NEOED

2023 REPORT

TOP 5

HR TRENDS IN EDUCATION

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WELCOME

The 2023 Trends Report addresses the biggest opportunities available to education HR in 2023 and provides insight into how your peers across the nation are prioritizing those trends. Filled with valuable data from 300+ survey respondents, relevant analyses, and resources, this report will help you refine strategic priorities and prepare for 2023.

Who We Surveyed

The report focuses specifically on HR trends in education, **using data from the survey responses of 300+ HR professionals.** Our respondents included HR generalists, directors, managers, administrators, etc. from a variety of institutions: four year colleges (35%), two year colleges (29%), K–12 (29%), and more (7%). The survey was conducted in December of 2022.

Staff shortages in education existed before 2020, but the pandemic exacerbated the problem. The education sector is now facing an unprecedented hiring and retention crisis.

According to an NEA report, the ratio of hires to job openings was 0.55 in 2022, down from 0.75 in 2019. And 55% of educators have indicated that they're ready to leave their jobs sooner than planned. It could be this way for a while.

Another report by Lightcast, analyzing US labor statistics, shows that all baby boomers will be 65+ by 2030. Meanwhile, the population entering the workforce (aged 16–24) will continue to decrease rapidly. In other words, over the next 10 years more people will be leaving the workforce than entering it, resulting in increased labor shortages for the foreseeable future.
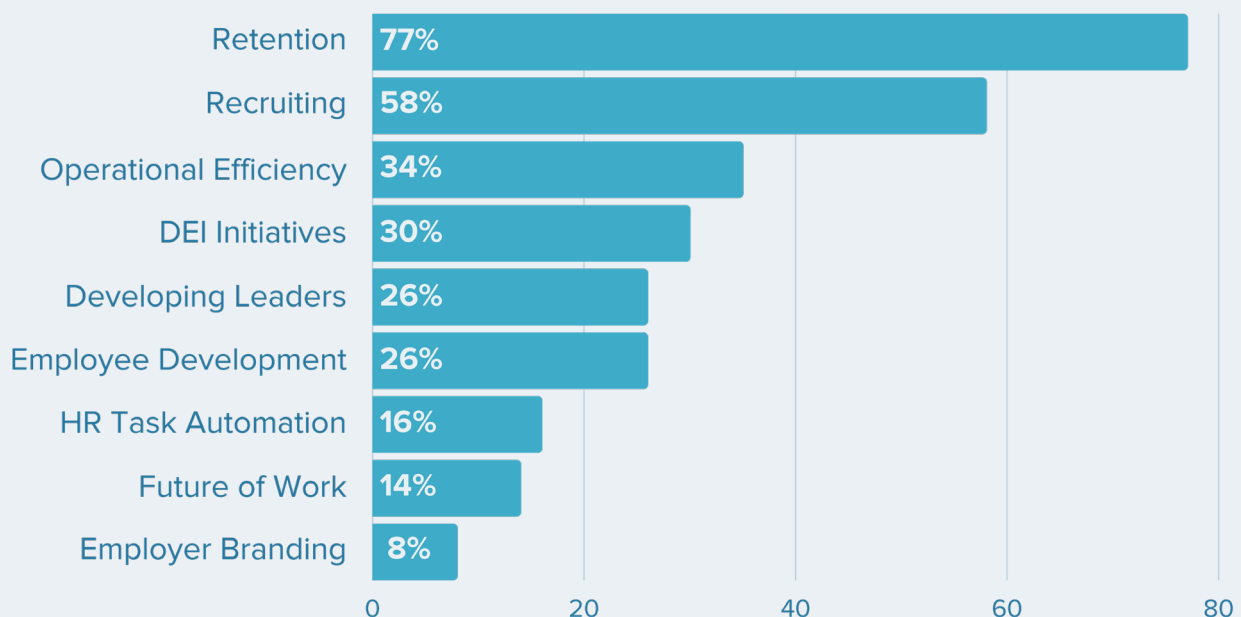
Education HR's Top Priorities

This report focuses on the top five HR trends in education, based on the survey results in Figure 1, where HR professionals listed their top priorities for 2023: recruiting, retention, operational efficiency, DEI, and employee development. Many of the other priorities listed in Figure 1 will also be addressed throughout the report, as many of them are connected. Respondents were able to select up to three choices.

