

Clever

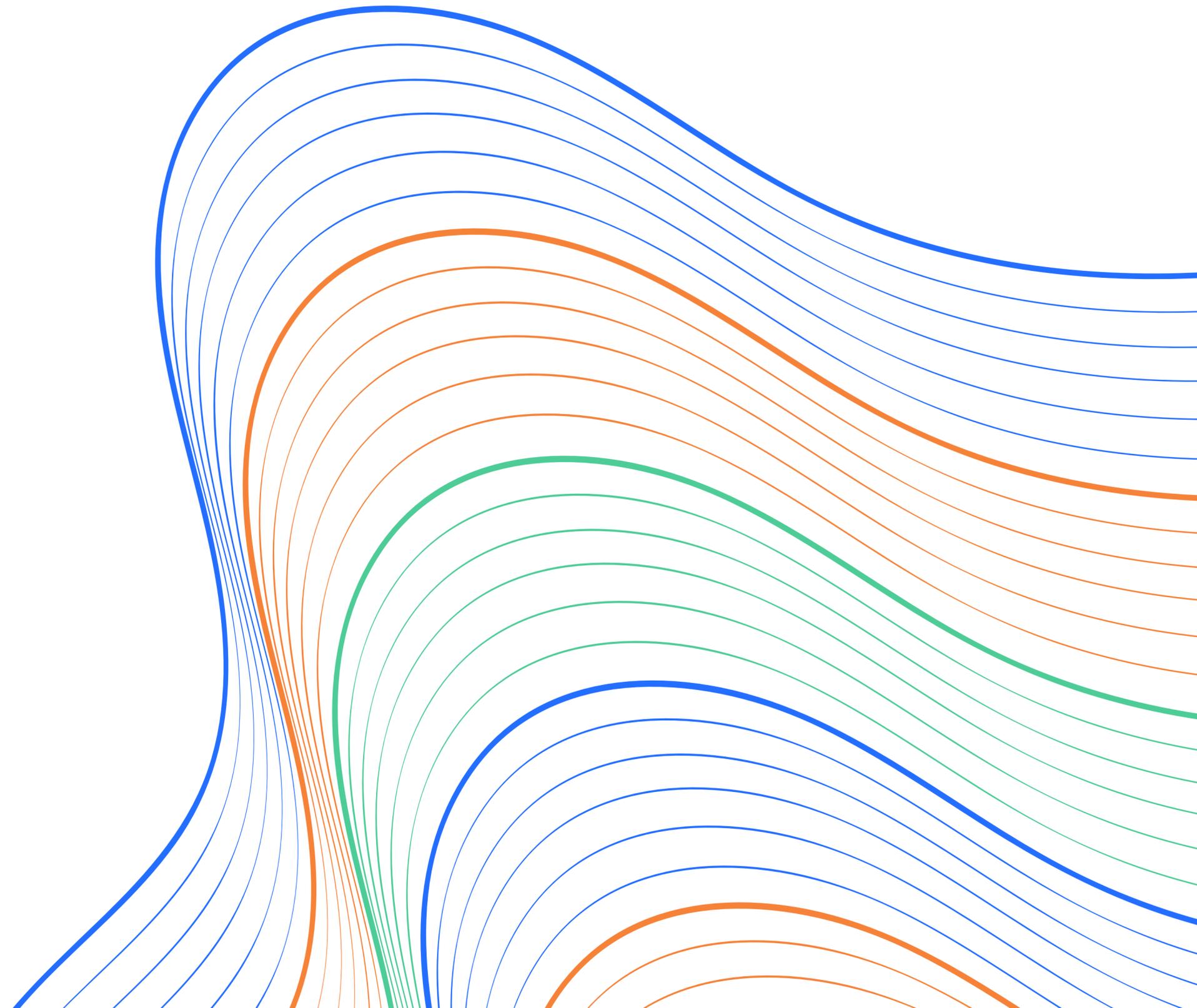
In the Year of AI, Teacher Mindset Still Determines Student Success

