Education's digital transformation opportunity: The current state and what's to come.

Adobe surveyed over 200 K–12 and higher education professionals to better understand their perceptions around digital transformation and where they reside in their transformation journey. Despite higher education and K–12 being in different parts of their journey, findings reveal each of these sectors understand the importance—and are increasingly making it a priority—to adopt new technologies.

Digital transformation
[dijidl/ tran(t)sfərˈmāSH(ə)n] *noun*

As defined in this survey:
Coordinated workforce and technology shifts that transform an institution's operations and strategic direction.

Digital transformation is gaining momentum within K–12 *and* higher education.

While the concept of digital transformation is not new in education, awareness around the value of it is increasing.

The majority of K–12 and higher education respondents agree that digital transformation is very important.

65% K–12

77% Higher education

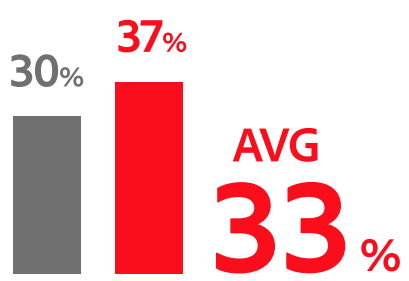
Schools are making strides in both the back office and the classroom.

While classroom-focused initiatives are further along, schools are working to help their back-office operations catch up.

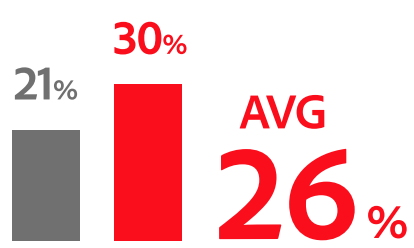
Percentage completeness in digital initiatives within educational institutions

