

The End of K-12 Stimulus Funding

What Comes Next?



December 2023

EdWeek
Market Brief®

Anxiety About the Unknown, And Major Challenges Ahead

| About This Report

The nation's schools have never seen a rescue package on par with the torrent of federal stimulus aid delivered to them over the past three years.

Since March of 2020, federal lawmakers and two presidential administrations have approved three different stimulus programs totaling nearly \$190 billion for the nation's K-12 schools. (To put that in context, the U.S. Department of Education's total yearly discretionary budget across all programs is about \$80 billion.) Congress placed relatively few restrictions on how school districts could spend their stimulus money, with the exception of a requirement that they use a portion of the third package to help students overcome learning loss.

Soon school districts will come to a critical decision point. They must obligate, or commit their remaining stimulus aid by September 2024, and by January 2025 they're supposed to have spent all of that money – though federal officials recently provided states and districts with new flexibility to go beyond those deadlines.

This report looks at how school districts will make critically important decisions about stimulus aid over the next year. But it also looks beyond that, exploring which programs are most likely to be cut when the money runs out, what alternate sources of funding districts will turn to, who in K-12 systems will be making decisions about post-stimulus policy, and how education companies are attempting to make their case to districts to keep their products off the chopping block.

The report is based primarily on nationally representative surveys of K-12 decision-makers conducted throughout 2023 by the EdWeek Research Center, as well as on analysis and insights

provided by *EdWeek Market Brief's* editorial team.

Many of the same priorities districts have had for spending stimulus dollars—in social-emotional learning, summer learning, and tutoring—are also those most at risk of getting scaled back once the aid runs out, the survey finds.

School district officials see major challenges ahead. Nearly 7 in 10 of those surveyed see negative academic consequences coming from the loss of emergency aid. Given those high stakes, it's not surprising that our research finds that district administrators and school leaders have ideas about how they'll judge which products and programs they'll keep or jettison, once federal aid runs out.

EdWeek Market Brief's editorial team will continue to track the last chapter of the stimulus era, and how school systems transition back to operating without that money—even as many of their biggest needs persist. Let us know how your organizations are preparing for this shift, and the intel you're looking for from us.

Sean Cavanagh
Managing Editor
EdWeek Market Brief
scavanagh@educationweek.org

Maurice Bakley
Publisher
EdWeek Market Brief
mbakley@educationweek.org

Table Of Contents

About This Report	2
Executive Summary	4
Inside ESSER: Important Facts, Key Deadlines	5-6
Stimulus Spending Priorities	7-13
Preparing for the Loss of Funding	14-19
How Districts And Vendors Will Respond	20-31
Key Contributors	32
About <i>EdWeek Market Brief</i>	33

Executive Summary

- School systems have ploughed through a significant amount of their stimulus aid already. About 8 in 10 say they have gone through **at least 75 percent** of their money. Only a small minority say the bulk of their funding is unspent. *(Page 8)*
- Districts are spending their federal stimulus funding **most heavily on learning recovery, particularly in early grades, as well on social-emotional learning**. Across product categories, district officials expect to spend less through the stimulus, a drop almost certainly attributable to their anticipation of the expiration of emergency aid after next year. *(Pages 9, 10)*
- Asked **about** what stimulus-funded products and programs they're most likely to cut, K-12 officials point to **summer learning, devices, tutoring, and student mental health/wellness, as well as SEL**. Those areas have also been top district priorities for spending stimulus dollars, suggesting that areas that saw a surge of interest because of stimulus availability have been made vulnerable by that money going away. *(Page 15-17)*
- When stimulus aid goes away, district and school leaders **predict it will have major academic consequences**. Two-thirds of those surveyed say the loss of that aid will have a negative impact on learning over the next two years. *(Page 21)*
- Many businesses are planning **proactive strategies to avoid being adversely affected by the loss of federal aid**. More than a third of K-12 businesses have planned or conducted marketing campaigns to tout their products' value, and another third have helped districts identify alternate sources of aid. *(Page 24-25)*
- Districts that are looking for alternate sources of money once stimulus aid runs out are most likely



- to **turn to their general fund budgets** (43 percent indicated they would do this), followed by state funding (27 percent) and federal Title I dollars. But the largest portion of those surveyed see no viable alternative. *(Pages 23-24)*
- **Superintendents are the K-12 officials who will have the most influence**, by far, in deciding what districts do when stimulus funding expires, followed by principals. But the most senior officials in charge of teaching and learning are highly likely to influence that process in large school systems. *(Pages 27-28)*
- Districts will most heavily weigh **academic outcomes and the ability to pay for stimulus-funded projects with state or local funds**, in deciding whether to continue to fund them after emergency aid expires. Teacher feedback and usage data will also matter a lot. *(Pages 29-30)*

Inside ESSER: Important Facts, Key Deadlines

| Emma Kate Fittes

As the end of federal COVID stimulus funding draws closer, school districts and education companies are trying to keep track of deadlines for spending their share of relief aid, and deciphering if there will be any additional leeway in allocating the massive infusion of money.

Over the course of three rounds of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funding, the federal government has funneled about \$190 billion to districts across the country. One of the central goals was to help mitigate pandemic-era learning loss, and districts were given a lot of leeway in how they spent the funding.

Districts used the money for different approaches to tutoring, expanded summer school, and significant investments in social-emotional learning, among other needs. But managing the significant flow of aid hasn't been easy for districts. And as time and money runs out, K-12 officials are now facing tough decisions about what to keep and what to cut.

Here's what we know about the impending ESSER deadlines, possible extensions, and where school districts stand in their spending.

What is the deadline for obligating the last round of federal funds?

Districts will need to obligate, or commit, the last of their federal relief dollars **by Sept. 30, 2024**. This is the original deadline that was set when the funding was released, and it has not changed.

This is an especially important deadline for companies looking to sell to new district clients, as that reserve of money will essentially be done. After this date, vendors

should not expect districts to commit to spending on newly proposed products and services using stimulus funding.

However, this does not mean that every dollar districts have received for stimulus projects has to be spent by that point. The obligation deadline simply requires that districts have committed all the funds in their spending plans.

What's the deadline for districts to actually spend the ESSER dollars?

Under the ESSER guidelines, districts are required to liquidate their federal relief money 120 days after the obligation deadline, which would be **by Jan. 28, 2025**.

That's the original deadline the federal government set when rolling out the final round of funds, and it has generally been the target date districts have kept in focus. However, the U.S. Department of Education has recently opened the door for some flexibility.

What "flexibility" for the spending deadline has the federal government allowed?

In some cases, districts could be granted additional time to liquidate their federal aid—known as "late liquidation"—although it will be up to states to decide which districts are eligible. The Department of Education [announced in September](#) that it would approve extensions of the liquidation deadline if individual states request it.

Specifically, if approved by their states, districts could have **up to 14 additional months** beyond the January 2025 deadline to liquidate their ESSER funding.

Inside ESSER: Important Facts, Key Deadlines

Continued from previous page

What do districts or states have to do to receive an extension?

The process requires that **states submit a written request** asking for more time for either the entire state, or on behalf of specific districts.

In their request, states must show that ESSER funds are “properly obligated,” according to a [federal memo](#), meaning they were bookmarked for allowable expenses by the September obligation deadline. States will also be held accountable for continuing oversight and documentation of district’s spending and attest that districts receiving the flexibility are “low-risk entities.”

Details on exactly how this process will look have yet to be released, but districts and states are being encouraged to start signaling their interest now.

This does not change the deadline for obligating money—it’s still Sept. 30, 2024.

Can districts sign multi-year contracts funded by ESSER with vendors that extend beyond the deadlines?

In short: **yes, they can**. But there are some considerations.

First, districts have to pay the vendor for the entirety of the contract before the district’s deadline for liquidating funds—whether that be in January 2024 or a later liquidation deadline—according to a [June federal memo](#).

The services can continue past that deadline, but the money still must be spent within that window.

There’s also a hard limit on how long these contracts can stretch. Multi-year contracts cannot extend more than four years after the obligation date, which would be September 2028.

Districts are being encouraged to document why signing a multi-year contract makes sense. For example, they might note that the per-month cost is lower for a longer contract, or that they need a vendor to continue providing support or software over the years.

Some multi-year contracts could be found “unallowable” during state or federal audits if the timeline is “lengthy or unreasonable” or the cost is “not reasonable or necessary,” the federal guidance says.

How many districts still have ESSER dollars left to spend?

While a year isn’t a lot of time in the work of K-12 budgeting, some districts still have money to spend. An April EdWeek Research Center survey found that more than half of school systems, 52 percent, [have spent about three-quarters of their stimulus aid](#). Just 27 percent of districts have spent all of it. (See page 8.)

Will there be any new federal funding to mitigate learning loss?

As of now, there is no plan for continuing federal aid specifically for pandemic-era learning loss. Districts are generally looking for ways to fit successful, ESSER-funded initiatives within existing funding sources, such as federal Title I money or their general fund budget. (The Title I program has long given districts flexibility to cover a broad array of needs, including in academic intervention.) And some are calling on state legislatures to increase funding for K-12 education.

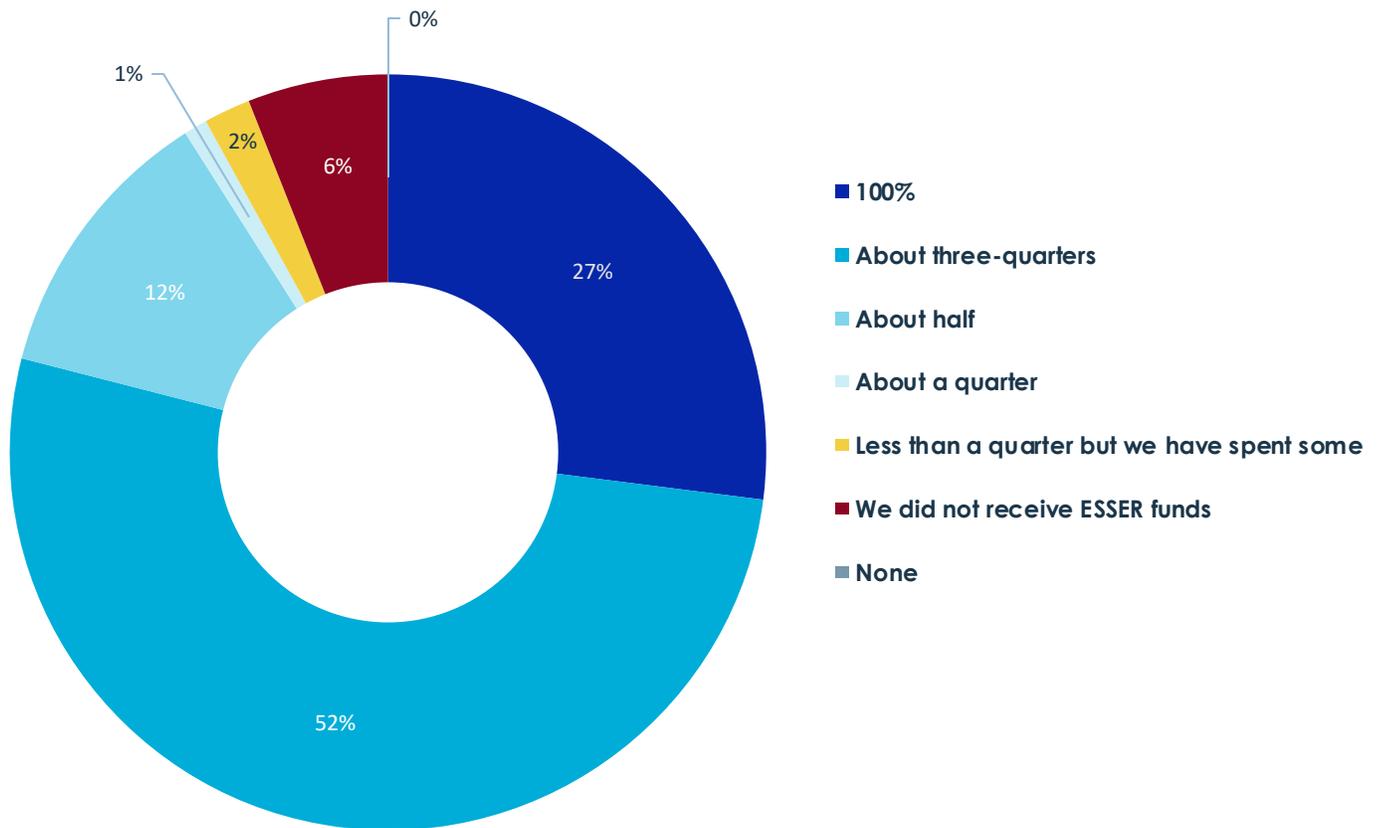
The Department of Education recently announced plans to collect ideas from state officials about how to continue “high-leverage” academic recovery strategies—though it’s unclear what the outcome of that effort will be.