Classroom of the Future Report 2025

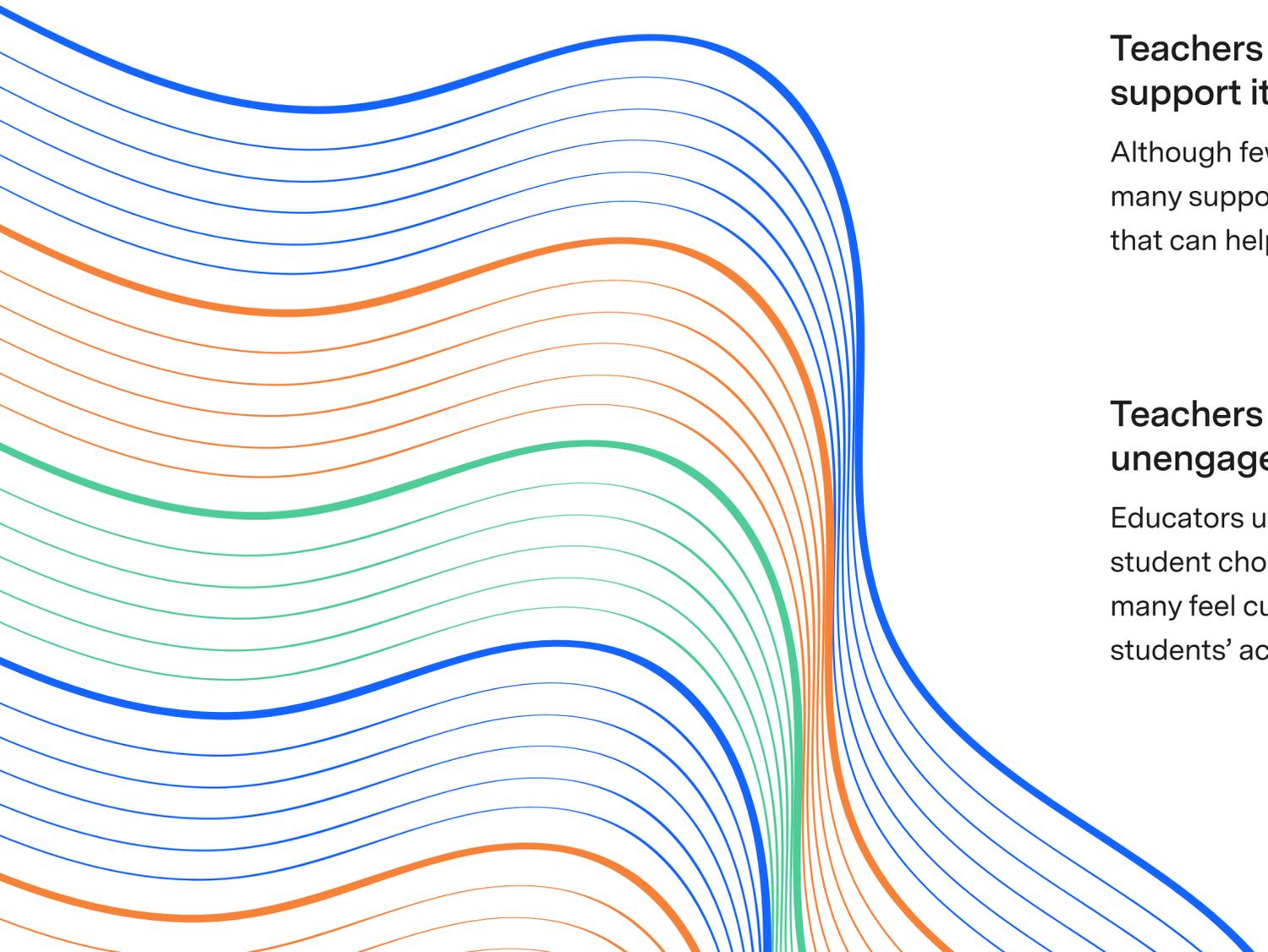
Introduction

Underneath the noise of artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom, student privacy debates, and staffing shortages, one message from the annual Classroom of the Future stood out in 2025: **technology doesn't transform classrooms—educators do**. Teachers' mindsets, confidence, and choices are the often-overlooked forces determining whether edtech lives up to its full potential. Yet more often than not, people are rarely the focus of headlines or procurement strategies. This report surfaces where that disconnect matters most—and what it means for the classroom of the future.

This year's report explores trends in **how technology shows up in classrooms, how teachers use it, and how decisions get made in schools**. From teacher mindset to AI adoption and student engagement to integration challenges, the report surfaces new trends shaping how digital learning is evolving in schools—and what that means for edtech leaders, developers, and decision-makers in schools.



Five Edtech Trends in the Era of AI



Teachers are split on the future of education

Teachers who actively use edtech tend to be more optimistic about the future, while those who avoid it are more likely to feel pessimistic about the direction of education.

Teachers lack AI confidence, but support it for students success

Although few teachers feel confident using AI, many support its use as personalized study aids that can help students and ease staff shortages.

Teachers are using edtech to reach unengaged students

Educators use features like gamification and student choice to engage diverse learners, but many feel current tools don't fully address their students' academic and emotional needs.

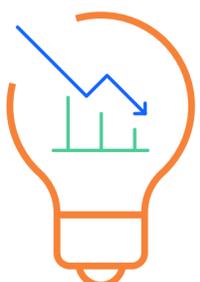
When budget drives edtech decisions, teachers are left behind

With most school leaders focused on budget over teacher adoption, educators often receive tools that don't fit their classrooms, limiting impact and wasting resources.

Cybersecurity starts in the classroom—so why are teachers left out?

Despite daily access to student data, teachers rarely receive cybersecurity training to input, meanwhile administrators worry about attacks but lack confidence in protecting student information.