With retention (78%) and recruiting (58%) towering over the other priorities, these two trends will remain a key focus across educational institutions this year.

Figure 1
Top Priorities in 2023

Priority	Percentage
Retention	77%
Recruiting	58%
Operational Efficiency	34%
DEI Initiatives	30%
Developing Leaders	26%
Employee Development	26%
HR Task Automation	16%
Future of Work	14%
Employer Branding	8%

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RETENTION

Overview

> **Key Takeaway:** *Providing raises and bonuses will always impact retention, but the biggest cause of educator turnover is burnout. Protecting work-life balance, boosting morale, and improving culture are practical ways to keep your staff around longer.*

With a majority of educators planning to leave their jobs sooner than planned, it makes sense to focus on retention. 78% of education HR professionals felt similarly, citing retention as one of their top three priorities in 2023 (Figure 1). Let's examine **why** retention is a top priority.
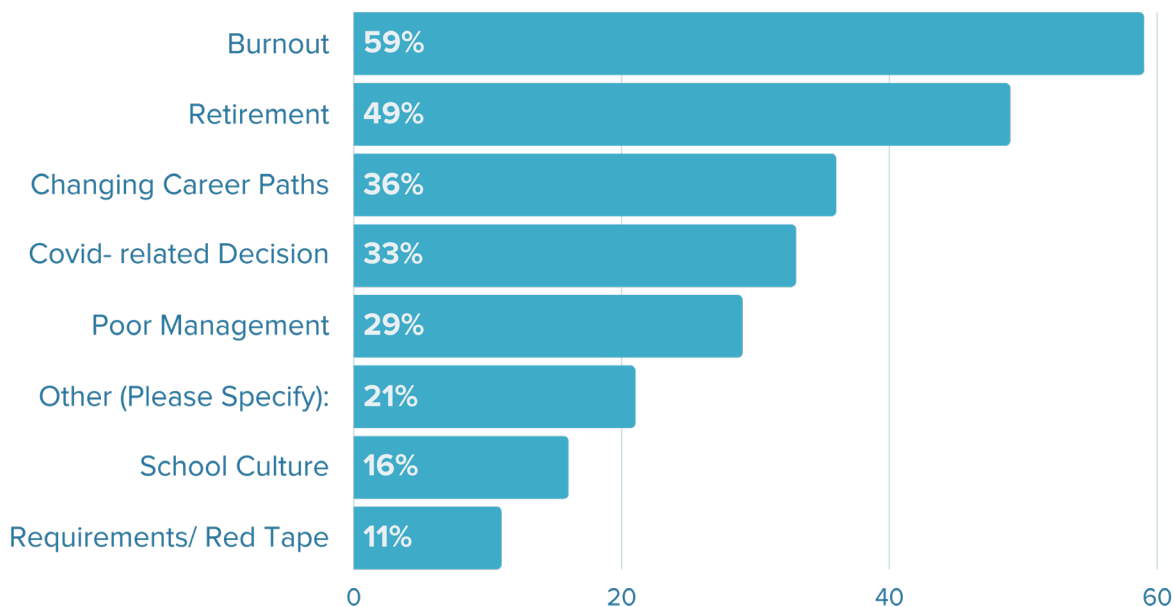
Why Retention

According to SHRM, each employee departure costs about one third of that person's annual pay, meaning higher retention requires less recruitment resources and saves money. Improving retention is addressing the root cause instead of the symptom.

To increase retention, you need to know what employees care about and why they're leaving.