Participating states were [asked last month](#) to submit their interest and prepare to assemble teams of 5-7 members to join in the yearlong discussions.

Stimulus Spending Priorities

STIMULUS SPENDING PRIORITIES

A Quarter of District/School Leaders Have Spent All Stimulus. Nearly 8 in 10 Have Spent Strong Majority



INSIGHT:

For many school systems, the end of stimulus funding is squarely in focus. One Arizona school district finance official recently told *EdWeek Market Brief* that teams of administrators in curriculum and other areas in his district have been whittling down academic-recovery software programs, and the district has ended its use of many temporary personnel. He estimated that 80 cents of every stimulus dollar his system has spent has gone to people costs.

Survey Question:

How much of your Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds have you spent?

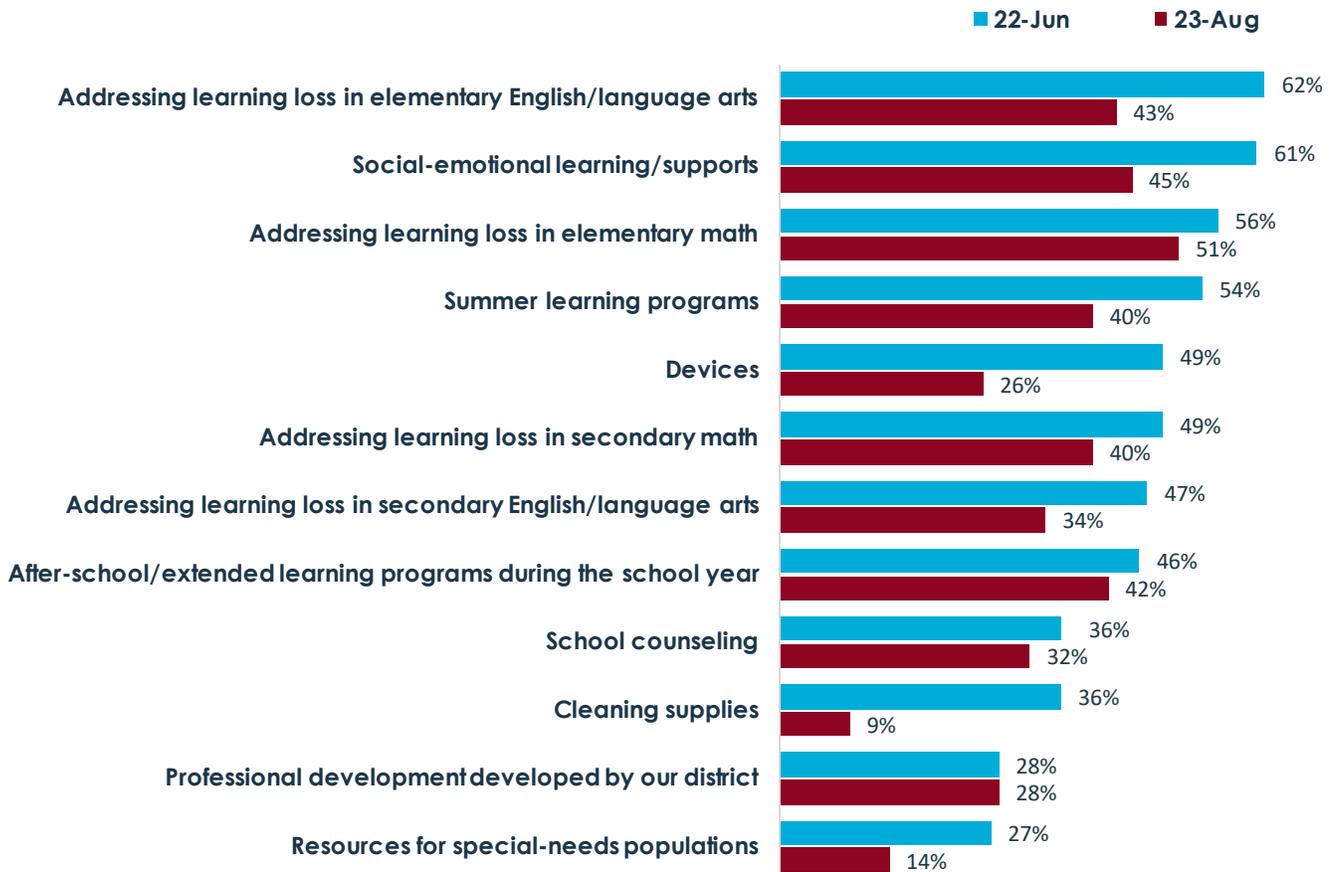
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/k12-insider/partys-funding-cliff-looks-like-one-district/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center nationally March/April representative survey of 277 district leaders and 185 school leaders.

STIMULUS SPENDING PRIORITIES

Early Grades Academy Recovery A Priority for Spending Stimulus Money



INSIGHT:

Academy recovery in early grades—particularly in math— has remained a consistent priority for school districts in spending emergency aid. Across product categories, K-12 officials say they plan to use less stimulus funding, a downward shift that likely reflects their understanding that the money is going away. Some stimulus categories, such as devices, have taken a pronounced hit, though other *EdWeek Market Brief* surveys show little lessening of overall appetite for digital tools. It simply appears that districts are preparing to seek other funding sources to cover that, and other needs.

Survey Question:

What does your district plan to fund with federal stimulus funding? Select all that apply.

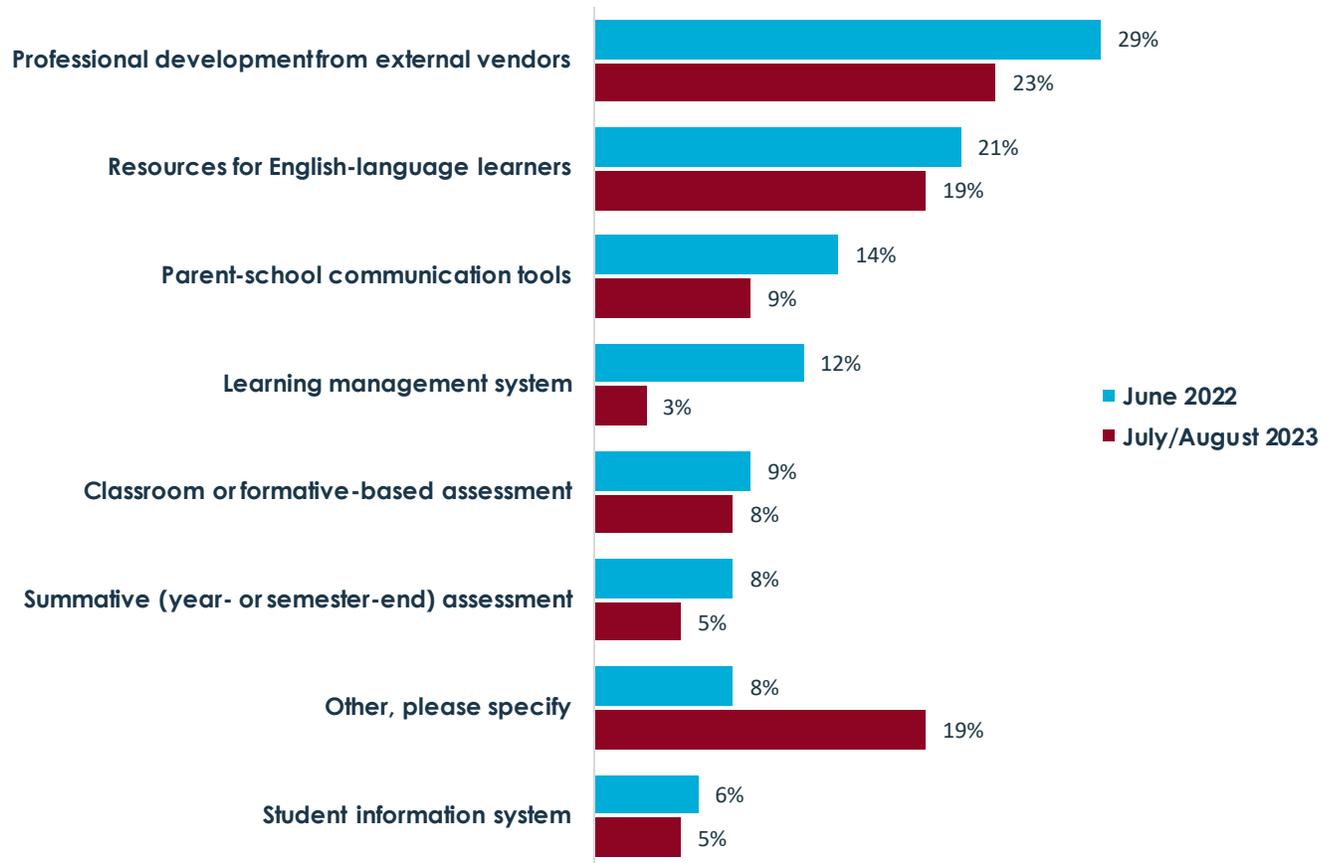
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/exclusive-data/decision-point-school-districts-will-spend-rest-stimulus-money/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center nationally representative July/August 2023 survey of 161 district leaders; June 2022 of 280 district leaders.

STIMULUS SPENDING PRIORITIES

Stimulus Priorities (Continued): Interest in ELL Supports Remain Strong



INSIGHT:

Roughly 1 in 5 district leaders say they plan to spend stimulus funding on support for English-language learners, a sign of the urgent and evolving needs among those populations. Stimulus spending on learning management systems, meanwhile, fell, perhaps because districts committed to those investments earlier in the process of spending federal aid. The substantial number of “other” investments named by respondents included salaries/workforce retention and HVAC systems in schools.

Survey Question:

What does your district plan to fund with federal stimulus funding? Select all that apply.