Key Findings



72%

of “Edtech Avoiders” believe education is on the wrong track

[Read more →](#)



27%

of teachers feel very confident using artificial intelligent tools

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1 in 4

of educators receive no cybersecurity training whatsoever

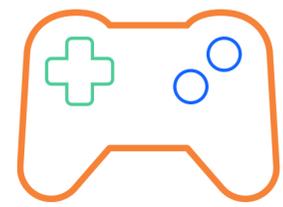
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20%

of school decision makers consider teacher adoption when choosing edtech tools

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60%

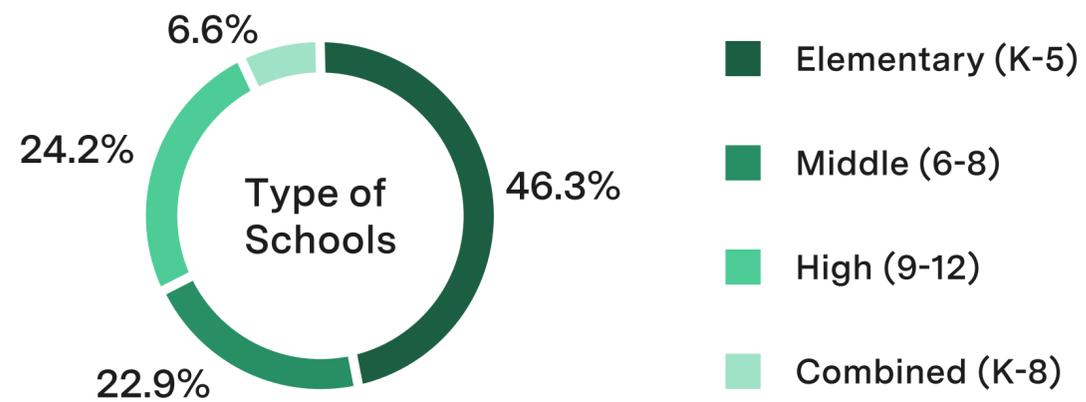
of teachers say gamification is the most effective way to engage disengaged learners

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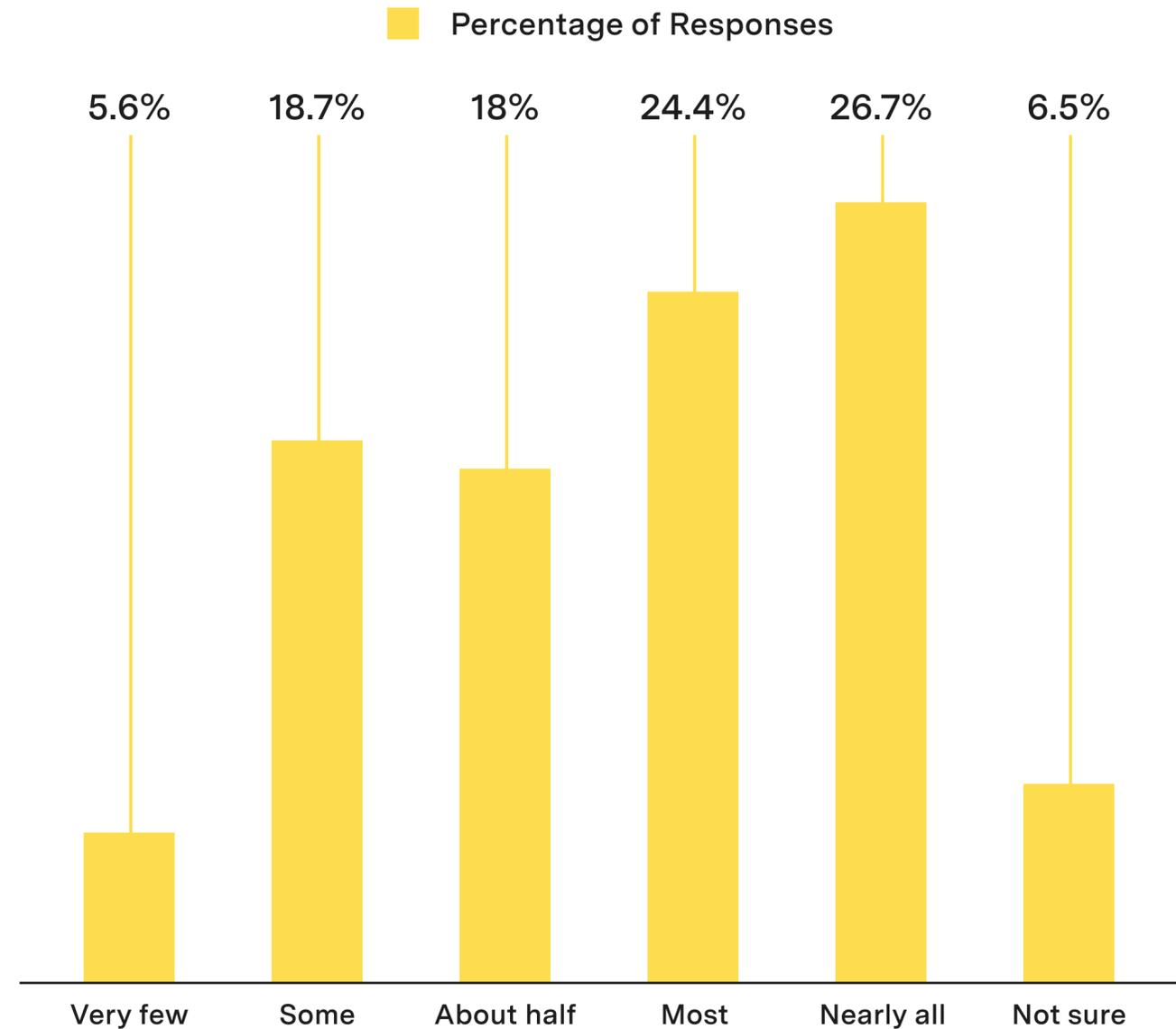
Methodology