According to HR professionals, the top three reasons employees left agency jobs in 2021 and 2022 were burnout (59%), retirement (49%), and changing career paths (36%). Respondents were able to select up to three options (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Top Three Reasons for Employee Turnover in 2021 and 2022

Reason	Percentage
Burnout	59%
Retirement	49%
Changing Career Paths	36%
Covid- related Decision	33%
Poor Management	29%
Other (Please Specify):	21%
School Culture	16%
Requirements/ Red Tape	11%

Boosting Morale

Morale impacts retention, and staff and faculty morale is low across all levels of education. Our survey revealed the leading culprits. Unsurprisingly, the results support the data in Figure 2.

In K–12, HR professionals cited pay (55%), work-life balance (53%), and interactions with student families (32%) as the top three causes of low morale. Higher education HR reported pay (71%), lack of resources (33%), and work-life balance (33%) as the key detractors.

Improving Culture

The number of people graduating from teacher programs has been _decreasing over the past decade_, while the percentage leaving education has been on the rise. Though you can't control the national narrative, you can make education at your institution a more attractive career path for current staff and future candidates. This starts with culture.

According to a Columbia University study, 57% of employees at high culture organizations were very satisfied with their jobs and only 14% were very likely to leave. Conversely, only 7% of employees at low culture organizations were satisfied with their jobs and a whopping 48% were very likely to leave. The message is clear — culture directly impacts employee job satisfaction, turnover, and productivity.

In our survey, only **30% of HR pros said their institution has a strong culture**, whereas 70% said their culture was average or weak. In today's job market, average culture can't compete with many private sector companies or the third of schools with strong culture.

30%
Strong Culture

70%
Weak/Average Culture

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RECRUITING

Key Takeaway: *Competition for qualified candidates is only increasing. In addition to finding innovative ways to compete for top talent, education HR professionals need to promote work-life balance at their agency – a growing concern for candidates.*

Recruiting over the last several years has been challenging. The ratio of hires to job openings has been ***less than 1 since 2017***, meaning the education staffing shortage predated the pandemic and has only gotten worse.

It comes as no surprise, then, that 58% of respondents reported recruiting as one of their top three priorities in 2023 (Figure 1). Let's examine **why** recruiting is a top priority and **who** HR professionals are targeting.

Why Recruiting

Competition for top talent will only increase in the coming years. 46% of education HR pros expect scarce talent and labor shortages for the next 1–2 years, and 42% think it could last 3–5 years.
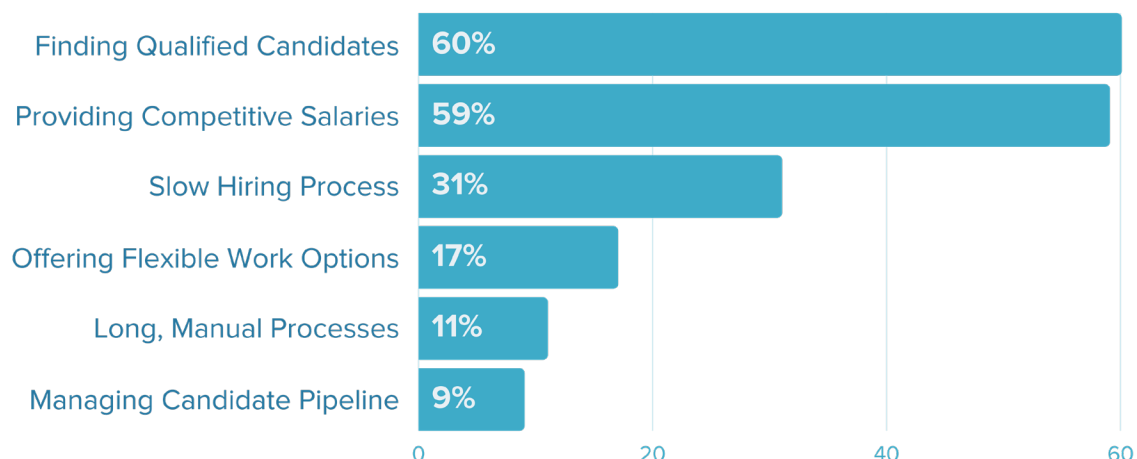
Population data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics implies it could be longer. By 2030, all baby boomers will be 65+ and the population entering the workforce (aged 16–24) won't be able to compensate for the exodus of retirees, resulting in increased labor shortages through the 2020s and maybe beyond.

