of critical areas.

The biggest weakness, he said, is not related to approaches to teaching about race, but rather to a very practical need: Publishers and curriculum providers failing to put forward resources in various languages, in particular for elementary school-level materials.

Located in suburban Houston, the Aldine ISD has a growing bilingual population. Its students speak more than 40 different languages, though most of them conversing in a second language are Spanish speakers, he said.

When the district was looking to adopt new literacy materials two years ago, the products it ended up choosing did not come in Spanish.

“We had to seek out additional resources,” Davis said. “Publishers need to be able to provide resources to students in their native language.”

The Aldine ISD is currently in the middle of an equity audit that could be completed by the middle of the school year, in which an external reviewer is examining the district’s practices, Davis said.

The district is hoping the audit will provide guidance on what steps it can take to improve disparities among students. And last year, the district appointed a “Black students outcomes” taskforce that brought to light inequities in the academic performance of that student population, he said.

“When you think of a specific strategy around anti-racism, culture, privilege and bias, we have not had one in terms of raising that up as an opportunity to learn and come together,” Davis said. The ongoing audit is expected to help the district on this front.

But Aldine is also in one of 12 states that have enacted bans, either through legislation or other policies, on what teachers can teach on issues of race, gender and identity.

Davis said his district is undeterred by the new law.

“We’re going to stand firm because this work is a

“What I see in districts oftentimes is a commitment to do diversity work, but it’s not funded properly. This type of PD is challenging because it has to be consistent and ongoing.”

ERIC MOORE
Minneapolis school district’s senior accountability, research and equity officer
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necessity in order to serve our students,” he said. “If the current drama does get lopped into any of our work, we will have our response and narrative ready to go.”

State Restrictions Taking Hold

Across the country, K–12 administrators and educators are mindful of policies like the one in Texas, though they have mixed views of whether the state actions will have an impact on their work, the survey shows.

At least 28 states so far, according to Education Week, have proposed legislation or taken other steps to restrict lessons on racism and sexism, including targeting the notion of critical race theory — a decades-old academic concept that sees racism as a social construct, embedded in legal systems and policies.

The EdWeek Market Brief survey found that 30 percent of respondents live in a state where a law or policy has been approved restricting how racial topics can be discussed.

The survey asked K–12 administrators and teachers who live in states that have adopted those policies about how the restrictions will affect their districts.

A little more than one-third of survey respondents — 35 percent — say they believe the policy in their state will lead their district to review curriculum, professional development and other products to ensure they are not violating the new policy.

Another 18 percent say it would cause their district to rethink how they word future bidding contracts for curriculum, PD, and other products. Sixteen percent say it will slow the procurement process.

Yet, a sizeable chunk of survey respondents aren’t very concerned about the new state policies. One-third of those surveyed say new laws or policies will not have any impact.

An Uneven K–12 Commitment to DEI

More broadly, the K–12 officials surveyed have differing views of their districts’ overall commitments to addressing DEI.

Thirty-two percent of those surveyed say their school systems are putting a lot of effort into supporting that work, and 40 percent believe some effort is evident. Seventeen percent say little support for DEI is being given, and 11 percent say no effort is underway.

The survey then asked the K–12 officials who see no evidence that their districts are focusing on DEI why no action is occurring. Worries about igniting controversy weigh heavily on district officials: 34 percent said controversies about critical race theory are a factor, and 27 percent point to resistance from the local community.

A Pulling Back Underway?

Ramanathan, of Pivot Learning, said demand for DEI-based curriculum remains strong, but the market “has pulled back” in some instances. Last summer, as protests over racial injustice erupted around the country, stemming from the killing of George Floyd, demand among districts for DEI learning materials was overwhelming.

That “sudden fury and surge in DEI work” has cooled off somewhat, given that discussions over critical race theory have become a flashpoint, he added.

“Moving forward, as some of these laws get more firmed up … you might start to see discussions about whether contracts aren’t approved because a vendor is CRT [culturally-responsive teaching]-aligned.”

And even in a relatively liberal state like California, the potential for a dust-up over lessons that weave DEI into them is still possible.

Ramanathan said one of the original frameworks for a state math curriculum drew the ire of some because it weaved math and historical culture, oppression and race.

Those objections resulted in California education
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Officials “stripping much of that language from the next round of math curriculum,” he said.

In other areas of the survey, K-12 officials also pointed to the importance of guiding educators through challenging work.

 Asked about where instructional materials, specifically, fall short in supporting their efforts on DEI, 42 percent of those surveyed say that those resources do not provide enough supporting guidance for teachers on how to address sensitive topics of race, diversity and equity.

Thirty-eight percent say historical stories and references involving people of color are missing or diminished, and 36 percent say learning materials do not speak to the experiences of our students of color.

Which Kinds of Assessments Support DEI?

The survey also asked district and school administrators and educators about another major set of products — assessments — and how they can support DEI goals.

In terms of the types of assessments most likely to support principles of DEI, the greatest portion of K-12 officials surveyed, 43 percent, said formative/classroom-based assessments.

Nearly as many, 40 percent, chose assessments of student social-emotional well-being — which in many districts, often take the form of surveys. A third of survey respondents chose performance-based assessments, and 26 percent said benchmark/interim assessments.

Just 21 percent see summative tests as valuable vehicles for supporting DEI.

In addition, the survey asked about the specific types of assessment features that are most essential to helping districts support DEI. The greatest portion of K-12 officials, 44 percent, say it’s critical that assessments be delivered through a wide variety of tech platforms, in order to support DEI goals.

