



Gallagher

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DATA DRIVES DECISIONS™

K-12 EDUCATION

— 2024 —
WORKFORCE
TRENDS
REPORT
SERIES

Findings and insights from the 2024 Benefits Strategy & Benchmarking Survey

US EDITION



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Introduction

The shifting landscape for K-12 education has jeopardized the sector's reliably solid value propositions in recent years.

Stable and fulfilling careers with excellent benefits and a guaranteed retirement are giving way to benefits erosion and community pressures. In today's classrooms, teachers are also asked to stretch their roles beyond education, putting job fulfillment at risk. Yet organizational leadership is responding to staffing shortages with increased investments. Supporting attraction and retention within financial limits is the key goal, which requires both a targeted selection of tools and effective implementation.

Wellbeing is at the center of **Gallagher Better WorksSM**, our comprehensive approach that aligns your people strategy with your overall business goals. It focuses on the full spectrum of organizational wellbeing — taking a strategic approach to investing in employee wellbeing at the right cost structures to support diverse workforce needs.

Part of our Workforce Trends Report Series, this addendum highlights key findings and implications based on 160 K-12 organizations that participated in our 2024 Benefits Strategy & Benchmarking Survey. From broad insights to specific findings, you'll gain a practical perspective on trends and best practices to help you face your future with confidence.



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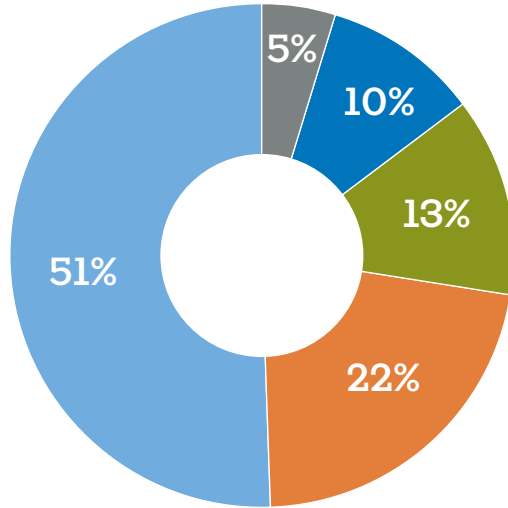
Benefits Strategy & Benchmarking Survey K-12 Education Participant Profile