Finding Qualified Candidates

Going into 2023, the top three recruiting challenges for government agencies are finding qualified candidates (60%), offering competitive salaries (59%), and slow hiring processes (31%). Dive deeper into ***recruiting and sourcing best practices***.

Figure 3
Top Two Recruiting Challenges

Challenge	Percentage
Finding Qualified Candidates	60%
Providing Competitive Salaries	59%
Slow Hiring Process	31%
Offering Flexible Work Options	17%
Long, Manual Processes	11%
Managing Candidate Pipeline	9%

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Balancing Work and Life

When asked what job candidates care about the most, 50% of HR professionals listed competitive salaries, 25% listed work-life balance, and 11% listed fulfillment in their work as most important. Benefits came in fourth, with only 5% of respondents listing it as most important. These data points should impact your candidate messaging. By promoting the things applicants care about, you can better attract top talent.
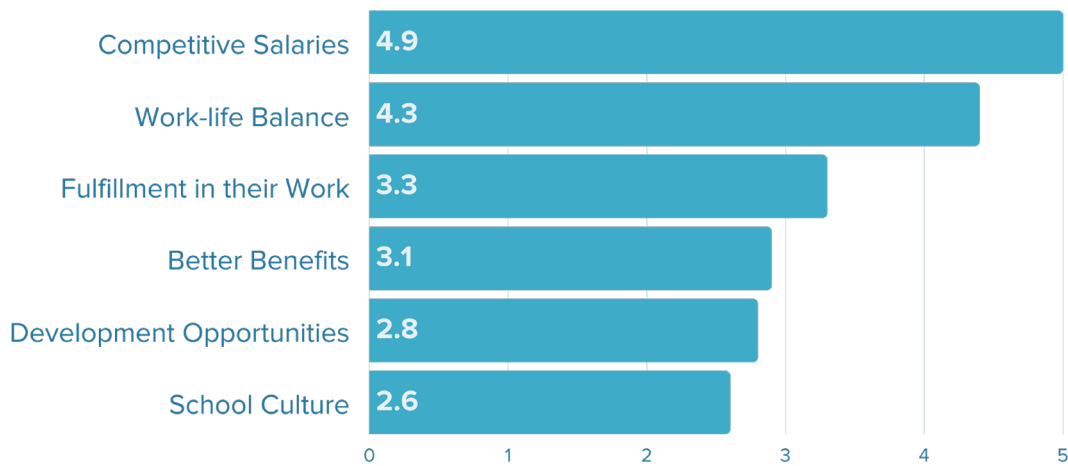

Figure 4
What Candidates Care About the Most

|	
Competitive Salaries	4.9
Work-life Balance	4.3
Fulfillment in their Work	3.3
Better Benefits	3.1
Development Opportunities	2.8
School Culture	2.6

Figure 4 is the average of all respondent rankings on a scale of 1–6.