Another 43 percent say assessments need to provide testing accommodations for students with disabilities. And 40 percent selected assessments utilizing topics/contexts that counter racial and ethnic stereotypes, and assessments with authentic visual/audio portrayals of racial and ethnic groups, respectively.

One of the major challenges with assessments is they have generally been problematic for students of color in terms of how questions are framed, says Ramanathan.

Vendors need to wrestle with whether test questions adequately speak to students of different backgrounds and whether a company’s assessments are designed with DEI in mind, he said.

“Among assessment providers those issues have been popping up,” he said. “Generally, assessments have been viewed as a mechanism for instructional adjustment and policy making. I don’t [think] it’s been viewed as a mechanism for cultural responsiveness.”

SEE ALSO:

- New Survey of Districts Gives Companies Direction on Addressing Racial Inclusion, Bias
- As States Restrict Teaching About Race, Curriculum Providers Watch and Wait
- The New, Tough Expectations Education Companies Face on Race and Diversity
Districts Look for Far-Reaching DEI Commitment From Education Companies

| By Emma Kate Fittes

More than a year has passed since the killing of George Floyd prompted a national reckoning that drove schools to demand more diverse and inclusive curriculum and led education companies to denounce racism and promise to improve their practices.

Yet many educators say they aren’t aware of changes the companies they work with have made since.

And when it comes to figuring out who is taking diversity, equity, and inclusion seriously, educators are largely focused on seeing the proof in the products and services that companies deliver, rather than hearing about new hiring practices or other policies.

A newly released EdWeek Market Brief survey asked district administrators, school principals, and teachers what steps they’ve seen education companies working in their school systems take to support DEI in the last year, from hiring an outside consultant to changing or recalling products where bias was evident — and which efforts were the most convincing.

The nationally representative survey draws from responses from more than 900 district administrators, principals, and teachers. The results offer insight into what actions are valued by educators, and how ed-tech companies can better serve their K-12 customers.

“As we’ve seen through history, hysteria around particular issues comes and goes,” said Ade Gachegua, Pearson’s diversity, equity and inclusion manager for products and services. “But there are fundamental principles about decency and ethics and behavior and human rights that are at the core of a properly and effectively functioning society.”

When it comes what schools teach, and how
What's the Role of Education Companies in Supporting DEI?

Education companies support that work, she said, “Why should education be any different?”

The 931 educators EdWeek surveyed were asked specifically what steps an education company they work with has taken to promote DEI over the past year.

A substantial portion — 32 percent — do not see any evidence that an education company they work with took steps to address DEI.

Of those that do see companies taking action, the greatest portion, 35 percent, say a vendor they work with introduced training or support to raise employee awareness around DEI issues, and one-quarter of respondents say a company provided additional resources focused on DEI to their district partners.

Only 7 percent say a company has updated, changed, or recalled a product where explicit or implicit bias was found. And 3 percent say a company they worked with has donated to organizations working to combat systemic racism.

The results likely don’t represent all of the steps that individual companies have taken to support DEI, a number of company officials and advocates noted. They simply reflect the actions that K-12 administrators and educators have noticed.

Why don’t the K-12 officials in the new EdWeek Market Brief survey see more evidence of companies taking action on DEI?

Educators Removed From the Products

Doug Lynch, a professor at the University of Southern California’s school of education, questioned whether those respondents have enough information to offer opinions about companies’ DEI practices.

Teachers know relatively little about the companies behind the products they use, especially when the products in their school systems are chosen by an administrator, he said.

Lynch is the managing director of USC’s Rossier Education Technology Accelerator, which has a particular focus on helping entrepreneurs of color and female founders of companies.

“What you don’t know is whether or not [the survey respondent is] the person either buying the product or using the product, Lynch said.

“Separate from that, you don’t know whether or not just because they’re buying it or using it, whether they know anything about it.”

A growing number of education companies are showing some commitment to the issue, EdWeek Market Brief’s previous research has found.

In a survey of 316 K-12 company officials conducted earlier this year, 61 percent said they introduced training or support to raise employee awareness of DEI. Sixty percent had revised their marketing materials or messaging, and more than half instituted goals or plans to increase the diversity of their workforce.

Those responses represent a significant jump from October 2020, when just 38 percent of company officials had introduced training on DEI, and 39 percent had revised marketing materials or put in place goals or plans to increase diversity.

In that same survey, a rising number of K-12 company representatives reported getting prodded by district clients about their DEI commitment. Forty-eight percent said they received questions from clients or prospects about if products meet the needs of diverse student populations, compared to just 22 percent the year before.

And the number of companies who said they lost a sale or an existing customer due to the perception that their products do not foster DEI doubled, to 8 percent.

The Proof Is in the Product

Gachegua, who leads several Pearson DEI initiatives, said it makes sense that many K-12 administrators and educators in the recent survey said they do not see evidence of education companies taking action on DEI.

Those K-12 officials aren’t trying to measure companies by their hiring goals or other highly-publicized milestones. Instead, they’re gauging companies based on their products, said Gachegua, who is spearheading the redevelopment of the company’s global content and editorial policy, and its editorial guidelines on race and ethnicity.

On that point, the EdWeek Market Brief survey asked administrators and teachers what steps companies could take to convince them that the business is taking DEI seriously. Nearly half the educators surveyed, 41 percent, say they’d be swayed if a company had data or results proving their product’s positive impact on DEI.

Thirty-nine percent say they look for a company’s plan to train teachers on how to identify and implement DEI practices, and 38 percent say they’re
convincing if company officials have shown how their product will specifically address their student population’s needs.