160

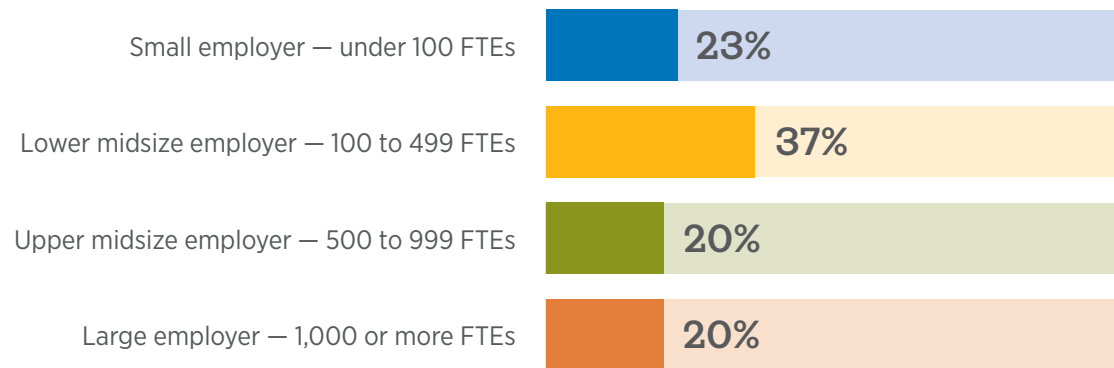
K-12 organizations

Type of educational institution

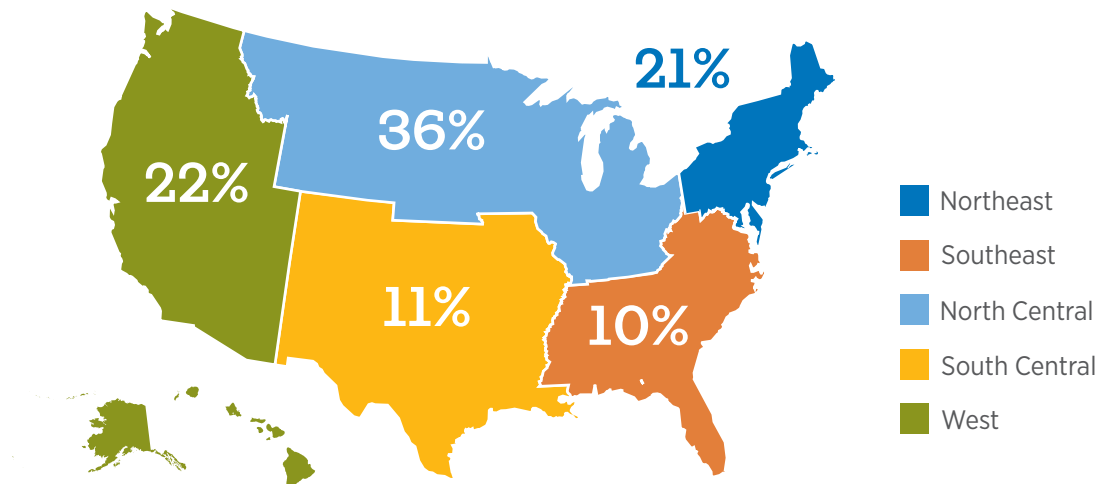


- Unified or unit school district
- Independent or private school
- Elementary school
- Charter school
- Secondary school

Workforce size — full-time equivalents (FTEs)



Geography



Key Takeaways for K-12 Education Employers

Organizational Wellbeing



Informed investments in holistic employee support builds an organizational culture centered on people as the key drivers of success.

Physical & Emotional Wellbeing



Creating a productive work environment includes advocating for the emotional wellbeing of educators and other staff members.

Career Wellbeing



A trajectory for professional growth, paired with engagement and inclusion, buoys career satisfaction.

Financial Wellbeing



Highlighting initiatives that enhance financial literacy and providing more retirement planning options promotes sustainability.

Organizational Wellbeing

Success is driven by informed investments in employee support and a people-centric culture.

A school system's strength is a reflection of its people's wellbeing and what they bring to work each day. Attraction and retention are critical priorities, and leadership is showing an increased willingness to address several factors that threaten organizational wellbeing. Investments target funding disparities, teacher shortages, and staff burnout.

Engagement surveys, stay interviews, and HR technology help identify unique needs and customize a stepped approach to solutions. For leaders, training programs can develop skills that foster a positive and supportive work environment.

HR tech is taking on a larger role by streamlining processes, improving data management, and enhancing strategic decision-making. The deployment of automated and integrated HR systems is crucial for attracting, efficiently onboarding, and retaining top talent by fostering professional development. Administrative tools also make it easier for employees to fully engage with and appreciate their benefits.