Recruiting Millennials and Gen X

Education HR professionals are most interested in recruiting millennials (55%), followed by Gen X (44%) and Gen Z (43%). Targeting this demographic will be more competitive, but _here are some helpful tips_ that could give you an edge over the competition.
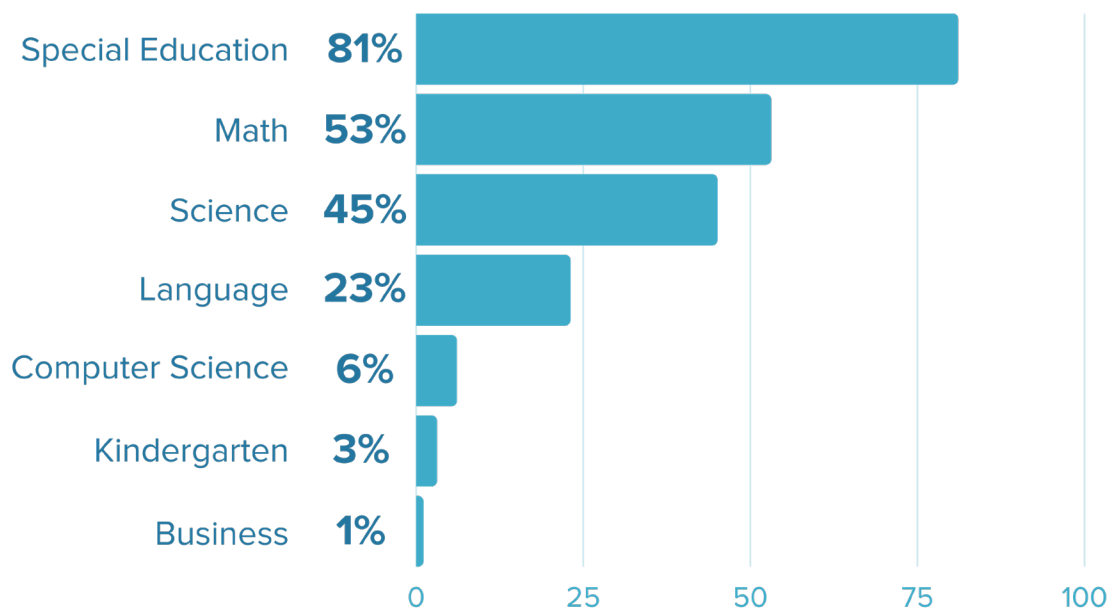
55%
MILLENNIALS

44%
GEN X

43%
GEN Z
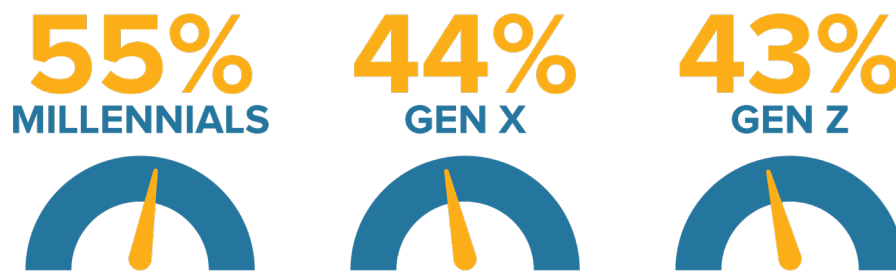
There's very little interest in hiring baby boomers (8%) and retirees (4%), which could present an opportunity for your institution. With the younger generations in higher demand and decreasing rapidly, older generations may be easier to recruit.

Hiring by Teaching Disciplines

Higher education respondents are struggling to recruit for some disciplines more than others: nursing (49%), computer science (37%), engineering (30%), and business related (17%). The same is true for K–12 respondents, but special education (81%) and math (53%) top the list (Figure 5).

Figure 5
K–12: Most Difficult Teaching Disciplines to Hire For

Discipline	Percentage
Special Education	81%
Math	53%
Science	45%
Language	23%
Computer Science	6%
Kindergarten	3%
Business	1%

(Scale: 0, 25, 50, 75, 100)

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OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Key Takeaway: *Money and people are the scarcest resources in education HR, creating a need to do more with less. The right software can help.*