On the other end, just 17 percent of respondents say they'd be convinced that an education company is taking DEI seriously if the sales representatives they work with are people of color, while 15 percent say their opinion would shift if they believed a company that can talk about how its hiring practices reflect DEI principles.

Only 10 percent of respondents say they'd be convinced of an education company’s commitment to DEI if the CEO is a person of color.

Gachegua, a former teacher, said she would have answered the question similarly. She would have been inclined to judge a company by the impact its products have on how issues of race, diversity, and inclusion are portrayed.

Some of the other options, including having people of color in positions of leadership within education companies, would not be enough to convince her of an education company’s resolve on DEI issues. Nor is having people of color in executive roles enough to ensure that an education company is responding to district needs on DEI, she said.

For example, Gachegua noted that she’s a woman of color in a position of responsibility in her education company. But that “does not negate the need to ensure that we still have training [and] developmental practices” to support DEI in her organization, she said.

Look For Missing Perspectives, Experts Say

That’s not to say that having diverse representation in critical positions within companies isn’t important, officials in the industry said.

At Pearson, Gachegua said the organization is not only working toward having more diversity among the writers of content, but also giving those individuals the tools to better represent DEI in their products. That includes creating editorial guidelines for ethnicity, gender, equity, inclusion, disability, and the LGBTQ community.

Kelli Doss, chief talent and equity officer for Reading Partners, a literacy curriculum provider, looks closely at the executive leadership and the makeup of the boards of the organizations that her company considers partnering with, in evaluating their commitment to DEI.

“I’ve worked with a lot of organizations where people had the language, they had the framework and they were very quick to talk about equity and DEI in their presentation,” Doss said.

But she saw a disconnect.

“So you’re talking to me about diversity, and yet I’m sitting at a table where there are no people of color, where there may not be a woman.”

“There are a ton of perspectives,” she said, “that are missing from this conversation.”

Rachelle Rogers-Ard, an anti-racism consultant who works with school districts, said if she were in the shoes of a district official evaluating products for DEI, she would first consider whether students will see themselves reflected in the product.

But Rogers-Ard — the former executive director of organizational effectiveness and culture for the Oakland Unified School District in California — also recommends going a step further to look at a company’s diversity statement and who is in leadership and board positions, both for racial and gender diversity.

For companies that take this work seriously, Rogers-Ard said one of the first steps after releasing an anti-racism statement is to do some deep and ongoing training of their employees.

Companies should start by establishing shared terminology among their workers, she said. For example, everyone needs to know what racism is, and how inclusion is different than just having diversity. Then they need to look at their policies.

“Companies that are really, really about it understand this is a long journey,” she said. “It’s always interesting to me when a company is like, ‘We are totally diverse. We have done DEI, and we’re done.’ And I’m like how deep did you go? Is it just, ‘I’m going to make this surface statement’ or do we really want to make a change?”

Ultimately, companies looking to make real change shouldn’t be driven solely by improving their product or making more sales, she said. They should understand the broader benefits of improving diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organizations, and in schools.

“I know that their bottom line is sales, but DEIB work — diversity, equity and belonging work — should not be about ‘so that we can get our product better,’” she said. “We should improve our company, so we can improve ourselves, and ultimately make our places of work better.”
The District Landscape
Mixed Views from K-12 Officials on Their Districts' Commitment to DEI Issues

**Survey Question:**
How much effort is your district or school currently putting into promoting racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion?

**Link to relevant story:**
[https://marketbrief.edweek.org/k12-insider/school-districts-look-diversity-leadership-k-12-companies-get-us/](https://marketbrief.edweek.org/k12-insider/school-districts-look-diversity-leadership-k-12-companies-get-us/)

**INSIGHT:**
A strong majority K-12 officials say their school districts are putting at least some effort into promoting DEI — perhaps a reflection of the increased commitment that many districts felt compelled to make in response to demands from the community over the past year. At the same time, more than a quarter say their school systems are putting forward little or no effort.

**SOURCE:** Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
K-12 Officials From Rural Systems Much Less Likely to Believe Their Districts Are Putting Effort Into DEI

INSIGHT:
Suburban K-12 officials are much more likely than those in rural areas to say their districts and schools are putting efforts into supporting DEI. Those differences could reflect how suburban priorities have changed with shifting demographics: White students are no longer the majority of the student population in the suburbs of the nation’s 25 largest metro areas, according to federal data analyzed by the EdWeek Research Center.

Survey Question:
How much effort is your district or school currently putting into promoting racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Link to relevant story:
https://www.edweek.org/leader ship/the-dramatic-demographic- shifts-reshaping-suburban- schools-7-key-data-points-to-know/2021/03
THE DISTRICT LANDSCAPE

Less Than Half See Strong District Performance In Raising Achievement Among Students of Color

INSIGHT:
Less than half of K-12 officials give their districts high marks in improving achievement for students of color. This stands in contrast to the roughly 70 percent of respondents who give their school systems good grades for their overall effort in promoting DEI. When it comes to translating those efforts into actual classroom results, district officials see their systems falling short.

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
Teachers and Principals Seen as the Most Active on DEI Issues in Districts

**Insight:** Teachers and principals are viewed as the most prominent players in promoting DEI. It could be that school leaders and classroom educators are seen as especially focused on these issues, because they're working most closely with students affected by district actions, or inaction.

**Survey Question:** Which of the following people in your school/district are taking active roles in promoting issues of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion, overall? Select all that apply.