K–12 | Higher education

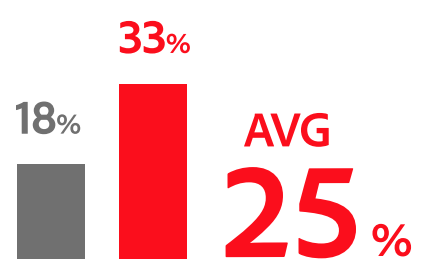
Operational initiatives



Converting paper forms to digital

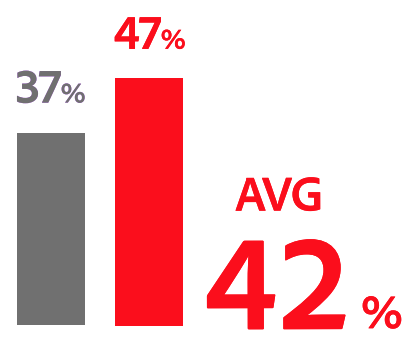


Automating administrative processes and workflows

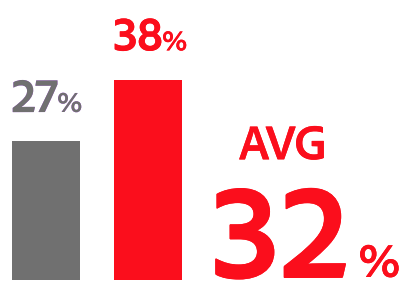


Moving "wet" signatures to digital signatures

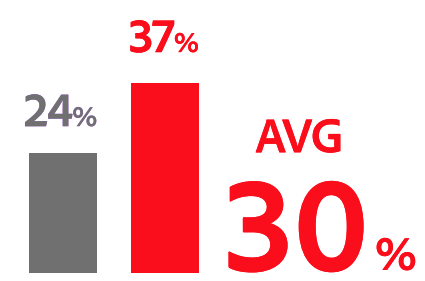
Classroom initiatives



Online/remote learning improvements



Student information system implementation/ improvements

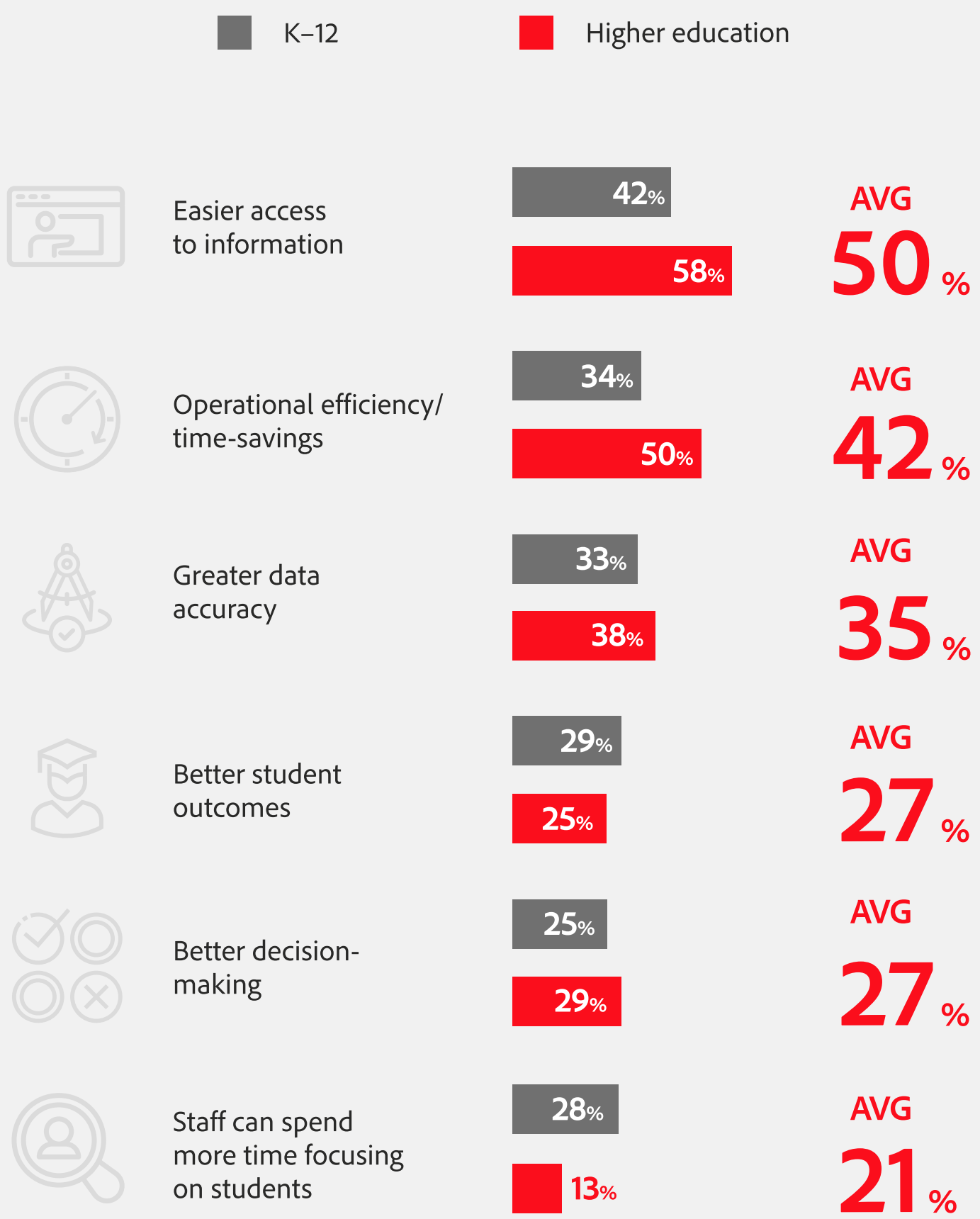


Learning management system implementation/ improvements

Demand is driven by need for access and efficiency gains.

Though the range of benefits for respondents is wide—**access to information, operational efficiency, and greater data accuracy rise to the top of the list.** This comes as no surprise given the massive amount of day-to-day data, information, and forms that are processed within K–12 and higher education—something that has only increased over time for many different audience groups.

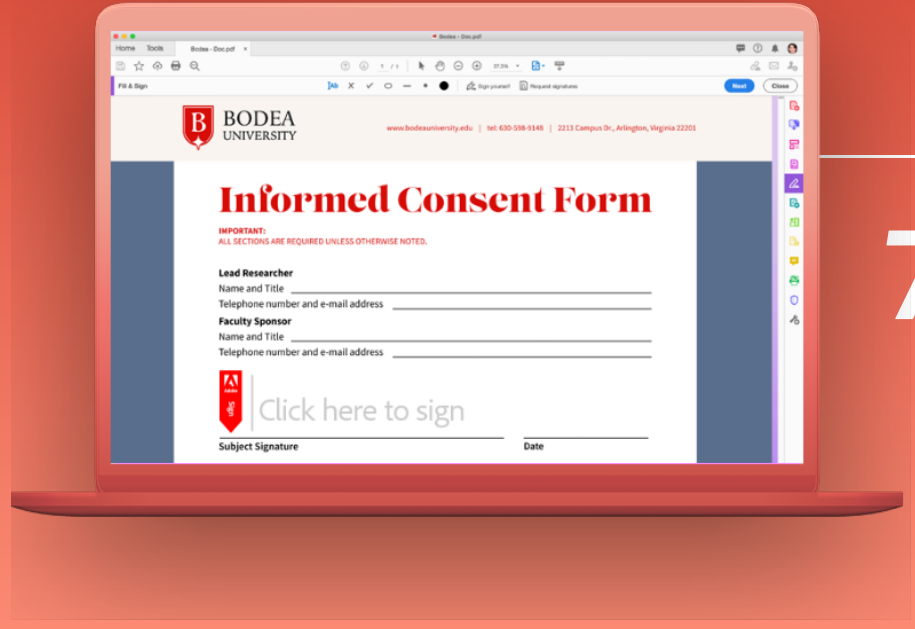
Most important benefits of digital transformation in education



The importance of paperless environments will only increase.

As time goes on, the importance of making progress on digital transformation initiatives and going paperless will only become more critical when it comes to sending, signing, and managing documents. This need has already accelerated greatly in the last 12 months and will only continue to grow over the next 5 years and beyond.

Importance of paperless environments in educational institutions



Last 12 months

77% more important

Next 5 years

85% more important

Barriers to going paperless reveal new opportunities.

While challenges to going paperless are inevitable, **top issues are more related to faculty and staff** than technology. These challenges reveal a learning opportunity where additional resources are needed to support accelerating paperless adoption. Professional development sessions, change management training, and tool consolidation are all tactics that could help.

Top 5 most common challenges institutions face when moving to a paperless environment
When given multiple options, these challenges rose to the top.

#1 Faculty/staff buy–in (29%)

#2 Staff access to technology (24%)

#3 Funding (22%)

#4 Implementation processes (21%)

#5 IT resources (21%)

Adopting a well-known, trusted, and secure solution can help garner faculty and staff buy-in and ultimately help you overcome the challenges of going paperless.

70%
of respondents stated that they are familiar with Adobe Acrobat Sign.

A trusted name to help you move forward.

Learn how Adobe Acrobat Sign can help educational institutions distribute and manage paperwork more efficiently and our commitment to supporting educational professionals in their digital transformation journey.

Learn more

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Research study was conducted by Sapio Research on behalf of Adobe in September 2021 among 207 education solution implementation decision-makers in the United States.