Considering the scarce resources in education HR, it makes sense that 34% of respondents cited operational efficiency as one of their top three priorities in 2023 (Figure 1). Let's examine **why** it's a top priority and **how** to improve it.
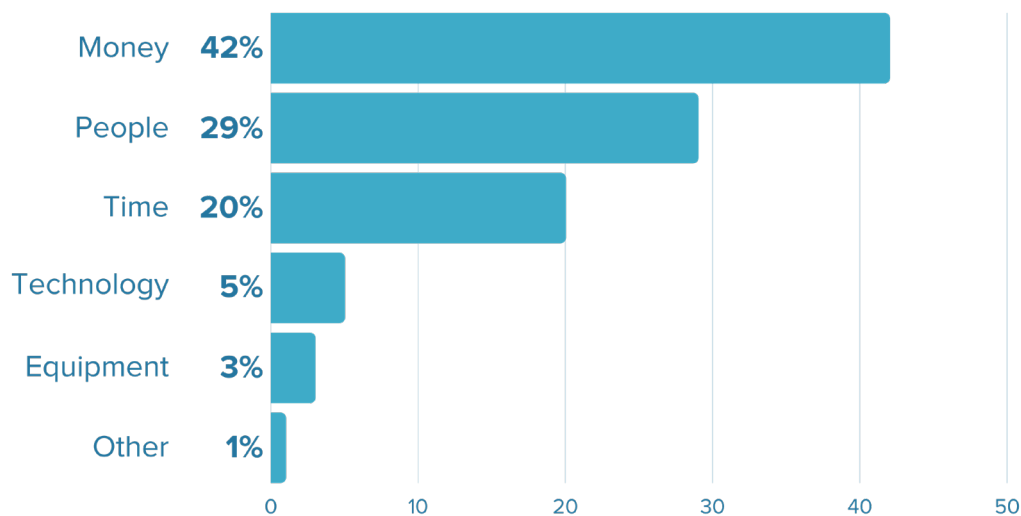
Why Operational Efficiency

Educational institutions with efficient operations can deliver high quality services at scale with as few resources as possible – a good thing to have in the midst of a labor shortage. 42% of HR pros reported money as the scarcest resource, followed by people at 29% (Figure 6).

Streamlining operations helps you do more with less people, so consider maintaining a smaller staff to free up money for pay raises, bonuses, etc. In this way, operational efficiency can positively impact retention.