The survey results show that while superintendents and principals see themselves as active players on DEI issues, teachers are significantly less inclined to think of those administrators as playing big roles. By contrast, the survey results do NOT show any statistically significant differences in how teachers’ involvement in DEI is perceived. In other words, district administrators and principals tend to regard teachers as leaders on the issue, to a similar degree that classroom educators themselves do.

**Survey Question:**
Which of the following people in your school/district are taking active roles in promoting issues of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion, overall?
## THE DISTRICT LANDSCAPE

### Classroom Educators, and Superintendents Seen as Leaders in Promoting Diversity, Equity

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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-leaders</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one is promoting issues of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, or inclusion in our district</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief academic officer/person who oversees academics in the district</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/civic organizations</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief financial officer/person who oversees finance in the district</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief technology officer/person who oversees technology in the district</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSIGHT:**
As noted earlier, teachers are seen as taking the most ACTIVE role in promoting DEI in their districts. Their INFLUENCE over those issues is also viewed as great, but superintendents — often tasked with taking proposed policies on DEI before school boards — are almost equally influential players, the survey found.

**Survey Question:**
In your district, who has the MOST influence over promoting issues of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion?

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
Factors Holding Districts Back
## FACTORS HOLDING DISTRICTS BACK

### Standing in the Way: Lack of Teacher Prep — and Fears of Igniting Controversy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are worried about taking on topics deemed controversial in class</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are inadequately prepared to cover these issues in their classes</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance from the local community</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate funding</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgetary decisions are not made with DEI in mind</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of academic resources that do not promote DEI</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability within district to agree on goals around diversity, equity, inclusion</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance from the school board</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSIGHT:** Administrators and teachers clearly believe that classroom educators have a pivotal role in promoting DEI in their school districts. But they’re also worried that teachers are not prepared for this work, and they believe teachers are afraid of controversies that will emerge if they approach the topic in a way that angers a parent, student, or school board member.

**Survey Question:**
In your opinion, which factors negatively impact your district’s efforts to promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion? Select all that apply.

**Link to relevant story:**
In Wealthier Districts, Teacher Anxiety About Taking On Racial Topics Is Greater

Teachers are worried about taking on topics deemed controversial in class.

**FACTORS HOLDING DISTRICTS BACK**

Survey Question:
Which factors negatively impact your district’s efforts to promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Answer: Teachers are worried about taking on topics deemed controversial in class.

Link to relevant story:
- [https://www.edweek.org/leadership/a-5-million-fine-for-classroom-discussions-on-race-in-tennessee-this-is-the-new-reality/2021/08](https://www.edweek.org/leadership/a-5-million-fine-for-classroom-discussions-on-race-in-tennessee-this-is-the-new-reality/2021/08)

**INSIGHT:**
In more affluent school systems, there is much more concern about teachers getting blowback for taking on topics connected to DEI than there is in poorer K-12 systems. It could be that opinions are more fiercely divided within wealthier school communities about how to broach topics connected to race, thus leading to more anxiety over the content educators choose to cover.

**SOURCE:** Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
FACTORS HOLDING DISTRICTS BACK

In Districts Where NO Effort Is Being Put Forward on DEI, What’s Behind the Inaction?

- Controversies around “critical race theory” 33%
- Resistance from the local community 27%
- Teachers are inadequately prepared to cover these issues in their classes 21%
- Resistance from the school board 19%
- Teachers are worried about taking on topics deemed controversial in class 19%
- District administrators are not supportive of diversity, equity, inclusion goals 17%
- School principals are not supportive of diversity, equity, inclusion goals 16%
- Teachers are not supportive of diversity, equity, inclusion goals 14%
- State laws/policies discouraging teaching of issues of race in class 13%
- Budgetary decisions are not made with DEI in mind 6%
- Inadequate state funding 4%
- Inadequate district funding 3%
- Other, please specify 44%

INSIGHT:
In districts where K-12 officials see no movement underway on DEI, worries about controversies around “critical race theory” are a factor. (Even though evidence suggests that the academic concept has virtually no presence in K-12 schools.) Of the 44 percent of respondents who selected “other” and wrote in a response, several either voiced skepticism about the value of DEI efforts or how they would be implemented.

Survey Question:
Why do you think your district is not putting any effort into promoting principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion? Select all that apply.

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
FACTORS HOLDING DISTRICTS BACK

Rural K-12 Officials Are Four Times As Likely to Say Nothing Negatively Impacts Work on DEI

There are no factors that negatively impact our work in this area

INSIGHT:
It's unclear whether rural officials' confidence that nothing impedes their work on DEI is because they believe their districts can overcome any obstacles — or if no negative factors will impact them because they aren't pursuing those efforts to begin with. (One of the other findings in this report is that rural K-12 officials are less likely than suburban ones to believe their school systems are taking action to promote DEI.)

Survey Question:
Which factors negatively impact your district’s efforts to promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Answer: There are no factors that negatively impact our work in this area.

Link to relevant story:
State Restrictions Come Into Play
INSIGHT:
As of November 2021, 28 states have introduced bills or taken other steps aimed at restricting the teaching of “critical race theory” or limiting how teachers can discuss racism and sexism, according to an Education Week analysis. Twelve states have enacted these bans, either through legislation or other policies. Three in 10 K-12 officials who took part in EdWeek Market Brief’s survey say they work in states that have approved those restrictions.

Survey Question:
“Do you work in a state that has approved a law or policy restricting how racial topics can be discussed?”