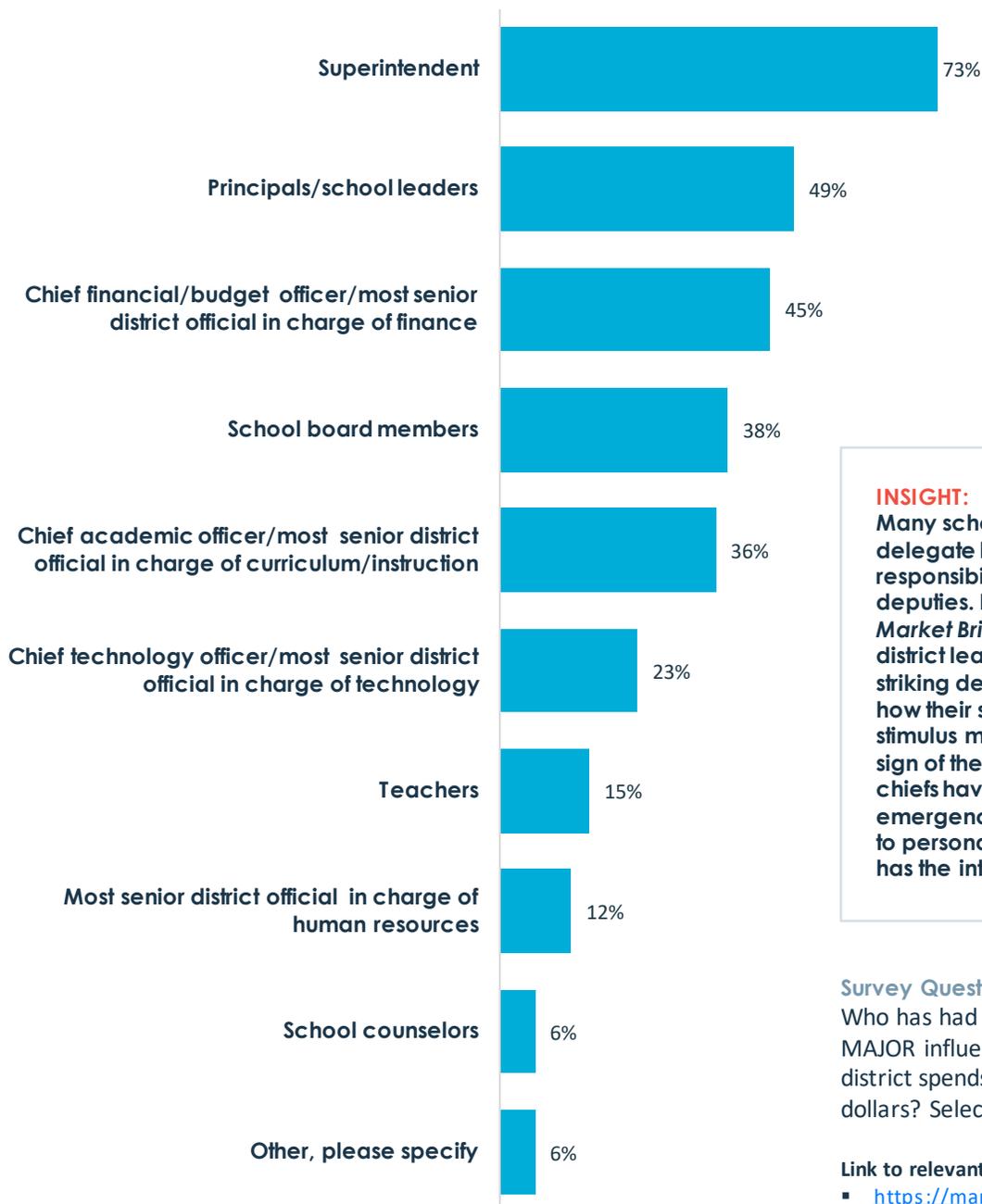
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/analysts-view/districts-ramping-standards-ell-materials-heres-meet-rising-expectations/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center nationally representative July/August 2023 survey of 161 district leaders; June 2022 of 280 district leaders.

STIMULUS SPENDING PRIORITIES

Which District and School Leaders Influence Stimulus Spending Decisions?



INSIGHT:
Many school superintendents delegate key budgetary responsibilities to their top deputies. But a recent EdWeek Market Brief survey shows that district leaders maintain a striking degree of influence over how their systems are spending stimulus money. It's perhaps a sign of the importance districts chiefs have assigned to federal emergency aid, and their desire to personally ensure the money has the intended impact.

Survey Question:
Who has had and/or will have a MAJOR influence in deciding how your district spends federal COVID stimulus dollars? Select all that apply.

Link to relevant story:

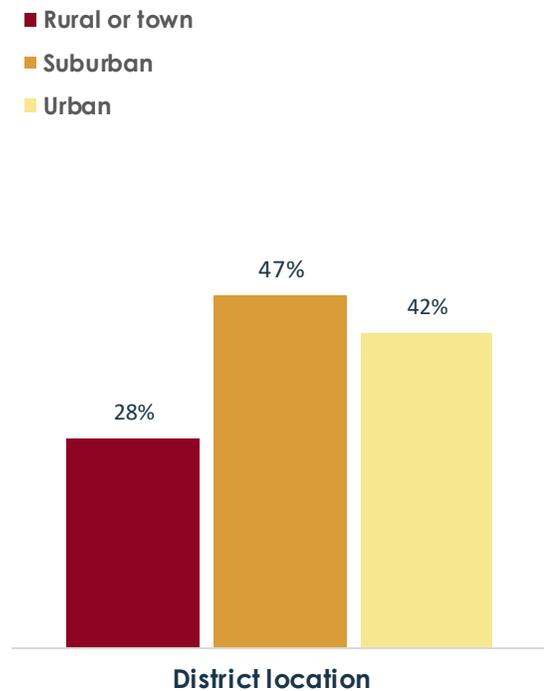
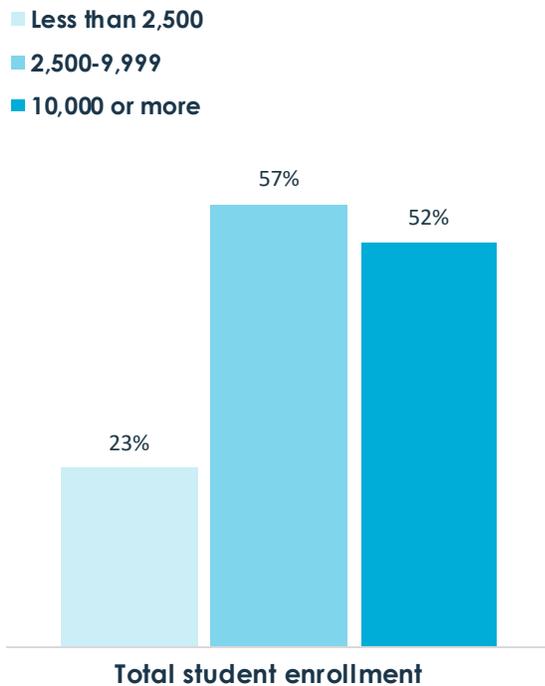
- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/special-report/new-special-report-4-key-decision-makers-shape-k-12-purchasing-policy/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February 2023 nationally representative survey of 296 district administrators and 284 school principals.

STIMULUS SPENDING PRIORITIES

In Large, and Urban Districts, CAOs Have Influence Over Stimulus Spending

Top influencers over district spending of federal COVID stimulus dollars? Chief academic officer/most senior district official in charge of curriculum/instruction.



INSIGHT:

Chief academic officers have greater influence in bigger school systems, and in urban ones, on stimulus spending decisions. The finding is consistent with other EdWeek Market Brief survey research, which tends to show that larger school systems—which are more likely to have top administrators who specialize in curriculum and academic content—cede significant power to CAOs to guide purchasing of teaching and learning resources.

Survey Question:

Who has had and/or will have a MAJOR influence in deciding how your district spends federal COVID stimulus dollars? Select all that apply.

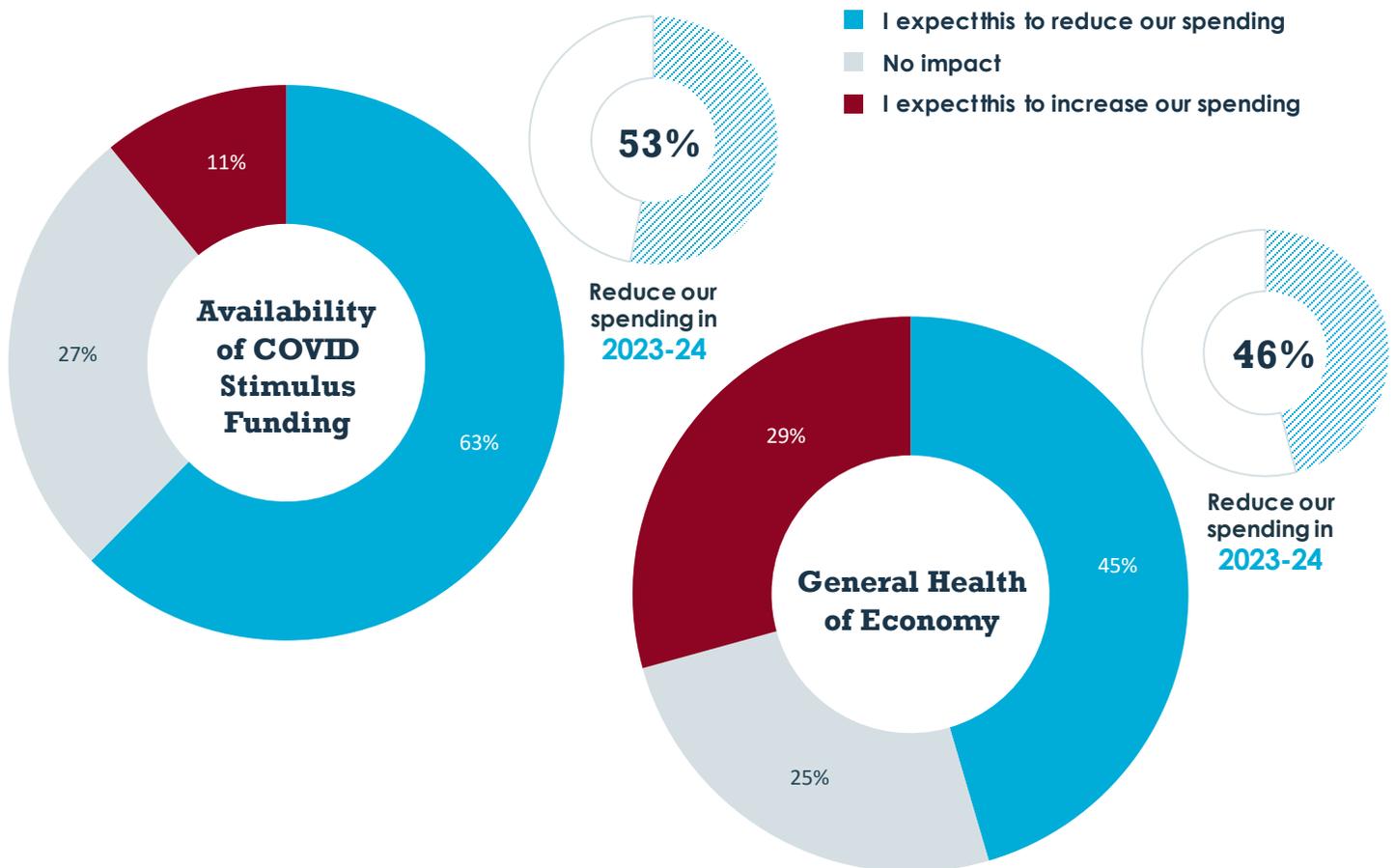
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/k12-insider/comes-big-tech-purchases-district-chooses-collaboration/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February 2023 nationally representative survey of 296 district administrators and 284 school principals.

STIMULUS SPENDING PRIORITIES

Worries About the Loss of Stimulus Money Rise Over Last Year, More So Than Overall Economic Concerns



Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

INSIGHT:

School districts' anxiety about the loss of stimulus funding has risen over the past year. There's also nervousness about the overall state of the economy: More than 4 in 10 district and school leaders expect economic conditions to reduce their spending over the next fiscal year. The pessimism persists despite low unemployment and relatively robust state and local tax collections.

Survey Question:

How—if at all—do you expect the following financial considerations to impact your district's spending plans over the next two years?