Figure 6
Resource Scarcity

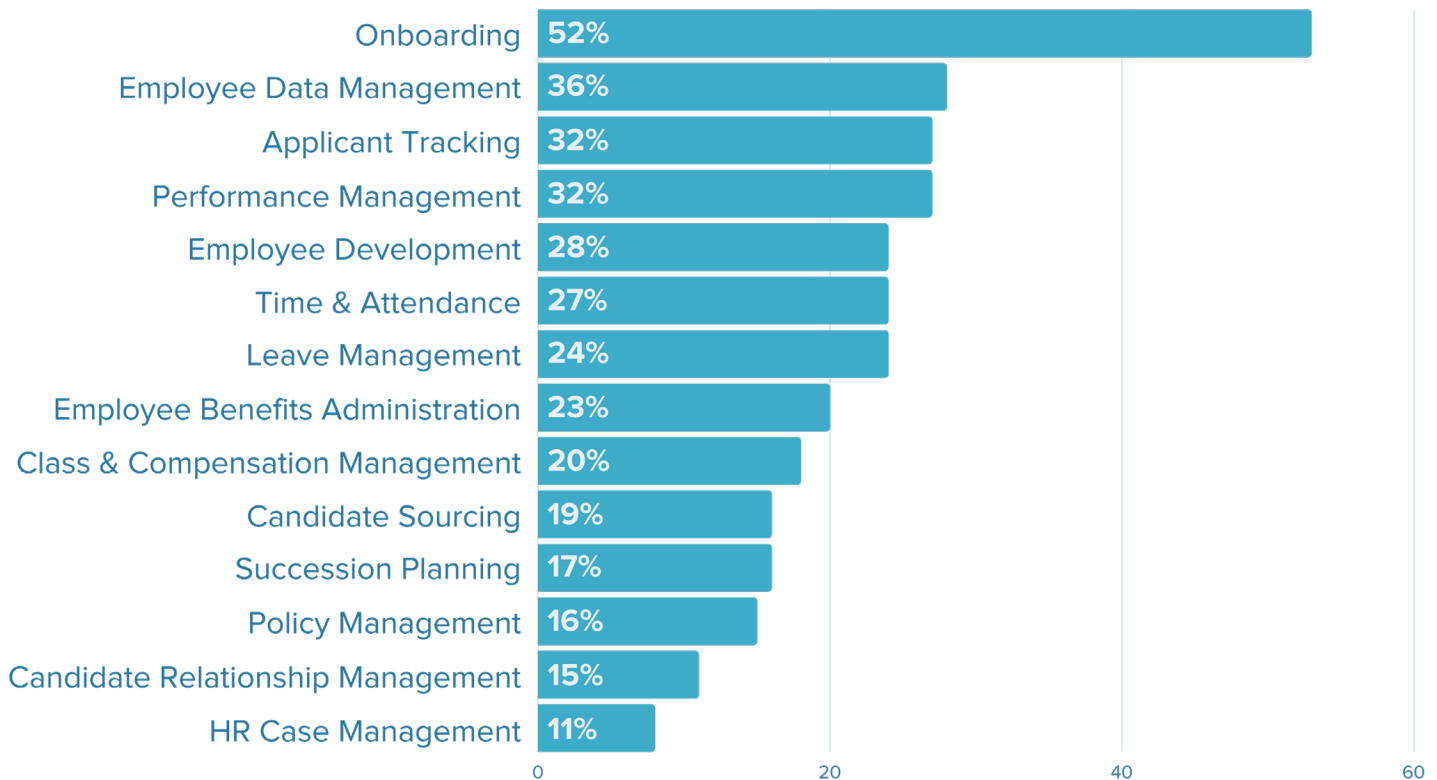| Resource	Percentage
Money	42%
People	29%
Time	20%
Technology	5%
Equipment	3%
Other	1%

Automating HR Tasks

The purpose of HR technology is to improve operational efficiency. Education HR professionals hope to improve a variety of processes and routine tasks in 2023, but **onboarding tops the list at 52%** (Figure 7). Respondents selected all options that applied.

HR Processes to Automate in 2023

Process	Percentage
Onboarding	52%
Employee Data Management	36%
Applicant Tracking	32%
Performance Management	32%
Employee Development	28%
Time & Attendance	27%
Leave Management	24%
Employee Benefits Administration	23%
Class & Compensation Management	20%
Candidate Sourcing	19%
Succession Planning	17%
Policy Management	16%
Candidate Relationship Management	15%
HR Case Management	11%

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DEI

Overview

> **Key Takeaway:** *DEI recruiting remains an important priority for educators, but reskilling female employees and employees of color is another (often overlooked) way to improve DEI initiatives at your institution.*

Students of color are the majority in public schools, and have been for almost a decade, but teachers and professors nationwide don't reflect that same racial and ethnic diversity. Education HR workers understand this, with 30% of respondents citing DEI as one of their top three priorities in 2023 (Figure 1). Let's examine **why** it's a top priority.

Why DEI

Diversity, equity, and inclusion improves teaching and learning at all levels of education. Students who interact with diverse teachers and staff are less likely to hold implicit biases as adults.

According to an NEA poll last year, diverse educators are more likely to leave or retire earlier than planned (59–62%), creating a need for effective DEI recruiting and retention strategies. But 48% of education HR professionals said they don't have an effective DEI recruiting strategy, or it could use some improvement.