Link to relevant story:

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
### The Impact of State Restrictions: Districts Will Review Their Curricular Materials, PD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It will lead us to review the curriculum, PD, and other products we use to see if they are in violation of the state’s policy</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will cause us to rethink the wording of future RFPs for curriculum, professional development, and other products</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will slow down the process through which we buy curriculum and other instructional products</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will lead us to do more outreach to parents explaining our choices of instructional materials and other products</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will stop using curriculum written for states/districts with different policies than ours</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'We will stop using certain forms of professional development</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will stop using certain instructional materials our district has in place</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will reach out to our existing vendors to request/demand they revise their materials</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will stop using certain forms of assessment</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Insight:**
Many K-12 officials predict that new state laws will lead them to review their academic materials and PD to ensure compliance. Yet just 5 percent say they will reach out to vendors proactively to demand changes to content — suggesting that administrators and educators are waiting to see what the true impact will be of the state restrictions.

**Survey Question:**
How do you think your state’s law or policy restricting how racial topics can be discussed will impact your school district? Select all that apply.

*Source: Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.*

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How K-12 Businesses See DEI
**For K-12 Businesses, Digital Equity Has Emerged as a Priority During the COVID Era**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased reliance on Zoom/Teams/other group collaboration technologies</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development provided virtually</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual meetings with districts</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New focus on equity in virtual environments</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions to address social-emotional learning needs</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at virtual events/online conferences</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater focus on delivering online supplemental curriculum</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More hybrid (in-person and remote) delivery of products for CORE subjects</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More intense focus on student learning loss</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More hybrid (in-person and remote) delivery of products for ELECTIVE subjects</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New focus on virtual outreach to parents</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater focus on delivering online core curriculum</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift in enrollment from public to private/parochial/alternative K-12 schooling options</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-level cleaning of schools/classrooms</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased demands on variety/frequency/quality of product support</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaled down summative/year-end/semester-end tests</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased downward pressure on pricing</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaling back of pilots of products</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A — I don’t believe any of these strategies or outcomes will have a lasting impact on the K-12 market, post-pandemic</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Insight:**
Many districts were forced to confront inequities in digital environments during the pandemic, as they struggled to deliver reliable online lessons. In a survey of K-12 business representatives conducted by EdWeek Market Brief earlier this year, education business officials said they believe overcoming online inequities will be a top priority that outlives the pandemic.

**Survey Question:**
Which of the following strategies, models, or outcomes that have taken hold during COVID-19 do you believe will have a LASTING impact on the K-12 market, post-pandemic? Please select ALL that apply.

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center October survey of 233 education company officials.

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What's the Role of Education Companies in Supporting DEI?

HOW K-12 BUSINESSES SEE DEI

Education Companies Say They’ve Revamped Their Training, and Their Marketing Materials, with DEI in Mind

- Introduced training/supports to raise employee awareness around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion: 61% (May 2021), 38% (October 2020)
- Reevaluated marketing materials/messaging/visuals to reflect diverse student populations: 60% (May 2021), 39% (October 2020)
- Instituted goals/plans to increase the diversity of our workforce: 54% (May 2021), 39% (October 2020)
- Reassessed our product offering for areas of explicit or implicit bias: 49% (May 2021), 31% (October 2020)
- Taken a public stance on issues of systemic racism: 48% (May 2021), 41% (October 2020)
- Hired outside consultants to offer suggestions around best practices to foster diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace: 29% (May 2021), 25% (October 2020)
- Donated to organizations working to combat systemic racism: 24% (May 2021), 13% (October 2020)
- Updated/changed/recalled products where explicit or implicit bias was found: 21% (May 2021), 14% (October 2020)

N/A: We haven’t undertaken any initiatives to address diversity, equity and inclusion in the last 6 months

INSIGHT:
Education company officials say their commitment to applying DEI to many aspects of their work increased from last year to this year, a period when public pressure on businesses to play a more active role was increasing. Just 11 percent say they haven’t taken any action on the issue — and that number has fallen over the last year.

Survey Question:
In the last 6 months, has your organization engaged in any of the following with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion?
Curriculum, Assessment Companies More Likely Than Others to Have Overhauled Marketing With DEI in Focus

**INSIGHT:**
Assessment companies, perhaps because of the scrutiny their products receive from K-12 districts, appear to be particularly focused on conveying their commitment to DEI through their marketing messages, according to survey data collected from those businesses. Curriculum companies also are showing a relatively strong interest.

**Survey Question:**
In the last 6 months, has your organization engaged in any of the following with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

**Answer:** Reevaluating marketing materials/messaging/visuals to reflect diverse student populations

**SOURCE:** EdWeek Research Center May survey of 316 K-12 business officials.
WHAT'S THE ROLE OF EDUCATION COMPANIES IN SUPPORTING DEI?

HOW K-12 BUSINESSES SEE DEI

Vendors Hearing Rising Concerns About DEI From Districts — And Some Companies Are Losing Sales

**INSIGHT:**
The number of education companies that said they are getting asked about how their products meet the needs of diverse populations doubled from 2020 to 2021. Not only that, but DEI questions from districts are affecting more companies’ bottom lines. While just 8 percent of education businesses reported losing a sale because of their work on DEI was deemed unsatisfactory, that number doubled from the year before.

**Survey Question:**
In the last 6 months, has your organization engaged in any of the following with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion? Please check ALL that apply.