21%

Experienced higher turnover than expected in 2023

Top operational priorities



Retaining talent



Controlling employee benefit costs



Attracting talent

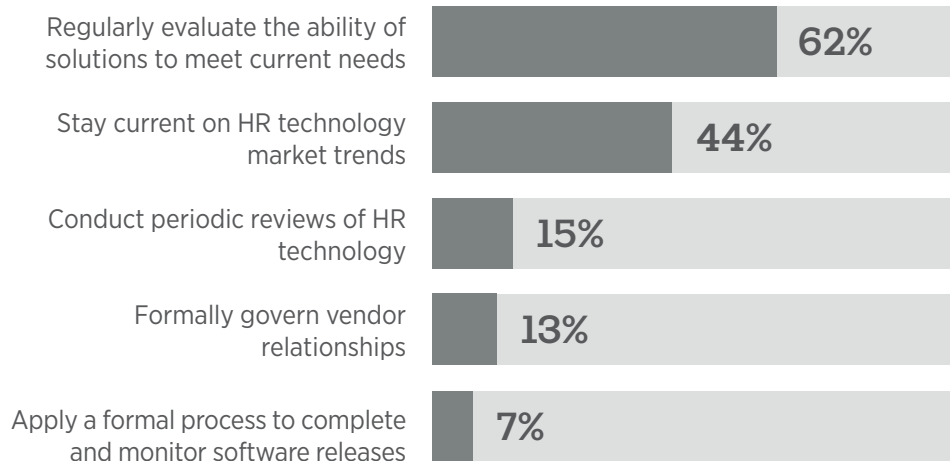
More than
1 in 4

Rank creating a strong culture as a top HR priority

More than 2 in 5

Expect to add and/or upgrade their HR technology solutions by 2026

Actions taken to optimize the organization's HR technology investment



85%

Enhanced base salary in 2024 to support employee recruitment and retention

Physical & Emotional Wellbeing

Support for both emotional and physical wellbeing promotes a better work environment.

Recognition that mental and physical health are interrelated, and equally important, continues to grow. What's also becoming more apparent is the ability of educators to positively or negatively influence students' emotional wellbeing.

To allow more flexible access to self-care, many employers are taking a fresh look at their absence management policy. Provisions under consideration include sick day buyback programs and short-term disability (STD) coverage, among others.

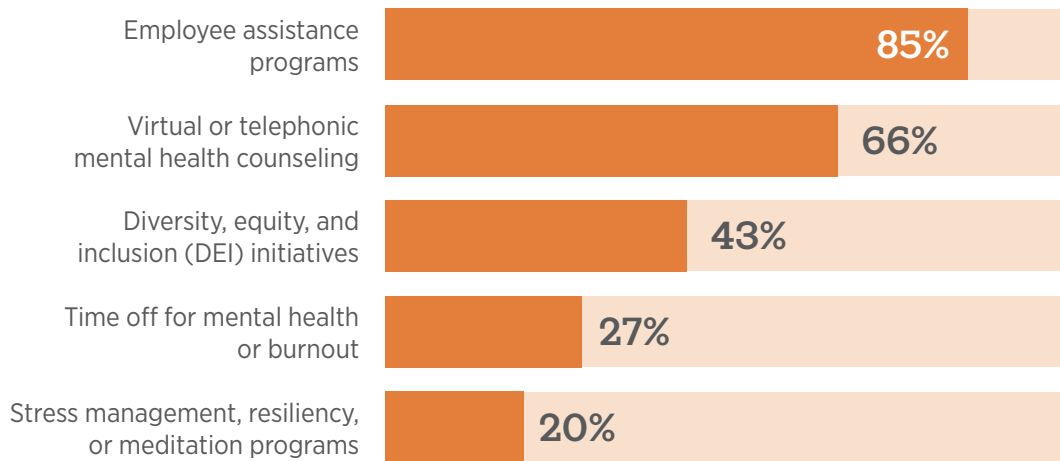
Proactive approaches to wellbeing such as mindfulness practices, stress management workshops, and access to mental health professionals are increasingly available. Rising employer interest underscores a trend toward preventive methods. And the emphasis on creating a supportive and inclusive work environment suggests a broader understanding of emotional wellbeing as key factor in employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention.



Less than
1 in 5

Have a comprehensive wellbeing strategy focused on whole-employee health

Components of emotional wellbeing initiatives

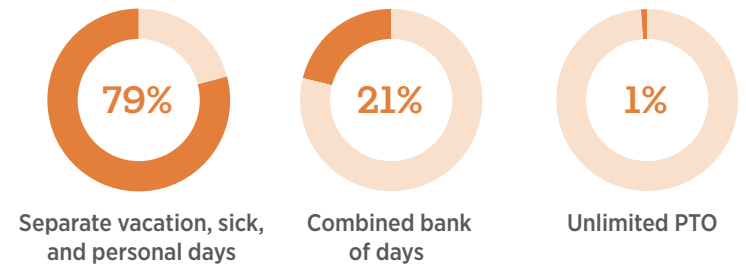


83% Agree leaders are concerned about the impact of stress and burnout on the organization

60%

Offer STD insurance or salary continuation benefits

Approach to paid time off (PTO)



More than
1 in 4

Apply at least one value-based health management tactic

Career Wellbeing

Inclusion contributes to engagement and professional growth that increases career satisfaction.

Organizations are solving the attraction and retention dilemma by focusing on staff engagement and career wellbeing. A people-centered approach, such as offering opportunities for continuous professional development, combats burnout by supporting teachers in the pursuit of their educational mission.