Link to relevant story:

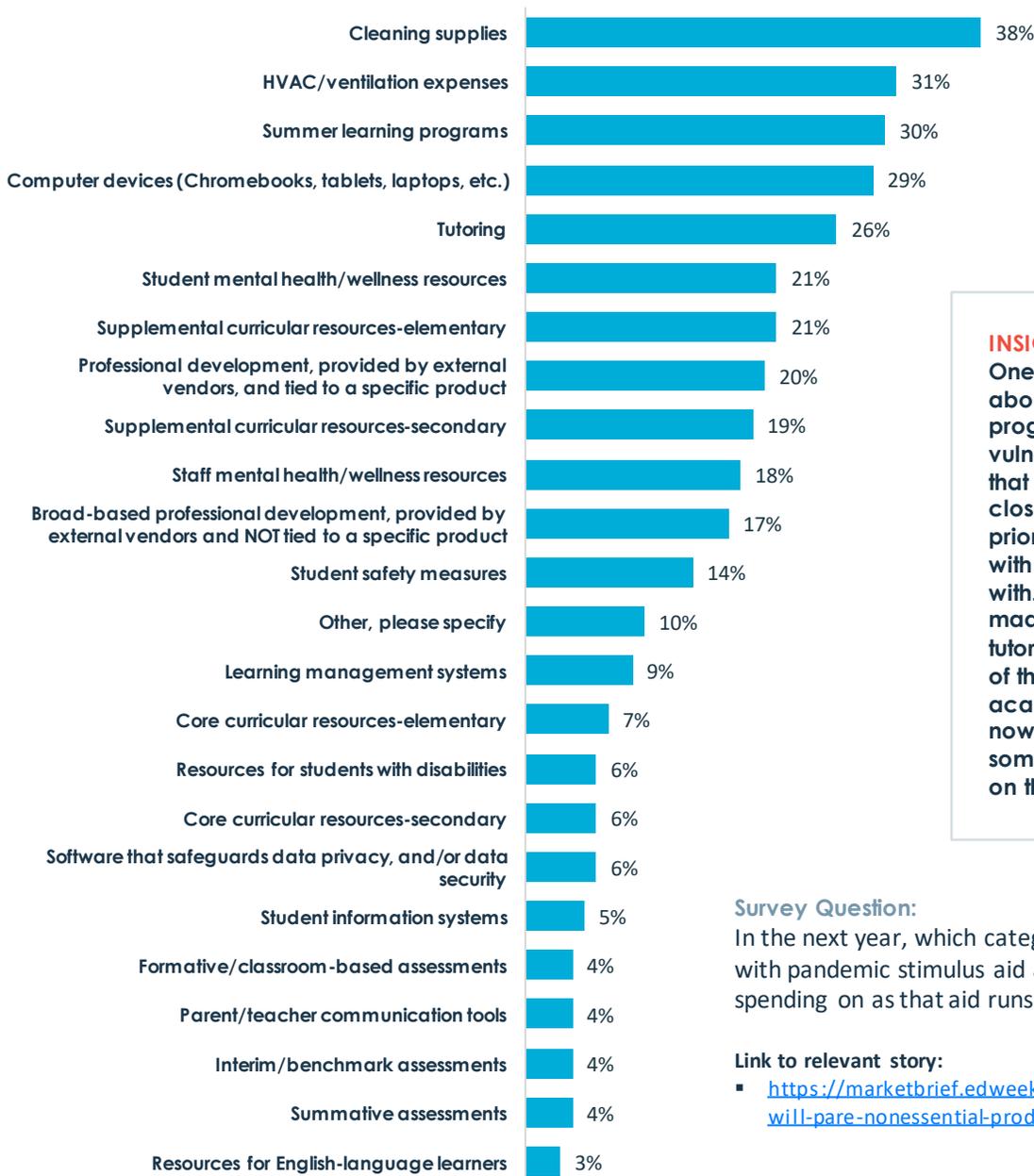
- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/market-trends/survive-a-recession-education-market/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center August 2023 nationally representative survey of 161 district leaders and 125 school leaders.

Preparing for the Loss Of Funding

PREPARING FOR THE LOSS OF FUNDING

Summer Learning Programs, Devices, Tutoring, Among the Stimulus-Funded Programs Likely to Get Scaled Back



INSIGHT:
One of the striking things about the stimulus-funded programs that are most vulnerable to cutbacks is that many of them are closely related to the highest priorities school districts had with stimulus aid to begin with. For instance, districts made summer learning and tutoring important parts of their stimulus-funded academic recovery efforts; now there's recognition that some of those efforts will go on the chopping block.

Survey Question:

In the next year, which categories of products purchased with pandemic stimulus aid are you likely to reduce spending on as that aid runs out? Select all that apply.

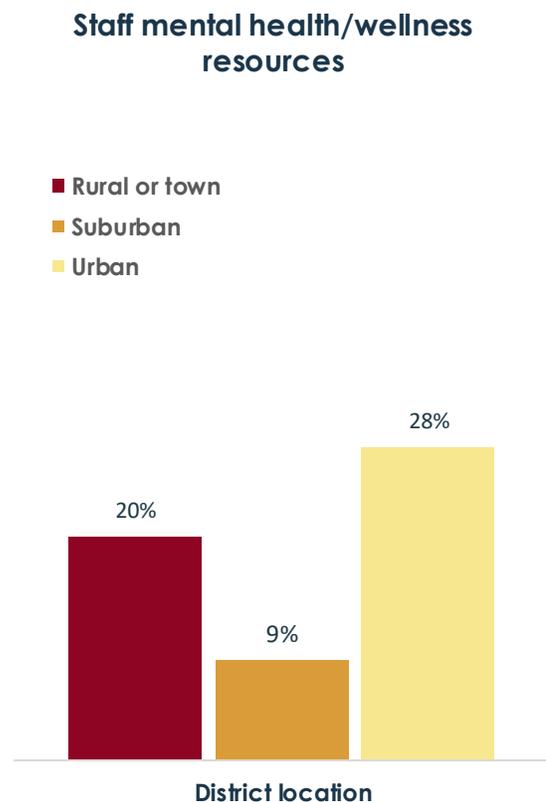
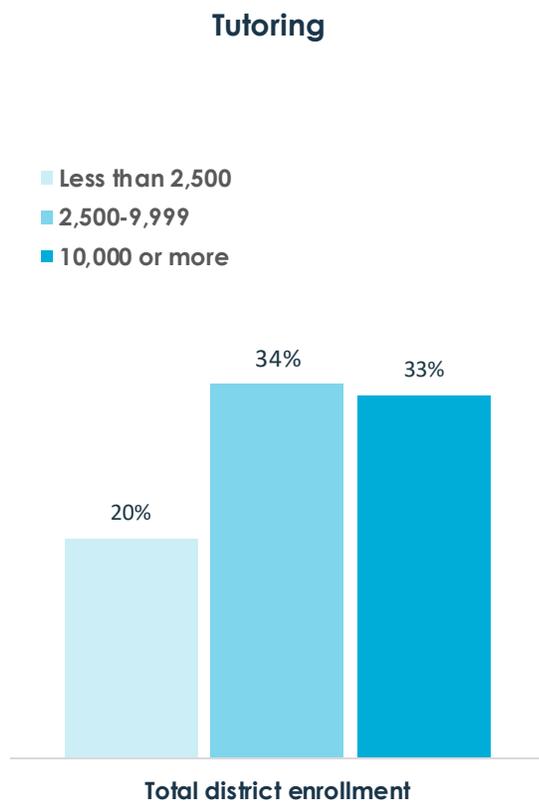
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/marketplace-k-12/districts-will-pare-nonessential-products-post-stimulus/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February 2023 nationally representative survey of 296 district officials and 284 principals.

PREPARING FOR THE LOSS OF FUNDING

Prospects for Scaling Back Investments In Tutoring, Staff Mental Health Vary



INSIGHT:

Large districts, and those in urban areas, are significantly more likely to target tutoring and staff mental health for cutbacks than are small and rural systems, respectively. This could be because big and urban systems initially devoted enormous amounts of federal aid to those needs, and now their scaling-down reflects a return to normal. Many school systems have told *EdWeek Market Brief* that they've seen rebuilding teachers' sense of well-being as a major priority since the pandemic.

Survey Question:

In the next year, which categories of products purchased with pandemic stimulus aid are you likely to reduce spending on as that aid runs out?

Link to relevant story:

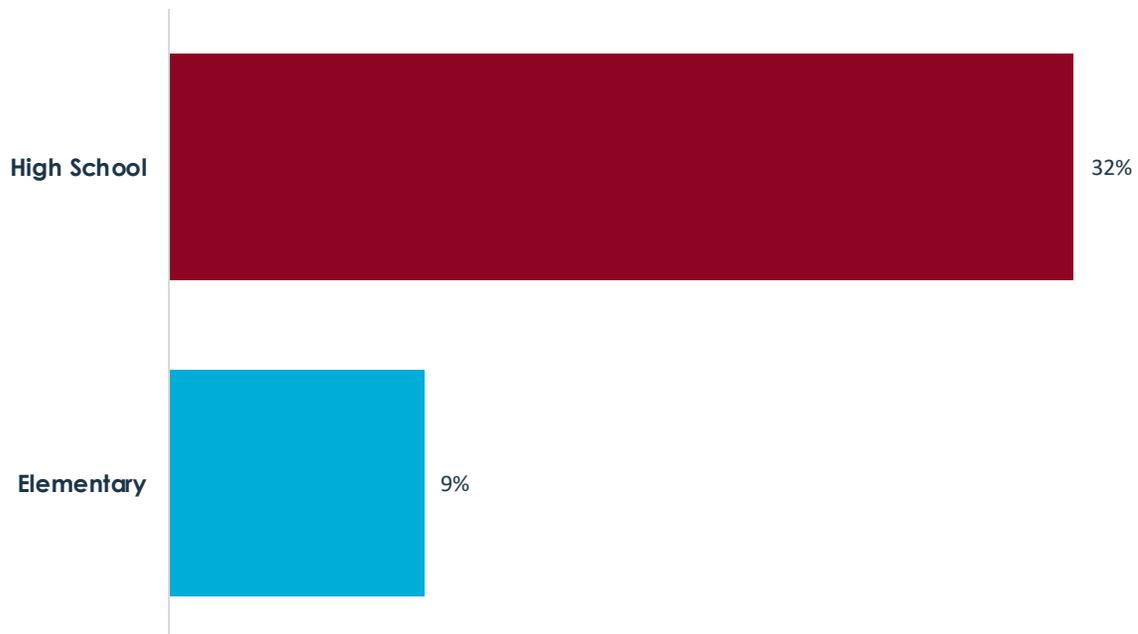
- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/marketplace-k-12/pair-big-city-district-officials-talk-whats-working-tutoring-isnt/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February 2023 nationally representative survey of 296 district officials and 284 principals.

PREPARING FOR THE LOSS OF FUNDING

High School K-12 Officials More Likely To See Paring Back of Supplemental Resources

Supplemental curricular resources-secondary



INSIGHT:

District and school leaders working in grades 9-12 are significantly more likely to predict that supplementary resources will be scaled back, as stimulus money ends, than are their elementary school counterparts. This could reflect the belief among elementary-grades officials that academic interventions will be just as necessary long after federal aid expires. EdWeek Market Brief's research has shown that K-12 officials see "learning loss" as being most severe at the elementary grades, particularly in math.

Survey Question:

In the next year, which categories of products purchased with pandemic stimulus aid are you likely to reduce spending on as that aid runs out?