In Q2 2025, Clever partnered with Whiteboard Advisors to conduct a national survey of more than 2,500 educators across the United States. The survey captured perspectives from teachers representing a range of school types, grade levels, and student populations. Nearly half of all respondents were elementary educators (46%), with the remainder split between middle school (23%), high school (24%), and K-8 combined settings (7%). About one-quarter of respondents teach in schools serving predominantly low-income students, and a similar share work in schools where nearly all students come from underrepresented backgrounds. Teachers were also segmented by their self-reported comfort and experience with edtech—categories that provided deeper insight into how adoption patterns correlate with confidence, satisfaction, and student impact.

At which type of school do you teach?



Approximately what percentage of students in your school come from low-income households?



Acknowledgements

We worked with school and edtech partners to develop this report, using their insights to shape our key findings. We thank these forward-thinking Clever partners:

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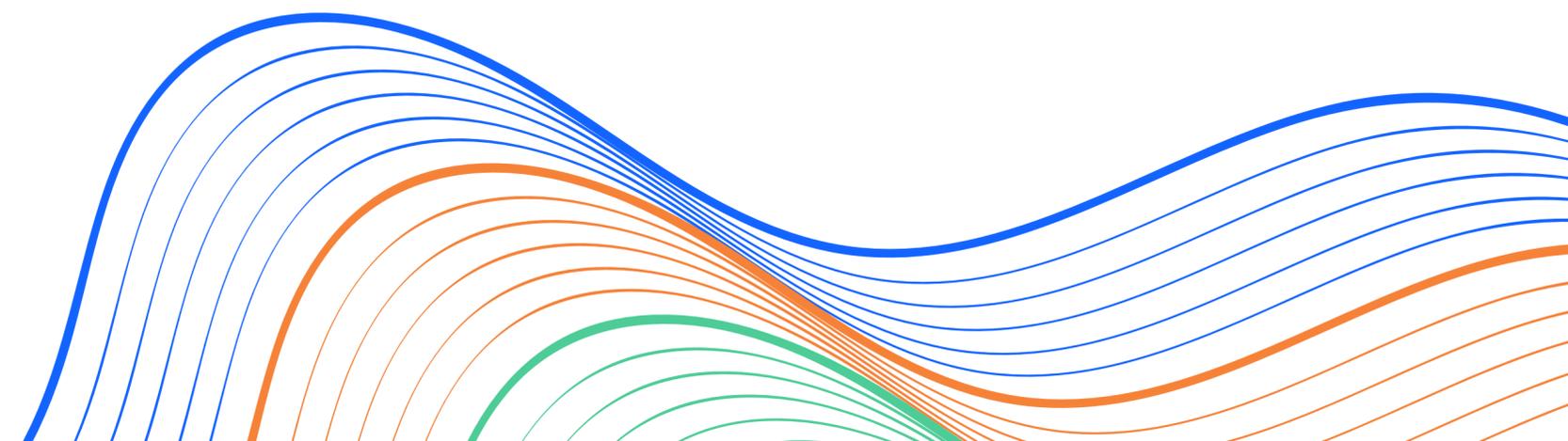
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Teacher buy-in is the new edtech bottleneck

Educators' attitudes are the strongest predictor of edtech impact

Even the best edtech fails without teacher buy-in. Our data identified three unique educator personas based on their use of edtech: Super Users, Routine Users, and Reluctant Users.