Leadership development has also emerged as a key focus because it enables the organization to nurture a culture that strongly values educators' learning, growth, and resilience. When classroom leaders are engaged, they can have an immeasurable impact on driving student behaviors and outcomes.

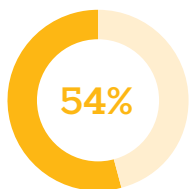
Setting policies that promote DEI, which requires correcting and preventing imbalances, can also help employees feel more respected and appreciated. For many organizations, this commitment coincides with a lasting competitive advantage.



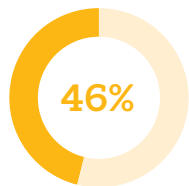
69%

Believe their workforce is highly engaged

Tactics used to improve employee engagement



Communicate in a way that fosters trust and confidence



Define clear performance goals

More than
1 in 2

Have conducted a survey to measure employee engagement since 2022

35%

Report that the key purpose of their current DEI initiatives or strategy is to align with the core values of the organization

Functions and activities that have integrated DEI policies or practices



Top components of career wellbeing initiatives



Financial Wellbeing

Dedicated resources can promote spending and saving habits that build greater financial stability.

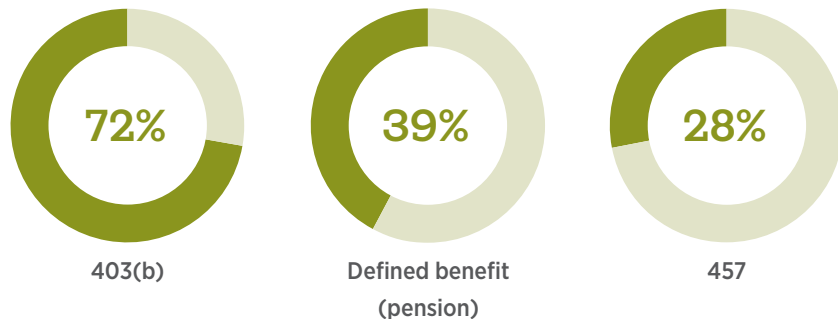
Financial stability has far-reaching effects on employees. Stress over price inflation and high interest rates is lingering, and the job outlook in the teaching profession is subject to a lot of variables. So employers are taking steps to assist their staff in managing financial concerns.

Partly for the sake of their own longevity, many schools have replaced their defined benefit pension plan with a 401(k) plan, which more closely mirrors the private sector. This choice may require participants to plan and save more diligently. But it's often supported with programs such as auto-enrollment and matching contributions, which help build retirement funds.

Educational opportunities targeting emergency savings and financial stability are also offered. Strategies that address savings and investments, using retirement planning resources, complement guidance on managing near-term spending. Together, they help employees make more informed decisions, now and in the future.