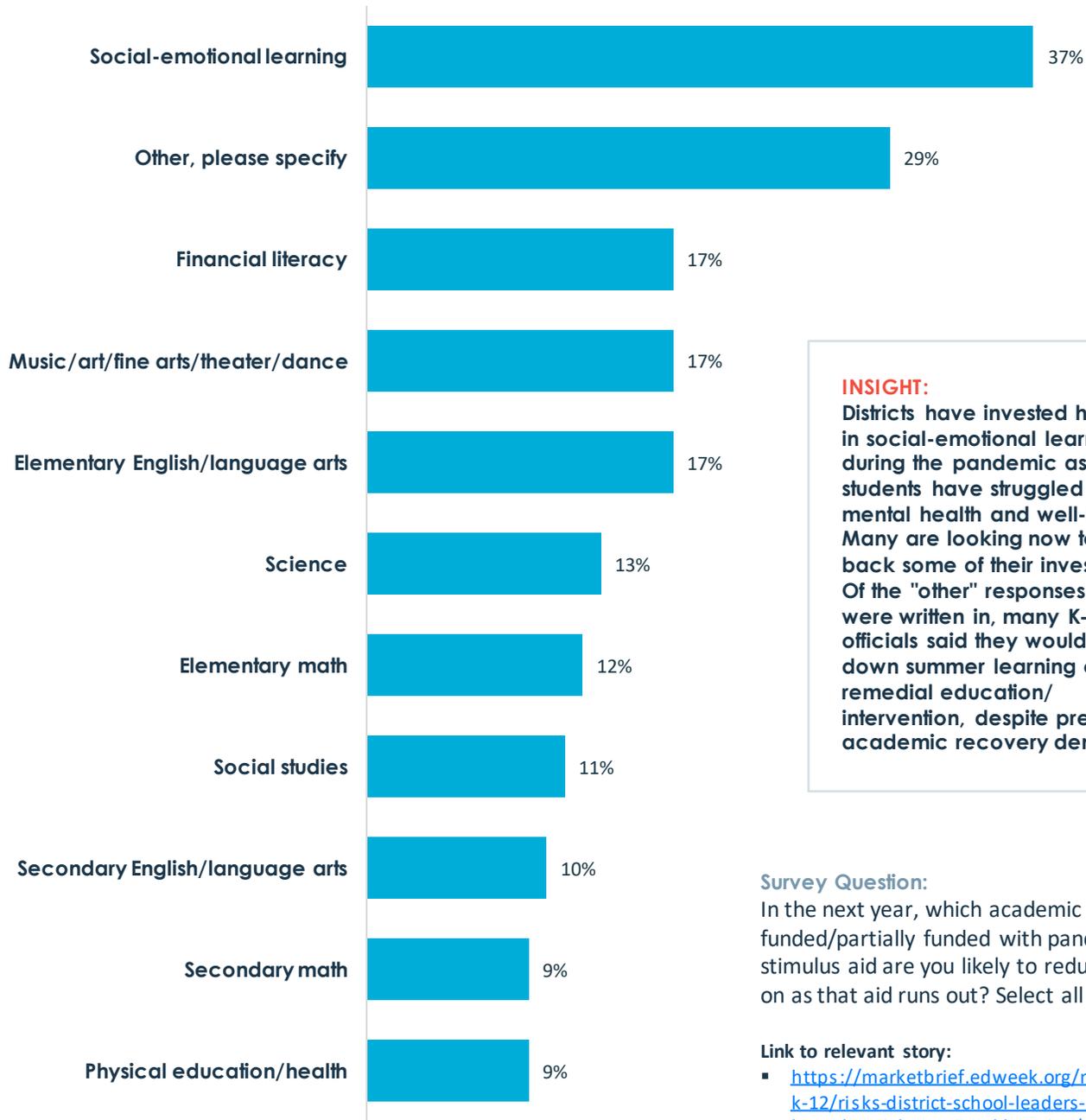
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/exclusive-data/districts-using-assessments-gauge-learning-loss-tests-fall-short/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February 2023 nationally representative survey of 296 district officials and 284 principals.

PREPARING FOR THE LOSS OF FUNDING

Of the Academic Areas Districts May Cut, SEL Is Most At-Risk



INSIGHT:
Districts have invested heavily in social-emotional learning during the pandemic as students have struggled with mental health and well-being. Many are looking now to pare back some of their investments. Of the "other" responses that were written in, many K-12 officials said they would scale down summer learning or remedial education/intervention, despite prevailing academic recovery demands.

Survey Question:
In the next year, which academic areas funded/partially funded with pandemic stimulus aid are you likely to reduce spending on as that aid runs out? Select all that apply.

Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/marketplace-k-12/risks-district-school-leaders-see-tech-based-social-emotional-learning/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February 2023 nationally representative survey of 296 district officials and 284 principals.

This report is available to EdWeek Market Brief enterprise members only. Copying, distributing, or sharing this report, or any of its contents, outside of your organization is strictly prohibited.

PREPARING FOR THE LOSS OF FUNDING

Stretching Stimulus Funds: Creative Steps K-12 Officials Are Taking

The EdWeek Research Center asked district and school leaders to "Tell us about any creative steps your district or school might take to stretch the use of federal stimulus funds—or to make up for their loss when they expire."



"We **have realigned our district budget** to support continuing some of the staff hired with stimulus funding."

"**We were careful** not to use it for reoccurring costs."

"We will **utilize Title I funds** and look for additional grants aimed at SEL."

"We will **eliminate some positions** as teachers retire. We are **lowering the pay** for teachers that support summer school programs."

"Still looking for creative ways—**don't see many options.**"

"We are **cutting programs** that do not show growth."

"We plan to **apply for more grants** through state and federal opportunities."

"**Reduction in the arts programs** (music, art, foreign language teachers)."

"We are very concerned that we will be **expected to continue the work we have put in place** over the past two years with no funding. It will be up to schools to figure it out, it seems."

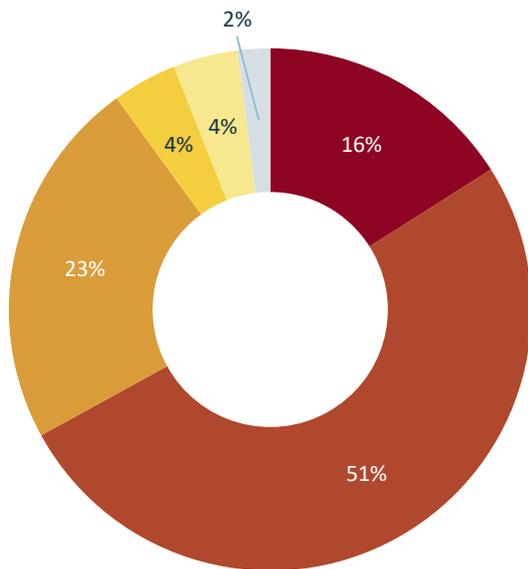


SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center March/April 2023 nationally representative survey of 277 district leaders and 187 principals.

How Districts And Vendors Will Respond

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

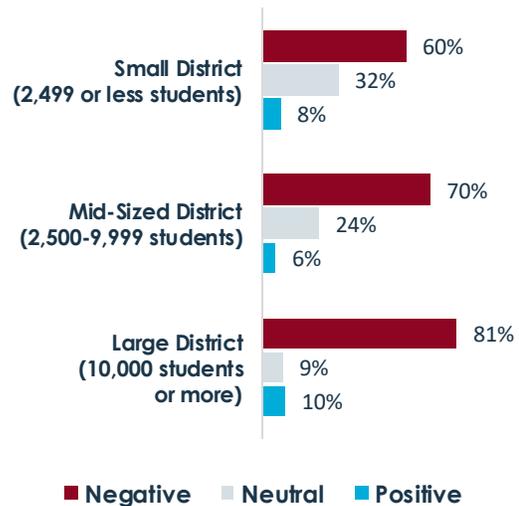
Nearly 7 in 10 K-12 Officials Foresee Negative Academic Impact From Loss Of Stimulus Funds



- Very negative
- Somewhat negative
- Neutral/no impact
- Somewhat positive
- Very positive
- Not applicable—we did not receive this aid

SNAPSHOT

How many students does your school district serve?



Survey Question:

In your view, what kind of impact will the expiration of federal COVID stimulus funding have on academic outcomes in your district or school over the next two years?

Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/marketplace-k-12/learning-loss-interventions-falling-short-implementation-study-finds/>

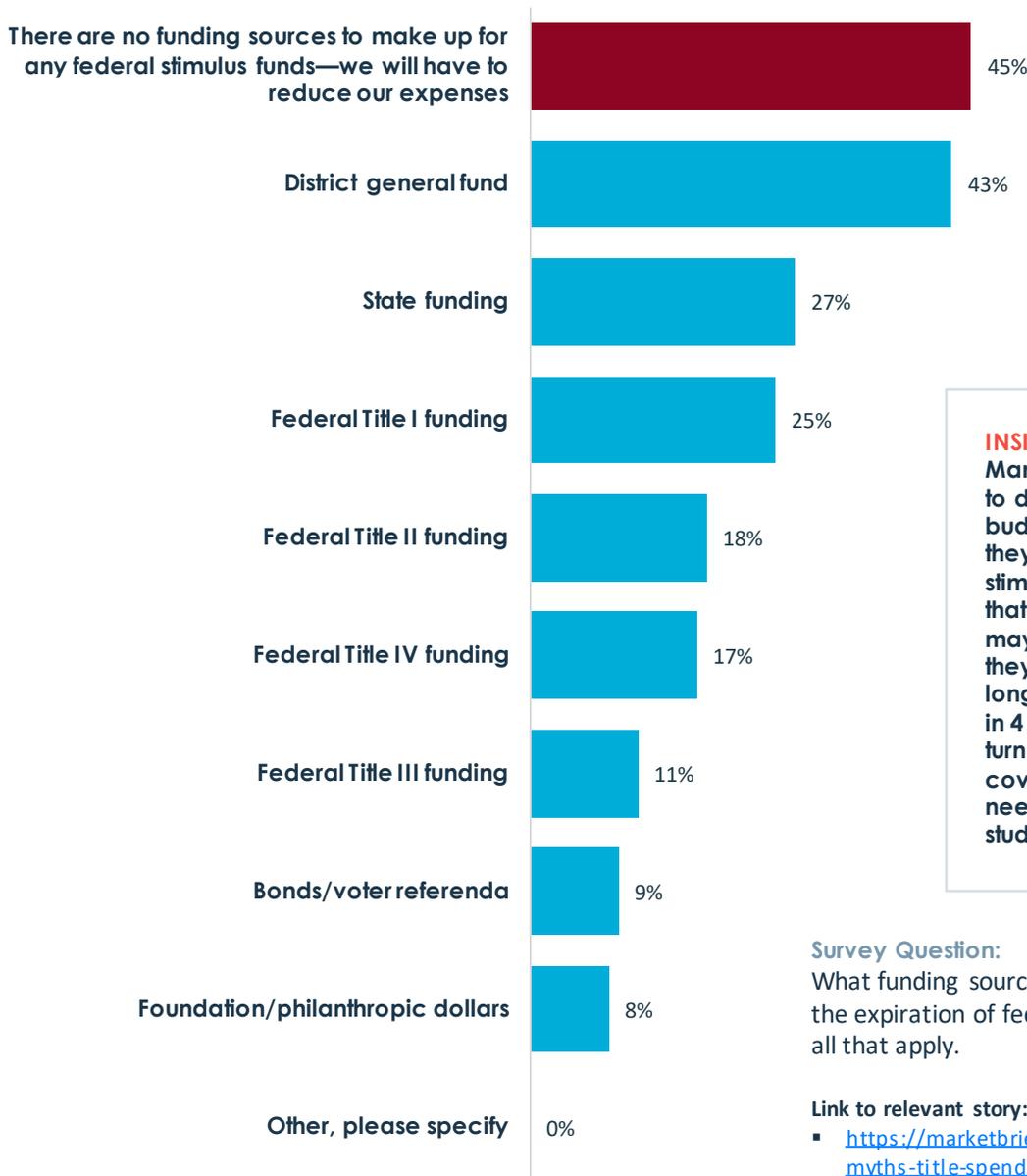
INSIGHT:

District and school leaders foresee major academic setbacks when federal emergency aid runs out. It's an indication of the extent to which school systems have come to rely on the stimulus to support academic interventions, and it raises major questions about how they will support similar strategies without that aid. Leaders of big-city districts, which tend to serve a high portion of students from impoverished backgrounds and with language needs, are especially worried.

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center August nationally representative survey of 218 district leaders and 271 school leaders.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

When Stimulus Aid Expires, Many K-12 Officials Say They'll Turn to the District General Fund



INSIGHT: Many school systems expect to dig into their general fund budgets to pay for programs they initially covered with stimulus dollars. That's a sign that many of those programs may get crowded out, as they compete with other, longstanding priorities. One in 4 K-12 officials expect to turn to Title I funding, which covers a broad array of needs for low-income students.