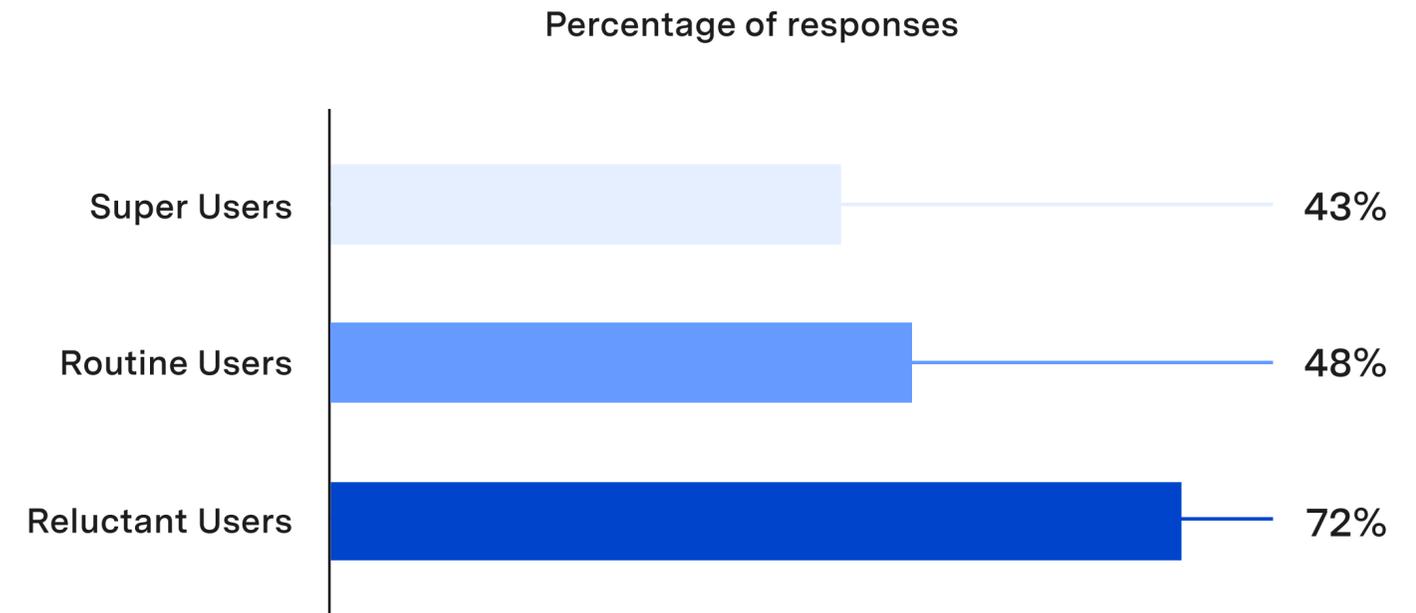
In 2025, mindset matters: Super Users see 60–70% student engagement success, vs. just 15% among Reluctant Users—driving better outcomes, lighter workloads, and more optimism for education's future.

Mindset divide

48% of all teachers think education is on the wrong track, rising to 72% among Reluctant Users.

How edtech mindset relates to educational optimism

Survey results: "Do you believe education is on the wrong track?"



Key insight

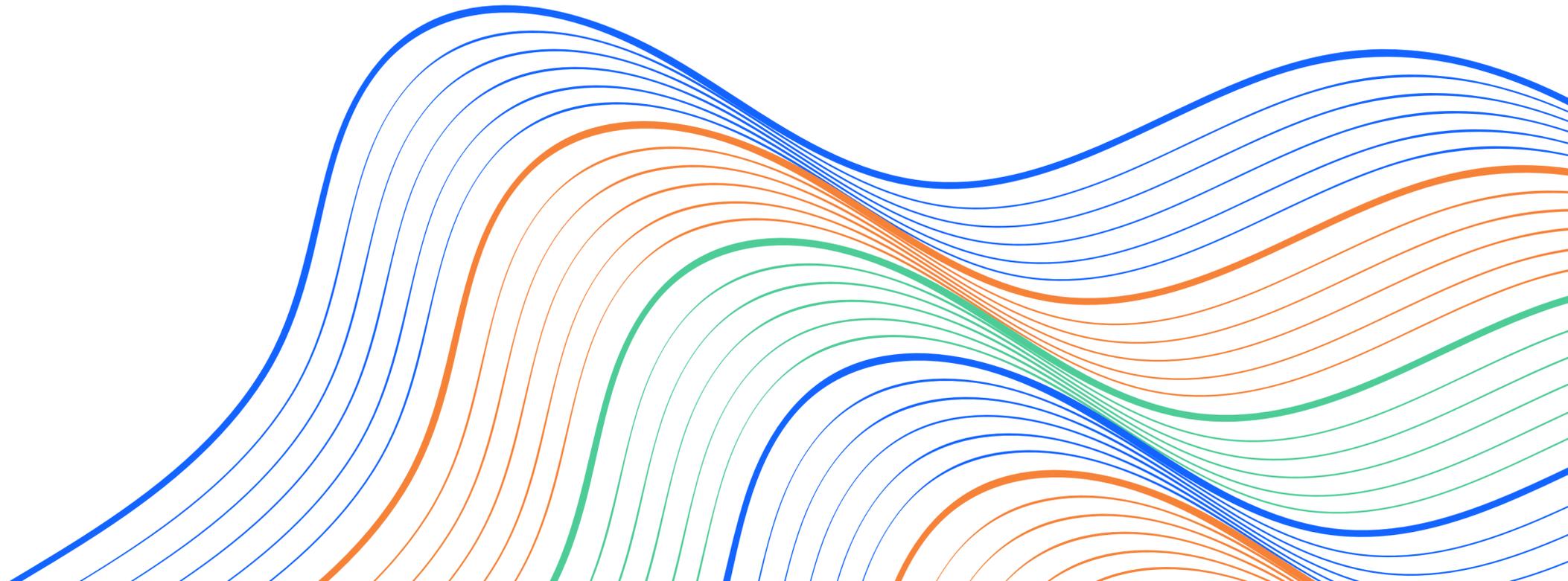
Teachers with different technology approaches show distinct patterns in their outlook on education's future.