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center June 2021 survey of 316 K-12 business officials; 2020 survey of a combined 1,700 company officials.
Expectations for Company Products
### A Path to Closing Racial Disparities Through Professional Development, SEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product/Resource</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development for teachers</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-emotional learning programs</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent communication tools</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English-language-learner focused programs</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources for school counselors</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/digital curriculum resources in reading</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development for principals</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/digital curriculum resources in social studies</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special needs-focused resources</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/digital curriculum resources in math</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom/formative assessments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/digital curriculum resources in science</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning management systems</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No products/services produced by companies have the potential to do this</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student information systems</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative (semester- or year-end) assessments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analytics on student usage of products</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INSIGHT:
Of the many types of products on the education market, K-12 officials believe the greatest potential for supporting DEI comes through those that deliver effective PD for teachers, as well social-emotional learning strategies, the survey found. The results reflect a common theme throughout the report: Many respondents see a need to help classroom educators develop the skills to lead complex and enriching discussions about race.

### Survey Question:
Which of the following products/services produced by education companies have A LOT of potential to help your district reduce disparities between white students and students of color? Select all that apply.

### Link to relevant story:
Shortcomings in Curriculum Materials: They Neglect the Stories of People of Color

- They do not provide enough guidance for teachers on how to address these topics: 42%
- Historical stories/references involving people of color are missing or diminished: 38%
- They do not speak to the experiences of our students of color: 36%
- Materials fail to address issues of racial bias/inequity head-on: 32%
- Materials fail to focus on the role of systemic, institutionalized racism: 31%
- Materials address issues of racial bias/inequity in oversimplified way: 30%
- Materials fail to present historical examples of racism in U.S. society: 29%
- I don’t believe the materials fall short: 19%
- In attempting to address issues of race, materials promote racism/racial bias: 18%
- They will fail to address the new limits on discussing race put in place by state officials: 13%
- Other, please specify: 12%
- They are not aligned with our state standards: 11%
- Photos/images in the materials are racially or otherwise offensive: 10%
- Materials present overtly racist depictions/descriptions of people of color: 9%

INSIGHT: When it comes to instructional materials’ biggest shortcomings in addressing DEI, the highest number of respondents point to materials not offering sufficient guidance to teachers. Others point to the flaws in the content itself — saying materials fall short in giving adequate treatment to the stories of people of color and fail to speak to the experiences of students.

Survey Question:
Where do instructional resources fall short when it comes to issues of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion? Select all that apply.

Link to relevant story: https://www.edweek.org/leadership/anti-racist-teaching-what-educators-really-think/2020/09

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
### Formative Assessments Seen as Promising Tools for Addressing DEI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative/classroom-based assessments</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments/measures of students' social-emotional well-being</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance-based assessments</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmark/Interim assessments</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No assessments or assessment features are critically important to promoting principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features meant to explain assessment results to parents</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative/end-of-year assessment</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments that incorporate/rely on games</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSIGHT:**
Many classroom-based and formative assessments are designed to allow educators to gauge student progress in real-time — and these measures are seen by K-12 officials as important DEI tools. Assessments of SEL, which are typically based on surveys of students’ well-being, are also viewed as being of high value.

**Survey Question:**
Which assessments or assessment features do you believe are critically important to promoting principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools? Select all that apply.

**Link to relevant story:**
What's the Role of Education Companies in Supporting DEI?

More Affluent Districts Less Positive on Assessments as Vehicle to Help With DEI

No assessments or assessment features are critically important to promoting principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity

Survey Question:
Which assessments or assessment features do you believe are critically important to promoting principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools?

Answer: No assessments or assessment features are critically important to promoting principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity.

Link to relevant story:
### Critical Assessment Features: Flexible Delivery Via Tech, Accommodations for Special Ed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessments can be delivered via wide variety of tech platforms (e.g., desktop, laptop, tablet, phone)</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing accommodations for students with disabilities</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic visual/audio portrayals of racial/ethnic groups</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of topics/contexts that counter racial/ethnic stereotypes</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility features beyond accommodations for students with disabilities</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companion printed formative/classroom assessment materials for students with limited home internet</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible times for administering assessments</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offline digital formative/classroom assessment component to help students with limited home internet</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No assessment features are likely to promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSIGHT:**
The ability to deliver assessments in a wide variety of tech formats is seen by K-12 officials as critical to supporting DEI -- a reflection of the broad array of devices that are in use in districts. The survey also reveals a strong interest in assessment content that is authentic and does not reinforce racial/ethnic stereotypes.

**Survey Question:**
In your opinion, which assessment features are likely to promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion? Select all that apply.

**Link to relevant story:**
Resources to Help Teachers Make Use Of Assessments Are Seen as Critical

- Multiple versions of questions that are relevant to different student backgrounds: 37%
- Instead of giving scores for test, providing targeted feedback on student’s performance: 37%
- Resources to help teachers incorporate assessments into their lessons/instruction: 37%
- "Differential item analyses" to determine potential bias in test questions: 35%
- Inclusion of language/concepts addressing racial issues across several different assessments: 31%
- Multilingual word glossaries: 29%
- Inclusion of language/concepts in assessments that are clearly anti-racist: 27%
- Students get to choose at least some of the questions they are required to answer: 26%
- Graphics to explain text of assessment questions: 24%
- Inclusion of language/concepts in assessments that allude to systemic racism: 17%
- No assessment programs/strategies are likely to promote racial/ethnic DEI: 12%
- Other, please specify: 10%

**INSIGHT:**
Asked about overall assessment strategies that can support DEI, district and school officials emphasized the need for assessments that account for their enormously diverse student populations. K-12 officials also want assessments that can support students’ academic growth – not just measure where they are currently.