Survey Question: What funding sources, if any, will make up for the expiration of federal stimulus dollars? Select all that apply.

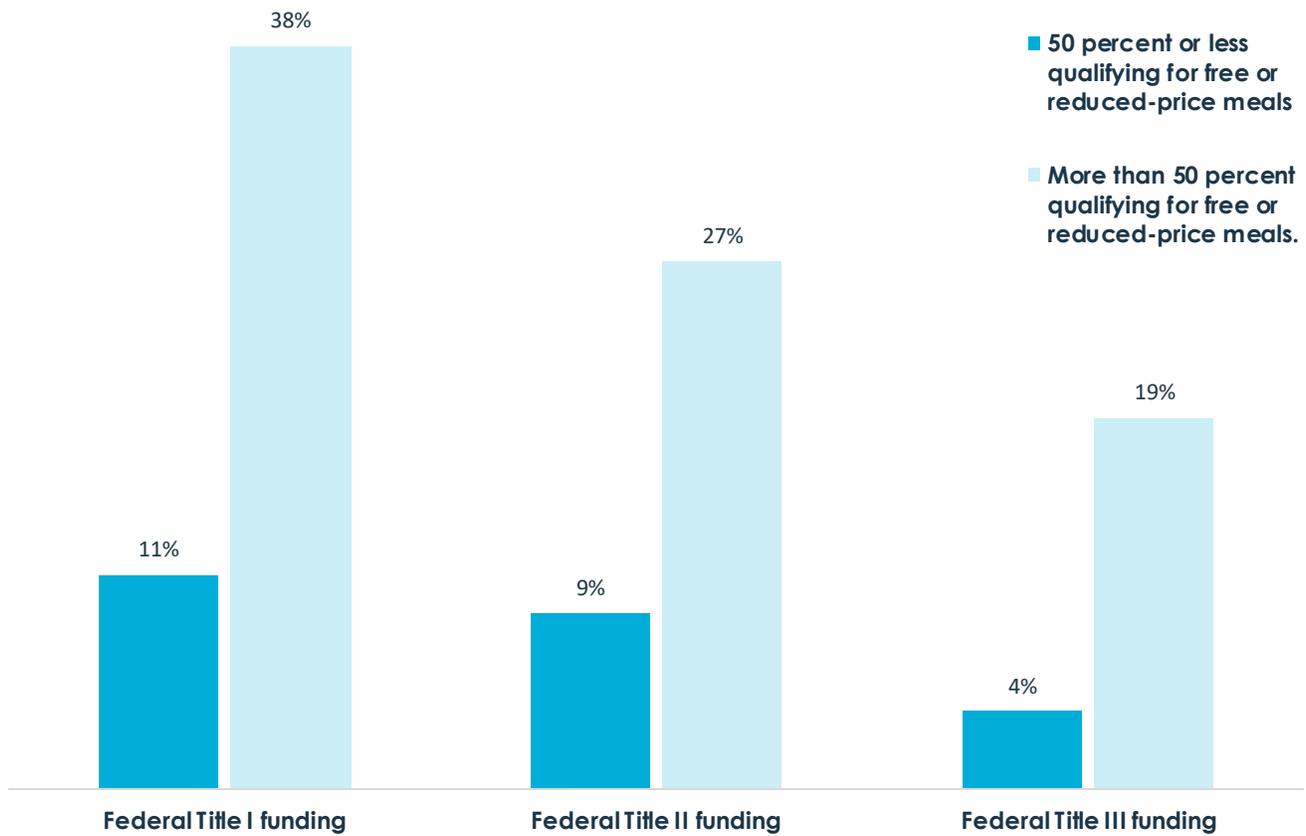
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/analysts-view/myths-title-spending-vendors-can-overcome/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center nationally representative March and April 2023 survey of 277 district leaders, 185 principals, and 401 teachers.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

Impoverished Districts Will Rely on Legacy Federal Programs, Post-Stimulus



INSIGHT:

It's not surprising that higher-poverty school systems will be more reliant on existing federal programs to make up for losses in stimulus aid. But EdWeek Market Brief's survey data shows stark differences in the reliance of less-affluent systems on this aid. Leaders of impoverished districts have almost certainly been strategizing about transitioning from one-time emergency federal aid to the federal sources they've counted on for years.

Survey Question:

What funding sources, if any, will make up for the expiration of federal stimulus dollars?

Link to relevant story:

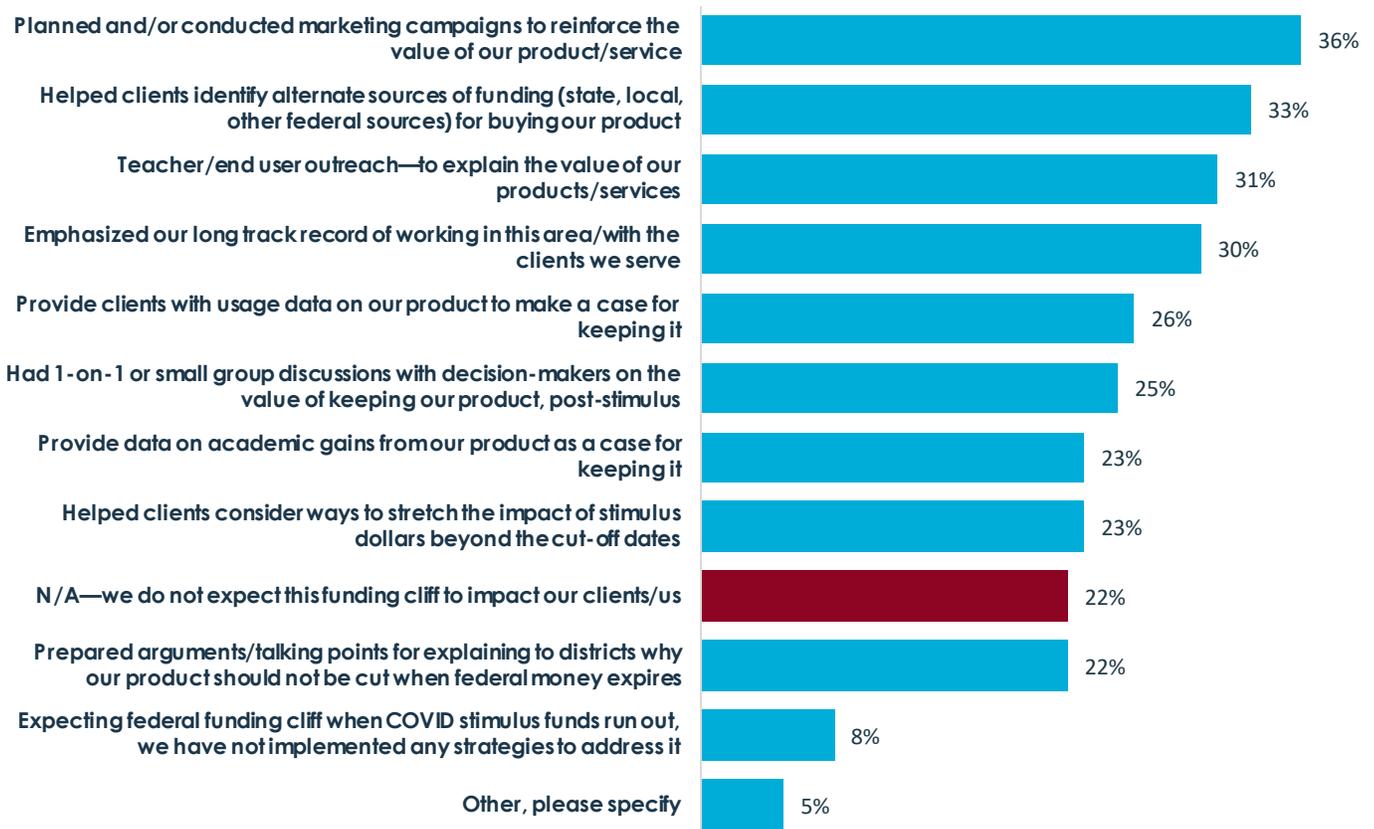
- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/k12-insider/districts-spending-federal-stimulus-aid/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center nationally representative March and April 2023 survey of 277 district leaders, 185 principals, and 401 teachers.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

Education Companies Are Focusing On Marketing Outreach, Helping Districts Find Alternate Funding

K-12 Business Perspective



INSIGHT:

An EdWeek Market Brief survey of more than 400 K-12 business representatives, conducted this summer, showed that many of those companies are taking active steps to avoid being cut out of district budgets, post-stimulus. More than a third are making their case to districts through marketing campaigns, and nearly as many are helping districts pinpoint alternate sources of funding.

Survey Question:

Which strategies, if any, has your organization implemented to help AVOID being adversely affected as your clients face the federal funding cliff when COVID stimulus funds run out? Select all that apply.

Link to relevant story:

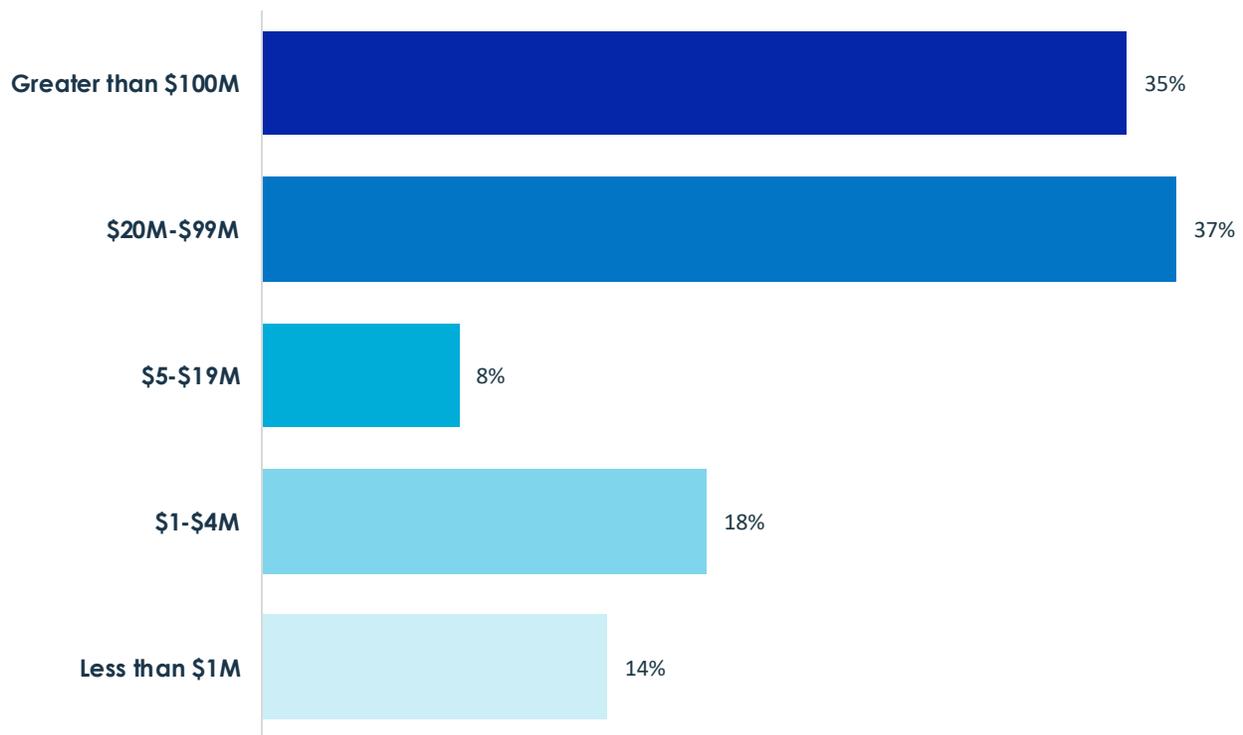
- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/marketplace-k-12/snapshot-ed-tech-marketing-strategies-pandemic/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center August 2023 survey of 429 K-12 business officials.