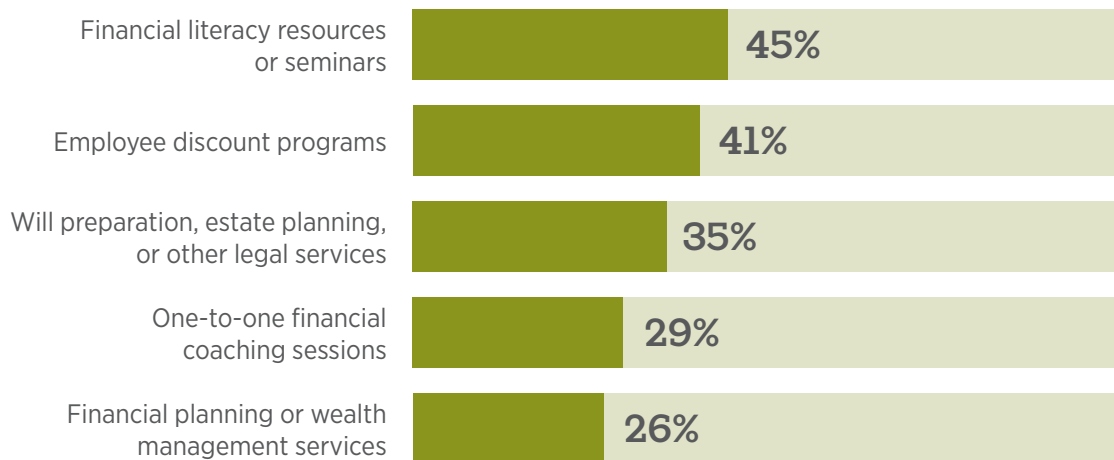


Most common active retirement plans offered

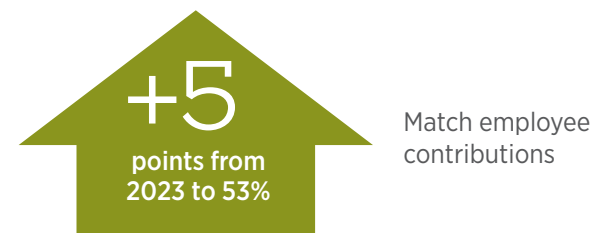


More than **3 in 4** Offer at least one financial wellbeing program or resource

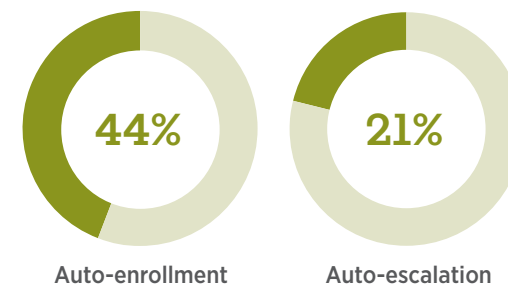
Top financial wellbeing programs and resources



93% Have a retirement program



Methods used to promote better savings habits



Final Remarks

Now that pandemic concerns have receded, opportunities are opening up to manage K-12 operations more strategically and less reactively. So organizations are making a transition. They're approaching employee and organizational wellbeing with innovative thinking and fresh solutions to common HR challenges such as attracting, retaining, and engaging talent.

When leaders demonstrate genuine appreciation for their employees, they increase resilience and trust. Making recognition a core aspect of the organization's culture is an important part of that commitment because it enables staff to better understand how their contributions impact the organization's success.

The coming years may still present operational challenges for K-12 institutions. However, enhancing HR technologies can help alleviate some of the disruptive effects associated with adaptation and advancement, especially related to administrative workload reduction. Carefully evaluating digital platforms and tools is critical, and selection should be based on the ability to efficiently deliver on their potential. Especially from an employee experience perspective, it's also beneficial to provide staff members with resources for exploring health services that offer lower healthcare costs and improved outcomes.

For additional insights and custom benchmarking on the latest trends impacting K-12 employers, contact your local Gallagher consultant or visit [AJG.com/publicsectorbenefits](https://www.nj.gov/ajg/publicsectorbenefits).

About Gallagher

Your people are your organization's greatest asset.

But daily hardships — like economic uncertainty, personal and family health concerns, and insufficient resources or staffing at work — can take a toll on your people and leave your business struggling with hindered productivity, heightened disengagement, and strained retention.

That's why every aspect of your benefits and compensation program needs to work in concert to promote overall employee wellbeing. Offering robust medical coverage and a competitive retirement plan isn't enough in today's hyper-competitive labor market.

As employees across all geographies, industries, and employer types navigate the ever-changing world, organizations must critically evaluate their people's experience in the workplace — finding unique ways to engage teams, establish authentic connections, and support employee wellbeing overall.

Doing so can help your business attract top talent, motivate employees, and shift the organizational culture so employees feel differently about their work. When organizations find ways to reduce burnout and increase productivity among their people, business performance can soar.

This is why employee wellbeing is at the center of Gallagher Better WorksSM — a comprehensive approach for strategically investing in benefits, compensation, retirement, employee communication, and workplace culture so you can support your people's physical and emotional health, financial confidence, and career growth at the right cost structures.

From evaluating the demographics of your workforce to surveying and analyzing competitor trends, Gallagher offers you data-driven insights — allowing you to make the most of your investment in talent, deliver a better people experience, and reduce organizational risk.

Even in times of uncertainty, Gallagher's consultants are here to help you optimize your profitability with a strategy rooted in the wellbeing of your people — so you can face the future with confidence.



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