“Developers need to think like teachers. **We need tools that let us help stuck students fast**—like restart checkpoints or answer keys in a mobile app we can use while walking the room.”

— **Evan Matthews** | Computer Technology Teacher, Massillon, Ohio, United States

87%

of Super Users say edtech makes teaching easier, dropping to 34% for those who only use edtech when required.



AI study buddies gain teacher support

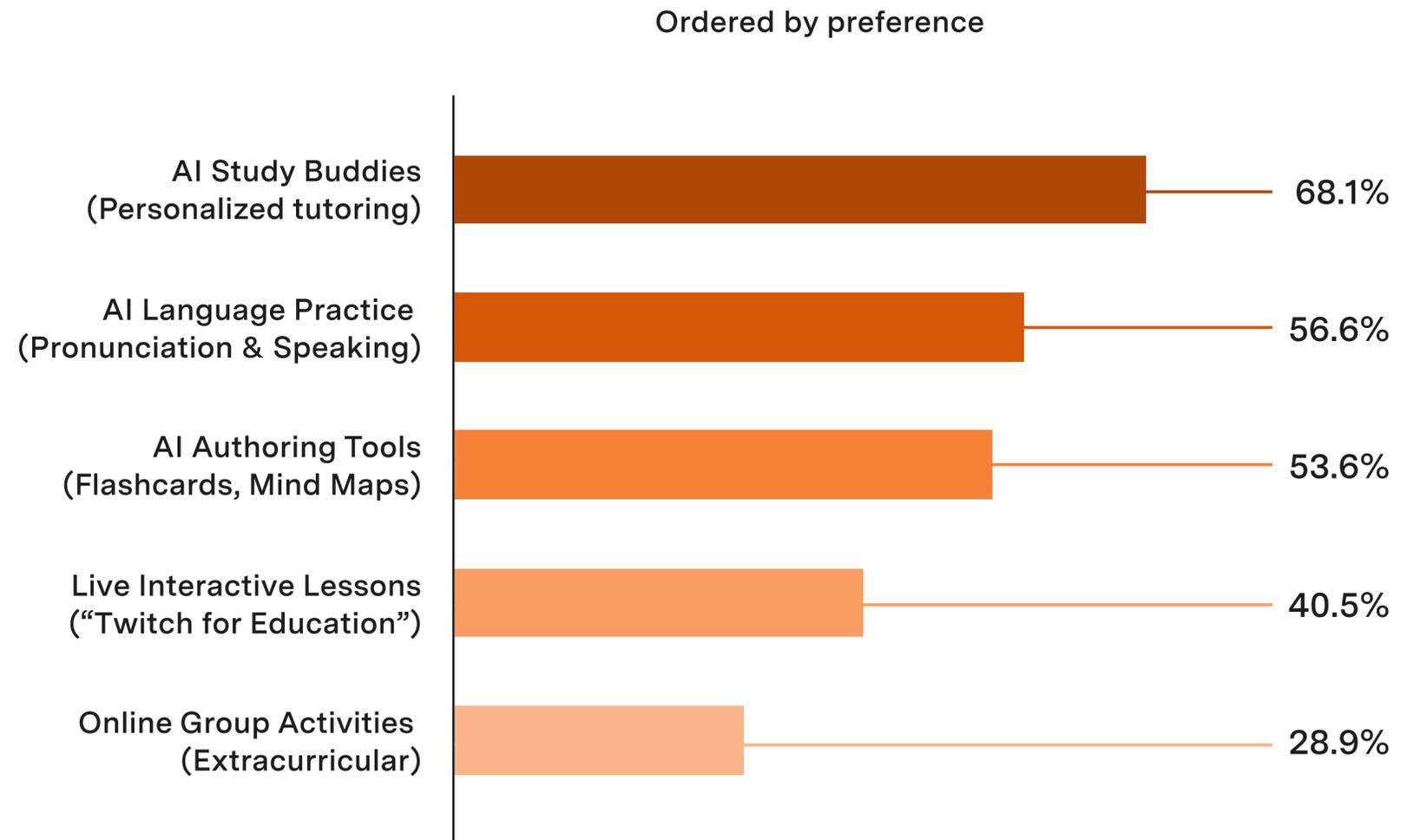
Most back AI tutoring tools, despite low confidence in using AI

Artificial intelligence is gaining ground in classrooms, but only 27% of educators feel confident using it. They're not rejecting it—just cautiously embracing it, especially for tutoring, language learning, and differentiated instruction, even if they're not ready to lead with AI yet.

AI study support

68% of educators support AI-powered study buddies for tutoring, seeing AI as a scalable fix for staffing and personalization.

AI-powered tools for students
Survey results: "Which AI tools would you give to students?"