K-12 BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

Businesses With Higher Revenues More Likely to Prepare Messaging on Stimulus

Prepared Arguments/Talking Points



Approximate size of your organization's K-12 revenue on an annual basis

INSIGHT:

Education businesses that are bringing in \$20 million or more in revenue are much more likely than small- and medium-sized ones to have strategies in place for explaining why districts should keep their products around when federal aid runs out. It could be that these organizations simply have more staff to tailor these messages, perhaps even district-by-district. Or larger companies may have seen especially high benefits from the heavy flow of stimulus aid, and so they see protecting their place as a priority.

Survey Question:

Which strategies, if any, has your organization implemented to help AVOID being adversely affected as your clients face the federal funding cliff when COVID stimulus funds run out? Select all that apply.

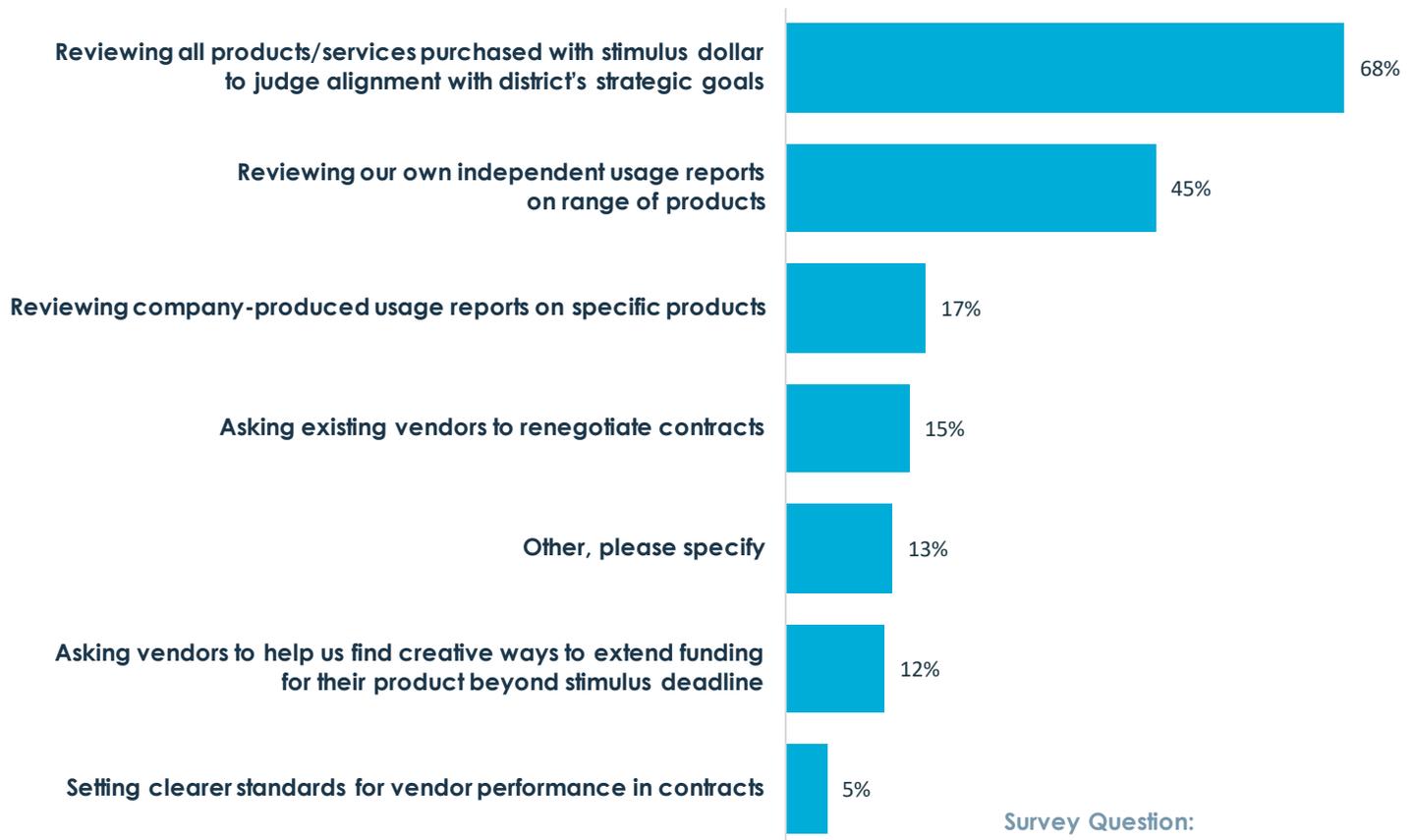
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/exclusive-data/k-12-priorities-spending-federal-stimulus-aid-changed-past-year/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center August 2023 survey of 429 K-12 business officials.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

Alignment With Strategic Goals, And Usage Data, Will Guide District Decisions When Stimulus Ends



INSIGHT:

District and school officials say they'll think of the big picture—fulfilling their strategic goals—when reviewing whether to keep individual products when emergency aid runs out. They will also trust their own usage reports. Crosstab data also reveal that respondents from medium-sized and large districts (26 percent and 19 percent, respectively) are more likely to look at company usage reports than are those from the smallest districts (11 percent).

Survey Question:

What steps will your district or school be taking to determine what to do when federal stimulus funding for K-12 education expires? Select all that apply.

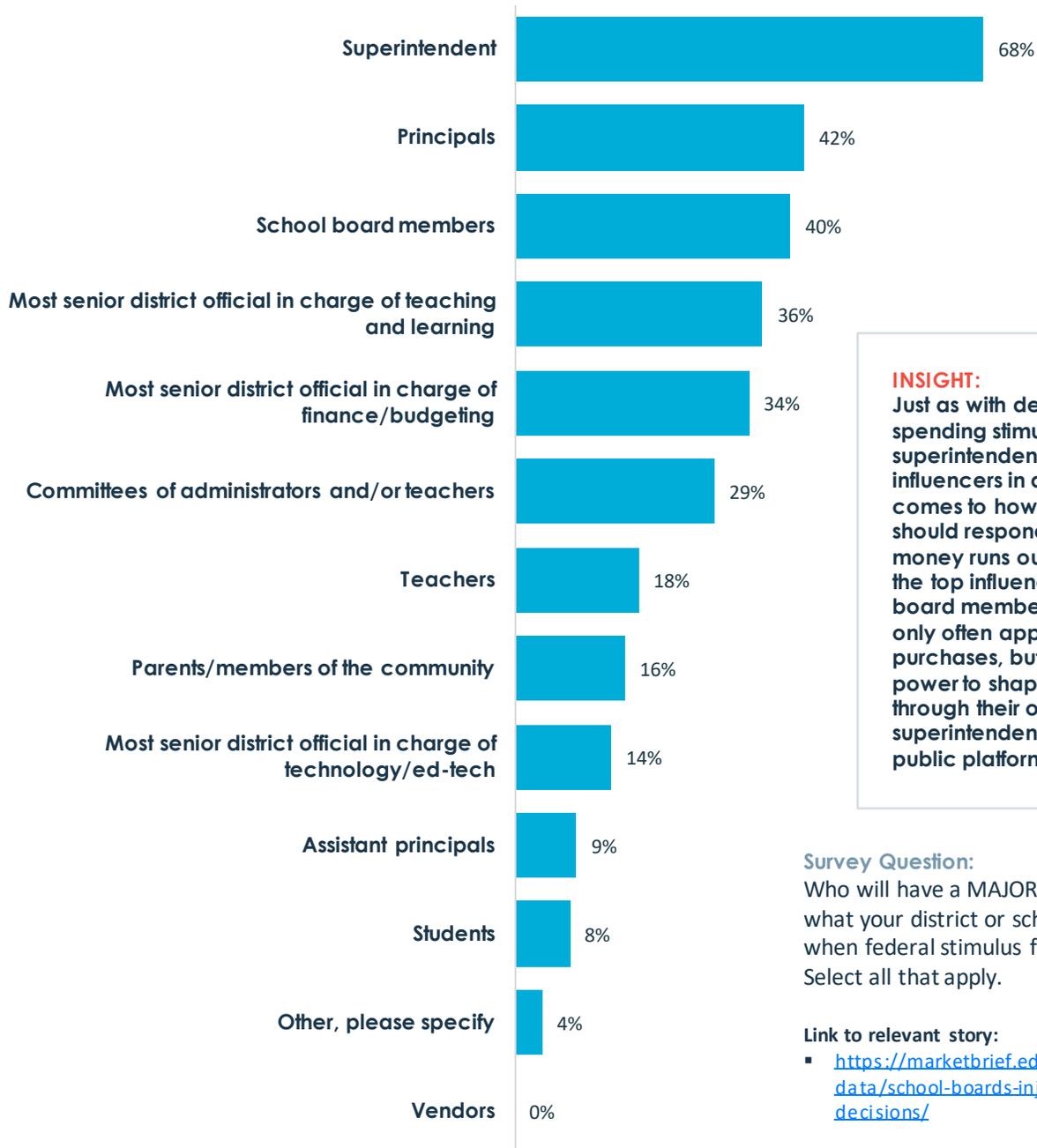
Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/k12-insider/ed-tech-tools-push-meaningful-usage/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center nationally representative March and April 2023 survey of 277 district leaders, 185 principals, and 401 teachers.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

District Chiefs Will Shape Decisions, Post-Stimulus



INSIGHT:
Just as with decisions about spending stimulus aid, superintendents will be major influencers in districts when it comes to how their systems should respond when the money runs out. Also among the top influencers: school board members, who not only often approve large purchases, but also have the power to shape policy through their oversight of the superintendent and the public platforms they have.

Survey Question:
Who will have a MAJOR influence on what your district or school decides to do when federal stimulus funding expires? Select all that apply.

Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/exclusive-data/school-boards-inject-purchasing-decisions/>

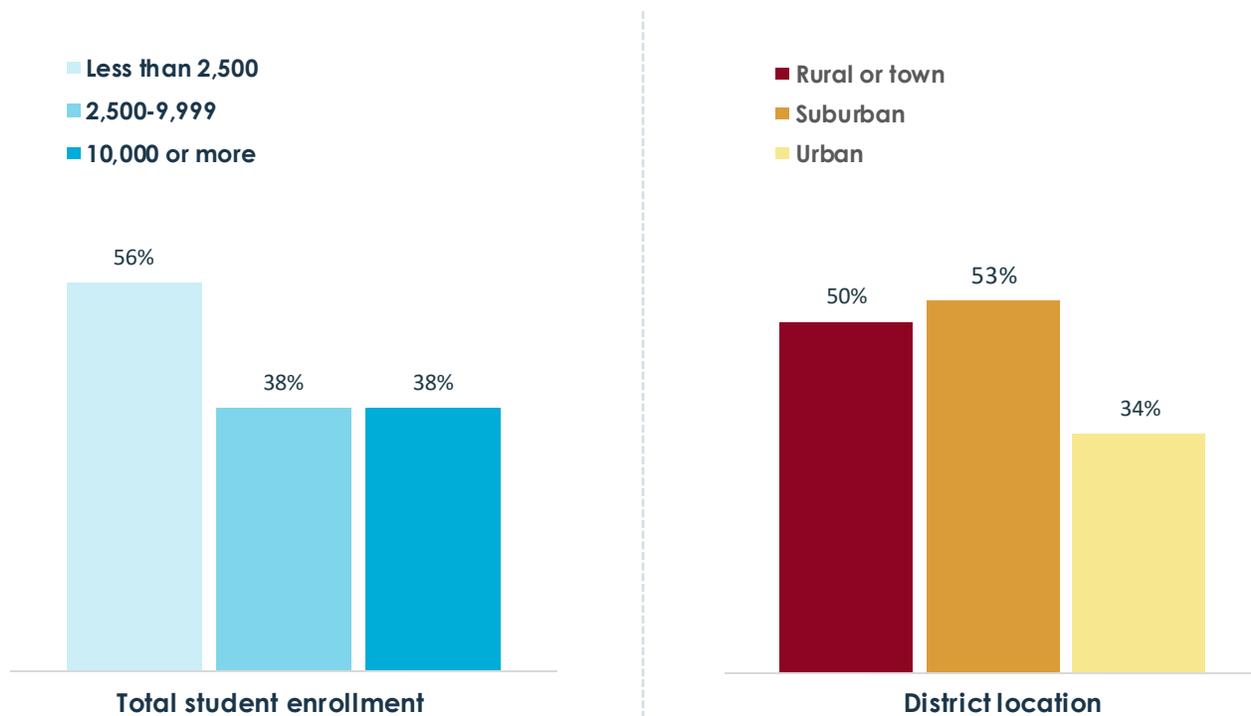
SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center nationally March/April representative survey of 277 district leaders and 185 school leaders.