**Survey Question:**
In your opinion, which of the following assessment PROGRAMS/STRATEGIES promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion? Select all that apply.

**Link to relevant story:**
**EXPECTATIONS FOR COMPANY PRODUCTS**

**Wealthier Districts, Those With Lower Minority Populations More Likely to Favor Assessments That Address Systemic Racism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion of language/concepts in assessments that allude to systemic racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50% or less low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion of language/concepts in assessments that allude to systemic racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 percent or more white student population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSIGHT:**
Districts that have less poverty and less diversity are, paradoxically, more inclined to want language/concepts in their assessments that allude to systemic racism, the survey found. It’s possible that K-12 officials in wealthier and less diverse districts are responding to the interests of parents who are skeptical of how inclusive their tests are.

**Survey Question:**
In your opinion, which of the following assessment PROGRAMS/STRATEGIES promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion?

**Answer:** Inclusion of language/concepts in assessments that allude to systemic racism.

**SOURCE:** Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
What's the Role of Education Companies in Supporting DEI?

Expectations for Company Products

PD Sought to Help Educators Recognize Bias in Classroom Materials — and in Their Teaching

- Recognizing and correcting unconscious bias in teaching: 50%
- Recognizing and addressing bias/stereotyping in academic resources: 49%
- Working with parents from diverse backgrounds: 43%
- Working with racially diverse student populations: 40%
- Working with linguistically diverse student populations: 32%
- Developing lesson plans and other learning material to reflect DEI principles: 32%
- Selecting curriculum that reflects DEI principles: 32%
- Interpreting data to produce academic improvements among diverse student populations: 29%
- Implementing DEI in the classroom based on printed descriptions of what effective DEI looks like: 18%
- Implementing DEI in the classroom based on watching videos modeling this skill: 17%
- Other, please specify: 16%

**Survey Question:**
Which topics or approaches should companies place a lot of emphasis on when providing professional development designed to promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) among educators? Select all that apply.

**Insight:**
District and school officials want PD that will help teachers correct the biases in their classroom work — and help them identify instructional materials that are off base. Four in 10 of those surveyed want help working with diverse student populations — a relevant skill, in an era where 53 percent of U.S. public school students are racial/ethnic minorities.

Source: Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
What's the Role of Education Companies in Supporting DEI?

EXPECTATIONS FOR COMPANY PRODUCTS

Non-White K-12 Officials More Likely to See Value of Focusing PD on Students' Diverse Language Needs

Percentage who want to see more PD focused on working with linguistically diverse student populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-White K-12 officials</th>
<th>52%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White K-12 Officials</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSIGHT:
The percentage of English-language learners in U.S. schools rose from 8.1 percent to 9.6 percent between 2000 and 2018. Researchers have shown that many teachers — particularly those leading general education classrooms — have little preparation to work with ELLs. EdWeek Market Brief’s survey suggests that non-white educators are especially hungry for PD focused on helping them work with students from different language background.

Survey Question:
Which topics or approaches should companies place a lot of emphasis on when providing professional development designed to promote principles of racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) among educators?

Answer: Working with linguistically diverse student populations

Link to relevant story:
- [https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-nations-english-learner-population-has-surged-3-things-to-know/2020/02](https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-nations-english-learner-population-has-surged-3-things-to-know/2020/02)

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
What Kind of PD Is Seen as Valuable? K-12 Officials Favor In-Person Training on DEI

- **Face-to-face training in which all participants are educators from my district/school**: 39%
- **Online resources we can review at any time**: 37%
- **On-demand, asynchronous online training modules available to educators from multiple districts/schools**: 20%
- **Printed resources we can review at any time**: 18%
- **Other, please specify**: 14%
- **Pre-scheduled, live (synchronous) online training sessions in which participants are educators from my district/school**: 12%
- **Pre-scheduled face-to-face trainings in which educators from multiple districts gather at a convenient, off-site location**: 12%
- **Pre-scheduled, live (synchronous) online training sessions attended by educators from multiple districts/schools**: 7%

**INSIGHT:**
District and school officials like DEI content being delivered through in-person training where their colleagues are present — perhaps a sign that they value peer-to-peer interaction when taking on those topics. There’s a hunger for online resources that can be viewed at a time convenient to educators. Pre-scheduled, live, synchronous trainings, by contrast, are not viewed favorably.

**Survey Question:**
When it comes to promoting racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom, what form of training or support offered by companies do you believe is most valuable for your district or school? Select two.

**Link to relevant story:**
https://marketbrief.edweek.org/exclusive-data/close-school-districts-switching-online-professional-development/
What's the Role of Education Companies in Supporting DEI?

**Expectations for Company Products**

District Leaders More Enthusiastic About On-Demand DEI Training Than Teachers Are

On-demand, asynchronous online training modules available to educators from multiple districts/schools

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**Survey Question:**
When it comes to promoting racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom, what form of training or support offered by companies do you believe is most valuable for your district or school? Select two.

**Answer:** On-demand, asynchronous online training modules available to educators from multiple districts/schools.

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**Insight:**
Teachers' relative lack of interest in on-demand forms of professional learning focused on DEI could reflect an interest in more engaging forums that allow for more real-time, peer-to-peer interaction. Administrators appear to see sessions that can be viewed anytime, anywhere as more valuable than classroom educators do.