“Even with imperfect translations, edtech tools such as Google Translate **helped me to academically and socially reach my Arabic- and Turkish-speaking students**—and those moments of connection to the curriculum and fellow classmates were pure joy.”

— **Jennifer Baker** | 4th Grade Teacher, Erie, Pennsylvania, United States

57%

of educators favor artificial intelligence for pronunciation and practice, helping English learners engage more easily.

Student engagement depends on the right tool for the right learner

Gamification, choice, and personalization are key to impact

There's no single formula for student engagement—different learners need different support. Teachers say edtech is most effective when its features are aligned with students' academic abilities and emotional needs. The most engaging tools meet students where they are, whether through competition, creativity, or autonomy.

Tools to engage

60% of teachers see gamification as the top way to re-engage disconnected learners.

Which aspects of edtech is most effective in supporting disengaged students?

Percentage of respondents (%)



60%
Gamification element



47%
Engaging visuals



40%
Student choice and voice



38%
Instant feedback



32%
Real-world relevance



20%
Student collaboration



18%
Differentiation pathways



17%
Creative expression



12%
Goal setting

The 7-point edtech effectiveness gap

Despite widespread adoption of edtech – with over 80% of teachers using edtech regularly – there's still an effectiveness gap. While 60% of educators say they want more edtech resources to help engage students, only 53% find their current tools effective. This 7-point gap reveals that availability isn't the issue – **teachers need tools that are actually engaging and meet their students' specific needs, not just more options.** This speaks to the importance of administrator oversight of the tools teachers are using to evaluate and elevate what's really effective.



“My students used to skip class and tune out. I knew I had to find a new way to reach them, so I turned to edtech. After I started using Clever and the Enhanced Teacher Portal training, their attendance shot up to 95% and they’re actually excited to learn. **Edtech helped me turn things around.**”

— **Babajide Odunfa** | Special Educational Needs Teacher South Carolina, United States

66% of educators use or want to use edtech to keep chronically absent students connected.

Budget-first decisions overlook teacher needs

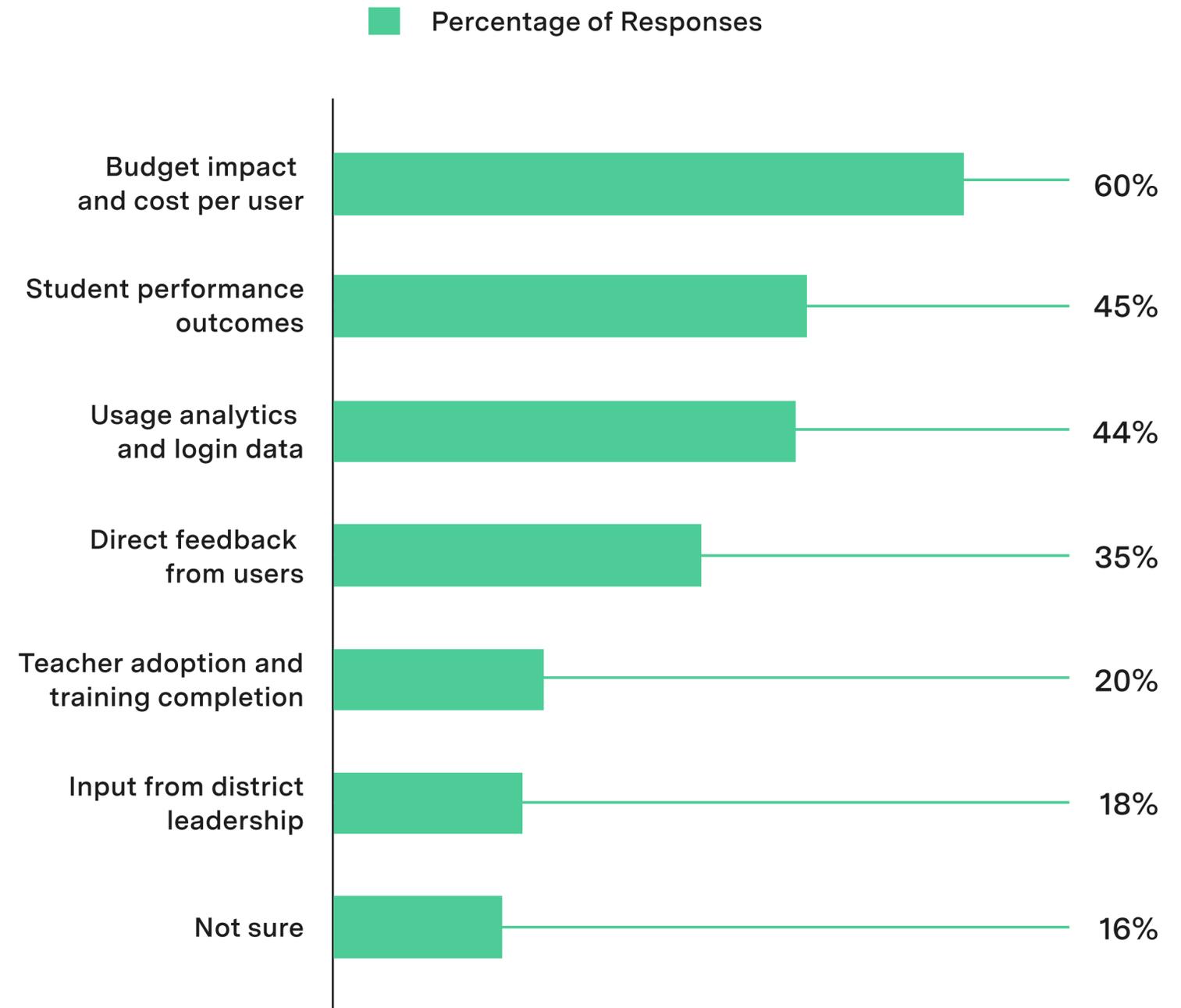
When budget beats outcomes, teachers pay the price.