This report is available to EdWeek Market Brief enterprise members only. Copying, distributing, or sharing this report, or any of its contents, outside of your organization is strictly prohibited.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

Principals Carry More Weight on Stimulus Spending in Small and Rural K-12 Systems

Who will have a MAJOR influence on what your district or school decides to do when federal stimulus funding expires? Principals



INSIGHT:

School principals have more sway over end-of-stimulus decisions in small and rural school systems. Superintendents and other central-office administrators in smaller systems may be more reliant on principals to offer input on what kinds of programs funded with emergency aid need to be continued, and what can be safely discarded, than would be the case in large districts, where top administrators play a stronger role.

Survey Question:

Who will have a MAJOR influence on what your district or school decides to do when federal stimulus funding expires?

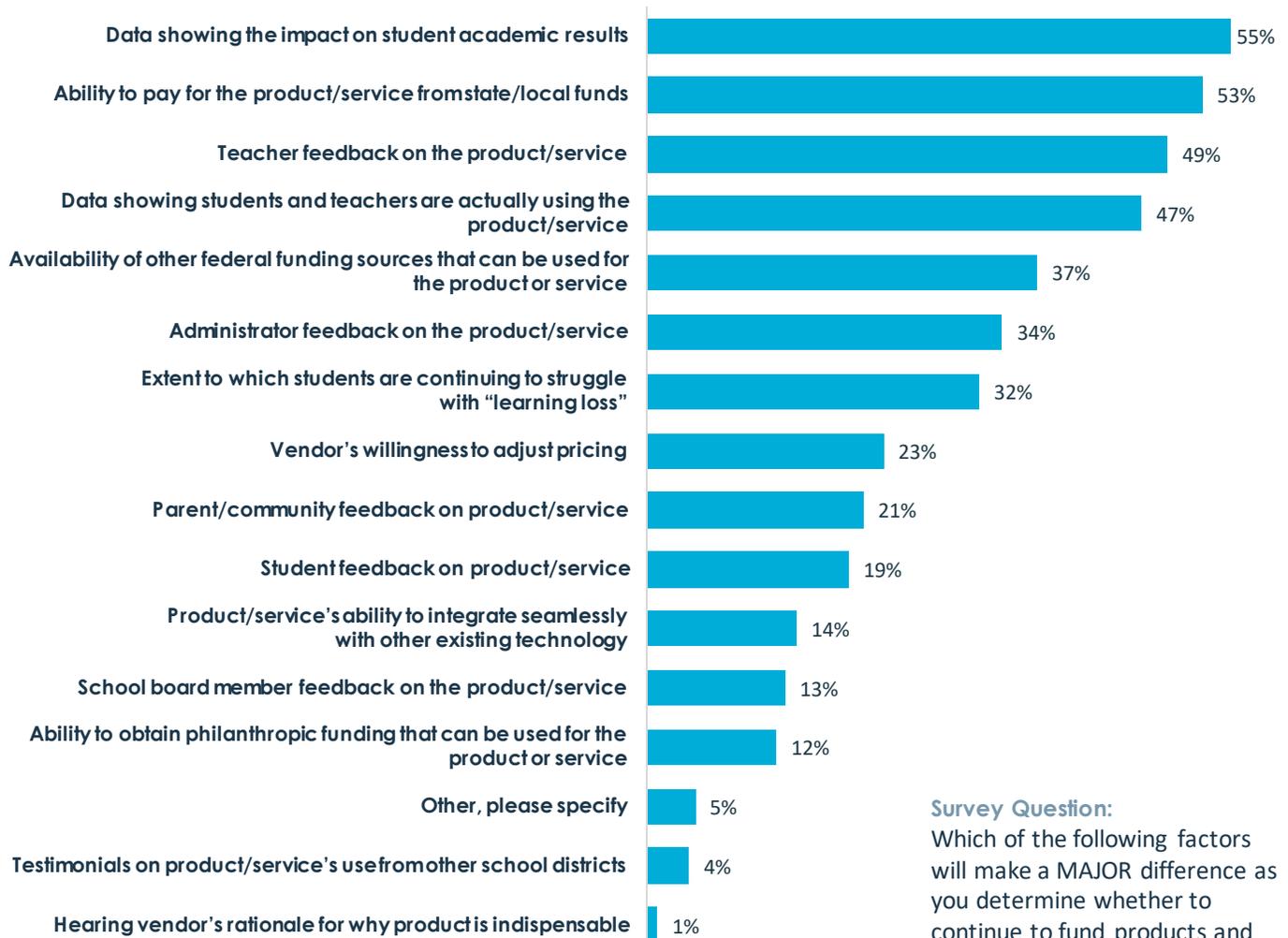
Link to relevant story:

- <https://webinars.edweek.org/shop/featured/selling-to-principals-without-alienating-district-leaders/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February 2023 nationally representative survey of 296 district administrators and 284 school principals.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

In Judging Products, Districts Will Weigh Academic Results, Fallback Funding Sources



Survey Question:
Which of the following factors will make a MAJOR difference as you determine whether to continue to fund products and services paid for with pandemic aid once that aid runs out? Select all that apply.

Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/analysts-view/education-companies-will-judged-next-phase-academic-recovery/>

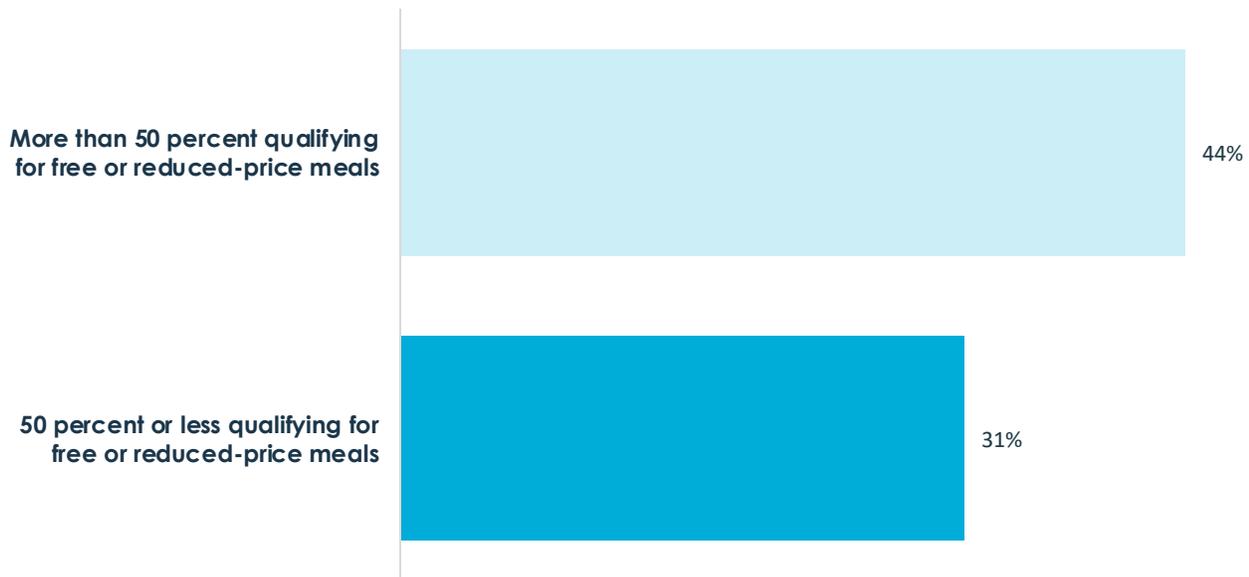
INSIGHT:
 School district officials feel the pressure to improve academic results, and if stimulus-funded products can't support that goal they're likely to be discarded. It's most likely a sign of the continued need to raise academic performance from the deep hole created by the pandemic. District and school leaders are also thinking of another practical matter: the ability to pay for products from alternate funding sources.

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February nationally representative survey of 296 district officials and 284 principals.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

Higher-Poverty Districts Want to Know That Other Federal Funding Sources Are Available

Availability of other federal funding sources that can be used for the product or service



Percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals

INSIGHT:

Leaders of impoverished K-12 systems want to know that products can be paid for from other federal sources when stimulus money dries up. Vendors working with those districts need to have researched how districts have prioritized spending from major federal programs – like Title I and Title II -- and make sure that their products/services fit within any parameters that those districts have set out.

Survey Question:

Which of the following factors will make a MAJOR difference as you determine whether to continue to fund products and services paid for with pandemic aid once that aid runs out?

Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/market-trends/the-funding-cliff-looms-how-will-school-districts-respond/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center January/February nationally representative survey of 296 district officials and 284 principals.

HOW DISTRICTS AND VENDORS WILL RESPOND

Large and High-Poverty Districts Put Emphasis on Teacher/Student Usage Data

Which of the following factors will make a MAJOR difference as you determine whether to continue to fund products and services paid for with pandemic aid once that aid runs out?

Academic results

62% District Leaders

49% School Principals

Say **academic results** will make a major difference

K-12 officials influence

53%

Districts with 50% or more students in poverty

Indicate that **teacher/student usage of products** will make a major difference

41%

Districts with less than 50% of students in poverty

60%

10,000 more students

49%

Mid-sized districts

Indicate that **teacher/student usage data** will make a major difference

42%

Smaller districts

INSIGHT:

Survey crosstab data from the EdWeek Research Center reveals a number of differences across types of district, and types of respondents, in terms of the standards they will use to judge products. For instance, district leaders – perhaps because of the pressure they face from school boards and the public – are more likely to emphasize academic measures than school-level leaders are. All of these differences are statistically significant.

Link to relevant story:

- <https://marketbrief.edweek.org/exclusive-data/districts-mean-tout-value-student-engagement/>

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center nationally representative survey of 296 district leaders and 284 principals.

Key Contributors

EdWeek Market Brief



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.



Maurice Bakley is the 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 and leads Education Week's overall revenue strategy and customer service offerings for K-12 Districts, K-12 Industry and Higher Education. Prior to joining Education Week, Maurice was President of FierceMarkets, a B2B media company serving professionals in the Telecom, Healthcare, Life Sciences, Technology and Retail markets throughout the US, Europe and Asia. He holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BA in International Relations and German from Tufts University.



Emma Kate Frites is a staff writer for *EdWeek Market Brief*. Previously, she reported on statewide education issues and policy in Indiana, covering everything from state funding to school takeovers to COVID-19 closures. She's also covered suburban and rural districts as a K-12 beat reporter.



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

EdWeek Research Center



Holly Kurtz directs the Education Week 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 wide 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.

About EdWeek Market Brief

See our other coverage at
marketbrief.edweek.org

For information on activating your
EdWeek Market Brief member account—with
full access to all our coverage, analysis, data,
webinars, briefings, and other services—go to
[this link](#) or contact Ryan Lanier, at
rlanier@educationweek.org

For suggestions of editorial coverage/content,
contact Sean Cavanagh at
scavanagh@educationweek.org