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**District Administrators vs. Teachers**

- **District:** 37%
- **Teachers:** 14%

**Source:** Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
Expectations For Company Leadership
### What Factors Convince K-12 Officials That Education Companies Are Taking DEI Seriously?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company has data showing positive impact of their product on DEI</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company plans to train our teachers on how to identify, implement DEI</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company shows us how product will specifically address our student population</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company’s product developers/content writers include people of color</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company has plans to develop resources for teachers on implementing DEI</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company has public platform/portal to collect feedback its DEI materials</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product support/PD staff include people of color</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company’s marketing materials reflect the diversity of student population</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company has taken a public stance about supporting DEI</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company reviews its materials to determine if they reflect DEI principles</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least a few people of color are on their executive team</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company has an executive or director specifically focused on DEI</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales reps include people of color</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company has sponsored/funded events, resources, and/or initiatives on DEI</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company can talk about how its hiring practices reflect DEI</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CEO is a person of color</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing would convince me an education company was taking DEI seriously</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INSIGHT:
When they’re looking for signs of a company’s commitment to DEI, K-12 officials look to staffing — to a point. They’re particularly impressed if businesses’ product development/content teams include people of color — perhaps because it suggests the core of what’s being sold is being crafted with those principles in mind. On the other hand, just a small percentage — 10 percent of those surveyed — say they were specifically persuaded by the company CEO being a person of color.

### Survey Question:
Which of the following steps would convince you that an education company you were doing business with or considering doing business with, was taking racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion seriously? Select all that apply.

### Link to relevant story:
## Expectations for Company Leadership

### Many District Leaders See Little Diversity At the Top of Education Companies

What share of the K-12 companies you’ve hired for academic services in the last three years have been led by CEOs or other executives who are people of color?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>No companies meet this standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44%</td>
<td>Less than half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>About half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Three-quarters or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>We have not hired an organization to provide academic-focused products or services in the last three years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Insight:**
Nearly 20 percent of district administrators surveyed say none of the companies they have hired recently have been led by CEOs of color. More than 40 percent say that less than half of the vendors they hired are represented at the top by people of color. (As noted on a previous slide, however, few K-12 officials say they judge companies’ DEI commitment by whether the CEO is a person of color.)

**Survey Question:**
In the last three years, what share of the organizations your district has hired to provide academic-focused products or services (e.g., curriculum, professional development, ed tech) have been led by CEOs or other executives who are people of color?

**Link to relevant story:**
- [https://marketbrief.edweek.org/analytics-view/education-companies-can-get-better-finding-diverse-unexpected-candidates](https://marketbrief.edweek.org/analytics-view/education-companies-can-get-better-finding-diverse-unexpected-candidates)
**EXPECATIONS FOR COMPANY LEADERSHIP**

### In-Person Training From Companies Seen As Helpful to Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced training/supports to raise employee awareness around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have NOT seen evidence that a company that produces an education-related product or service I use has taken steps in the last year to address DEI</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided new or additional resources to partners that address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken a public stance on issues of individual or systemic racism</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reevaluated marketing materials/messaging/visuals to reflect diverse student populations</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instituted goals/plans to increase the diversity of its workforce</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired outside consultants to offer suggestions around best practices to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassessed its product offering for areas of explicit or implicit bias</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated/changed/recalled products where explicit or implicit bias was found</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated to organizations working to combat systemic racism</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSIGHT:**
A third of K-12 officials surveyed say companies have introduced trainings of their business staff focused on raising awareness of DEI. That’s presumably work that vendors are eager to promote among K-12 officials they’re working with. However, it’s noteworthy that nearly a third of respondents say they haven’t seen ANY evidence that a company they work with has taken steps on DEI.

**Survey Question:**
In the last year, what steps has a company that produces an education-related product or service you use taken to promote racial/ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion? Select all that apply.

**Link to relevant story:**

**SOURCE:** Education Week Research Center survey of district administrators, principals, and teachers.
Key Contributors

Sean Cavanagh is the managing editor of EdWeek Market Brief, where he leads a team of editorial staff focused on delivering actionable intelligence about the needs and priorities of school districts to companies and other organizations working in the K-12 market. Before he began working on business and technology issues, he covered a variety of beats for Education Week, including math and science education, charter schools and school choice, state policy, and federal policy. Prior to joining Education Week, he was a reporter for daily newspapers in Tennessee and Florida.

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Maurice Bakley, publisher of EdWeek Market Brief. In this role, he oversees the team creating original reporting, actionable analysis and proprietary research to inform the K-12 business community. Maurice also leads Education Week’s overall revenue strategy and customer service offerings for K-12 Districts, K-12 Industry and Higher Education.

Holly Kurtz directs the EdWeek Research Center, which produces standalone studies as well as analyses for Education Week and special reports such as Quality Counts. Holly began working at Education Week in 2014 after earning a Ph.D. in 2013 from the University of Colorado at Boulder’s School of Education and completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Colorado at Denver’s School of Public Affairs. Prior to attending graduate school, she spent 11 years covering education and other topics for newspapers in Florida, Alabama, and Colorado.

Sterling Lloyd is the assistant director of the EdWeek Research Center. In this capacity, he manages data analyses and the development of surveys for data-driven journalism, including the high-profile Quality Counts report cards. Since joining the research center in 2005, he has authored articles on college- and work-readiness, school finance, student achievement, and other prominent topics in K-12 education.

Alex Harwin is a quantitative research analyst for the EdWeek Research Center. She works on a variety of projects, from marquee annual reports such as Quality Counts to data-driven reporting in collaboration with the Education Week newsroom. She received her education at Stanford and UT with degrees in Sociology and policy analysis.

Liz Yap is the lead designer for the report and data visualization.
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