
2022

EDUCATION TREND REPORT



New Orchard

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ABOUT THE REPORT

Director of Innovation, Samantha Burgess, and Education Specialist, Amber Hamilton, attended the NBOA Conference in Chicago where they presented the K-12 Education version of New Orchard's Operational Maturity Inventory to 300+ attendees.

In addition to their work in the education space, Sam and Amber conduct, create, and deliver all OMI insights for our clients.

This report covers the major trends we are seeing within the education space, as reported by educators, and provides use cases for the Operational Maturity Inventory within K-12 Schools.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



K-12 Independent Schools are left with an influx of enrollment after many families transitioned away from public schools during Covid-19 and have decided to stay.



Leadership transitions are at an all-time high as schools prepare for the Great Resignation and uncover ways to sustain this unprecedented enrollment growth.



As decision makers prioritize Diversity, Inclusion, and Emotional Wellness, the identity of traditional "Private Schools" is beginning to shift.

INTRODUCTION

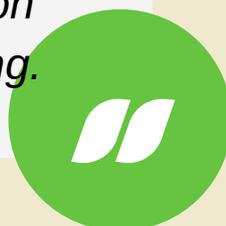


MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS



Samantha Burgess
Director of Innovation

People forget that most success indicators and internal terminologies go on without being defined. It's our job to remove that subjectivity for better decision making and better forecasting.



With a previous career in local and international development, and as Director of Innovation, it's my job to deliver tools that get leadership teams out of the weeds and back to what they're good at.

For educators, this often means helping to create an environment that's not only safe, but truly prioritizes focus and learning. People forget that most success indicators and internal terminology are subjective, which can lead to real confusion when hockey stick growth hits overnight like it did in the last two years. It's been really exciting to work alongside these schools and help them clearly define and prioritize what growth, education, mission and success look like before stepping into the strategic planning season.

As recovery from Covid-19 begins, we're seeing a lot of similarities between the for-profit and education spaces. By getting ahead of patterns, we can turn summer break from a big question mark into both proactivity and rest.



ENROLLMENT INFLUX

"We wondered if the parents who switched their kids from public to independent education would switch back after the pandemic, but it's looking like this increase of attendance is here to stay."

Regardless of mission, every school is trying to figure out how to take this influx of enrollment and still serve students well.



Why the spike?

Educators believe that keeping their doors open when public schools stayed closed has led to the dramatic spike in enrollment. Covid-19 provided an unprecedented opportunity, and Independent schools rose to the occasion.



New Growth Approach

The Covid years have quickened change trends that otherwise might have taken decades. Educators have thrived on creativity and resourcefulness and are ready to apply those mindsets to growth in new ways.



Intentional Expansion

Educators are talking about how their approach to facilities management has changed. Questions about prioritizing digital capabilities versus physical infrastructure are changing the definition of what counts as "campus."



CRYPTOCURRENCY CHANGES ENDOWMENTS

"We've never had the ability to receive or conduct advancement this way until now."

The rise of cryptocurrency as a viable means of giving is catching many schools off guard. Along with various stock-market increases and attendance through the roof, many endowments are going up. Some independent schools are finding themselves in a uniquely abundant situation asking:

"How do we create the structures underneath this growth in order to sustain it?"

01 **New Ways of Giving**

We are beginning to see crypto-currency donations become more mainstream within the upper echelon of the public. Not only were large donors able to give more, they were able to give in completely new ways.

03 **Hockey Stick Growth**

Schools forecast and prepare for incremental growth year over year, but the pandemic delivered near unprecedented growth over-night, leaving educators scrambling to support and sustain that growth with operational maturity.

02 **Staying Mission-Aligned**

Across the board, educators are reporting that strategy has taken a back seat. Without clear direction, we are seeing practices begin to creep and shift due to the reactionary nature of the last two years. Educators are asking themselves what it takes to remain mission-aligned within our "emerging normal" and course-correct from mission drift if necessary.



"As opposed to being able to see growth coming and provide support incrementally, I've got to **build the plane while it's in flight and figure out how to put support structures underneath."**



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SHIFTING IDENTITY



"How do we identify the things we want to keep from the last two years and things we are happy to let go of, without doing so from a place of fatigue?"