Many school organizations focus mainly on budgets but miss what teachers truly need to succeed. There's a clear disconnect between procurement priorities, teacher workflows, and classroom realities. Decision makers often overlook how their choices affect the educators who use these tools every day.

Decision gap

20% say they consider teacher usage or adoption in tool decisions, despite its strong correlation with classroom impact.

How do you (or your team) decide if a licensed edtech tool is worth keeping?



Why teacher input is the missing piece in edtech decisions

Teachers end up with tools that may be affordable but don't actually support their daily work. **When decision makers don't prioritize teacher input or classroom outcomes, educators are left to make the best of solutions and integrations that weren't designed with their needs in mind.** This creates frustration, reduces adoption, and ultimately wastes the very budget schools were trying to protect.



“Usage data tells you what’s being used—but **only teachers can tell you why**. Pair their insight with your analytics to make smarter, people-driven edtech decisions.”

— **Mark Racine** | Former Chief Information Officer, Boston Public Schools, Massachusetts, United States

61% of decision makers say budget drives tool evaluation, vs. 45% who focus on student outcomes.

Cybersecurity risks start where learning happens

Teachers are on the frontline—but often left in the dark

Educators handle student data daily but lack training or systems to keep it secure. With 74% of admins expecting breaches and 36% report already experiencing attacks, teachers remain an untapped part of school security infrastructure—leaving schools with patchwork defenses and persistent risk.

Student vulnerability

24% of administrators feel confident protecting student identities; MFA protects 95% of IT staff and 90% of teachers, but only 5% of students.

1 in 4 educators receives no cybersecurity training



16% of educators receive quarterly cybersecurity updates



59% of educators monitor student activity and 38% teach digital citizenship



“Technical cybersecurity solutions alone aren’t enough – the human factor remains our greatest vulnerability. We could invest millions in cybersecurity infrastructure, but **without educating our users, we’re missing the critical piece.**”

— **David Boxer** | Chief Information Officer, The Blake School, Minnesota, United States

21% of educators have a say in tool selection or privacy safeguards.

Why it Matters

The 2025 Classroom of the Future Report makes one point clear: **technology alone doesn't transform education—teachers do.** Every trend we examined underscores that educator mindset, confidence, and daily experience remain the decisive factors in whether edtech delivers on its promise. To build the classrooms of the future, product developers, curriculum leaders, and school decision-makers must put people—not just tools—at the center.

For Product Developers

- **Design with teachers in mind.** Tools must solve real classroom problems, fit naturally into workflows, and demonstrate immediate value—especially the skeptical or time stretched educators.
- **Build intuitive, secure, and inclusive products.** Onboarding should build teacher confidence, AI tools should be explainable, privacy protections should be seamless.
- **Prioritize engagement features.** Offer multiple pathways—gamification, personalization, and student choice—to meet diverse learners where they are.

For Curriculum Leaders

- **Invest in teacher mindset.** Tailored coaching, trust-building, and peer mentorship accelerate adoption and transform tools into teaching allies.

- **Match tools to learning needs.** Move beyond one-size-fits-all implementation by training educators to choose the right features for the right students.
- **Elevate cybersecurity awareness.** Make digital citizenship and data protection integral to professional learning.

For School Decision-Makers

- **Teacher buy-in drives impact.** Adoption—not procurement—determines whether edtech investments succeed. Include educators in tool selection and weigh engagement and satisfaction alongside budget considerations.
- **Close the confidence gap on AI.** Provide structured training and support so teachers can harness AI as a teaching assistant, not a replacement.
- **Strengthen the human firewall.** Equip teachers with the training and systems they need to protect student data, recognizing their frontline role in cybersecurity.

The takeaway? Schools can't simply purchase transformation. To create lasting impact, they must empower the educators who bring technology to life, ensuring tools are not only accessible but trusted, effective, and designed for the diverse realities of today's classrooms.



The background features a series of overlapping, wavy lines in three colors: blue, orange, and green. These lines flow from the left and right edges towards the center, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are of varying thicknesses, with some being significantly thicker than others, and they appear to be layered, with some colors partially obscuring others. The overall effect is a dynamic, fluid pattern that frames the central text.

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