Multiple "fundamental" elements to a private school education are now back on the table with leaders wondering if they aren't quite as important as we thought they were.

For example: uniforms, campus development or hybrid learning environments.

Growing pressure from parents and communities to provide transparency on DEI is also prompting questions regarding aspects of an independent school education that may not be as critical as previously assumed.

How will these forces shift and fundamentally change our schools for the better?

Many educators believe now is the time to experiment with more innovative ideas.



What did Independent Schools do during the pandemic that allowed them to care for their Faculty & Staff well?

Independent schools continue to score themselves at a 3 out of 5 or higher in the area of Social and Emotional Wellness for Faculty & Staff. This means not only are their Faculty & Staff socially and emotionally well, but they also have at least some standardized processes for identifying and responding to wellness deficiencies.



Could the difference be as simple as the ability to keep the doors open?

Educators are reporting that staying largely in-person and minimizing the unpredictability of how and when teachers transition from classroom to virtual has allowed them to reduce the strain on their faculty & staff.

While some schools are planning to use the ability to flexibly transition from physical to virtual to minimize the impact of weather events (especially those schools who experienced long seasons of inclement weather, such as the southern Atlantic coast and midwest), others are holding back.

"Weather days are healthy for everyone," says one Head of School from the North Carolina coast. "Not only do we get a break from our day to day routines, but we also don't want to pressure faculty & staff to be teaching when they need to be caring for their families and communities in the event of an emergency."

These are the kinds of questions schools are asking themselves in the emerging normal, especially when it comes to balancing virtual capabilities with mission-alignment. The resounding question seems to be:

Just because we can now, does that mean we should?



**We've learned to do
a lot of things we
couldn't before, but
we should we keep
doing them?**



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LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Across the board, many schools are either in the middle of some kind of leadership transition or they are re-visiting strategic plans from three years ago to see what's still relevant.

Many education specialists believe we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg of how Covid-19 will affect the Independent school landscape. How do leadership teams restructure and reprioritize, while also staying flexible?



Leadership Changes

The majority of the schools we've worked with over the last several months are experiencing leadership transitions. Some were planned pre-Covid. Some were not.



The Effect of Seasonality

For education, personnel changes tend to happen around the start and end of the school year, which leaves decision makers in the balance as they forecast what's to come.



Re-evaluate Now

Strategic planning retreats are typically slated for summer, but we are seeing teams try to get ahead of the curve by completing their data gathering and current-state evaluations early. There's no time to lose.



Clarity for New Hires

With so much influx, effectively evaluating and onboarding new hires has gotten more complicated, especially in leadership positions. How are qualifiers and trainings changing based on what we've learned over the last 2 years?



**"How do we set our
teachers up for
success instead of
exhaustion?"**



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CONCLUSION

Based on our learnings from the NBOA experience and in working directly with Independent schools, these are the trends we are keeping an eye on right now.

Unprecedented Abundance

- Sizable enrollment increase almost overnight
- Endowments are changing, both in size and format.



Shifting Priorities

- Traditional elements of an independent school experience, such as uniforms, are being re-considered.
- Leaders are emerging from the Covid years and realigning with mission and strategy.



Major Staffing Changes

- Leadership transitions are putting many schools back in a state of flux.
- The way new hires are evaluated and onboarded may be changing based on learnings from the Covid years.



ABOUT NEW ORCHARD

New Orchard is a team of change management experts that created a strategic framework for schools looking to accelerate mission and demonstrate impact. Our tool, Journey, delivers powerful, flexible, and evaluative tools across the school environment to generate data driven and mission-aligned strategy.

The leaders of New Orchard have been advancing the field of organizational insights through research and development for more than 20 years.

New Orchard draws on our ever-growing database of insights to help guide the evaluation of organizational health from multiple perspectives across multiple industries.

Organizations are using Journey in industries such as education, healthcare, non-profit, technology, and more.



NEXT STEPS

Now that you know the trends,
Which should you pay attention to?

Here's how Journey can help:

- Get a clear, unobstructed view of every critical aspect of your school.
- Identify leadership blindspots and key influencers within your team.
- Leverage self-reported data from your faculty & staff to evaluate strategic goals against current capability.



**Identify the
strategies needed
to sustain mission.**

JOURNEY