Adding a Diversity Champion

Some higher education institutions use search committees to recruit faculty and staff. These committees include a variety of roles (HR manager, dean, etc.), but only 28% of respondents have a diversity champion on their committee. Adding a diversity champion or selecting a more diverse interview panel is a practical step towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Reskilling Employees

Many organizations are focused on DEI recruiting, but upskilling and reskilling can be an important part of your DEI program as well. 58% of respondents said they don't have a plan for, or could use improvement on, reskilling female employees and employees of color. Reskilling those who have interest in another job can help them advance in their careers, increase job satisfaction, and improve DEI at your institution.

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EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Key Takeaway: *Providing hands-on development opportunities can foster deeper learning for staff members. Leaders at all levels should be given development opportunities as well, since management skills were reported as needing significant improvement.*

Employee development helps your staff grow in their careers while increasing job satisfaction. 26% of government HR professionals cited employee development as one of their top three priorities in 2023 (Figure 1). Let's examine **why** it's a top priority.

Why Employee Development

Employee development can help improve culture and, ultimately, retention. **Data from a _University of Phoenix study_ showed that 49% of employees want to upskill but don't know where to start.** 52% said they need to learn new skills to continue their careers.

HR surveyees cited coaching/development (24%) and people management (23%) as the top employee skills needing improvement in 2023 (Figure 8), pointing to a need for leadership development.

Figure 8
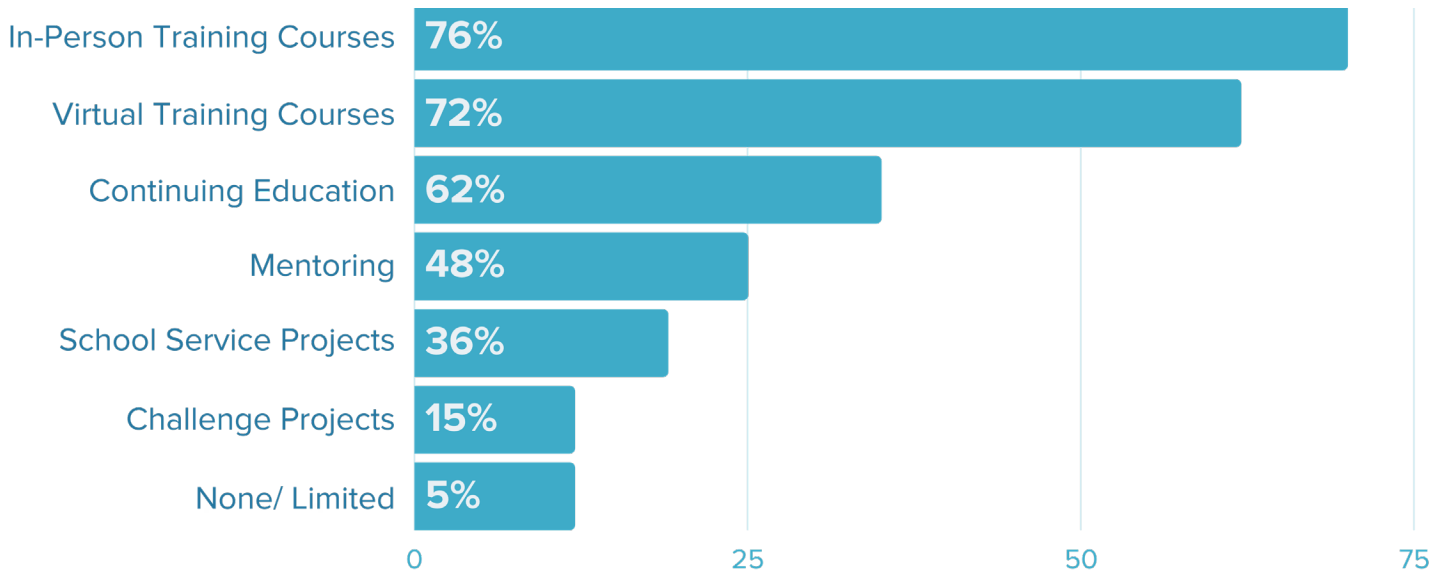### Employee Skills Areas of Improvement
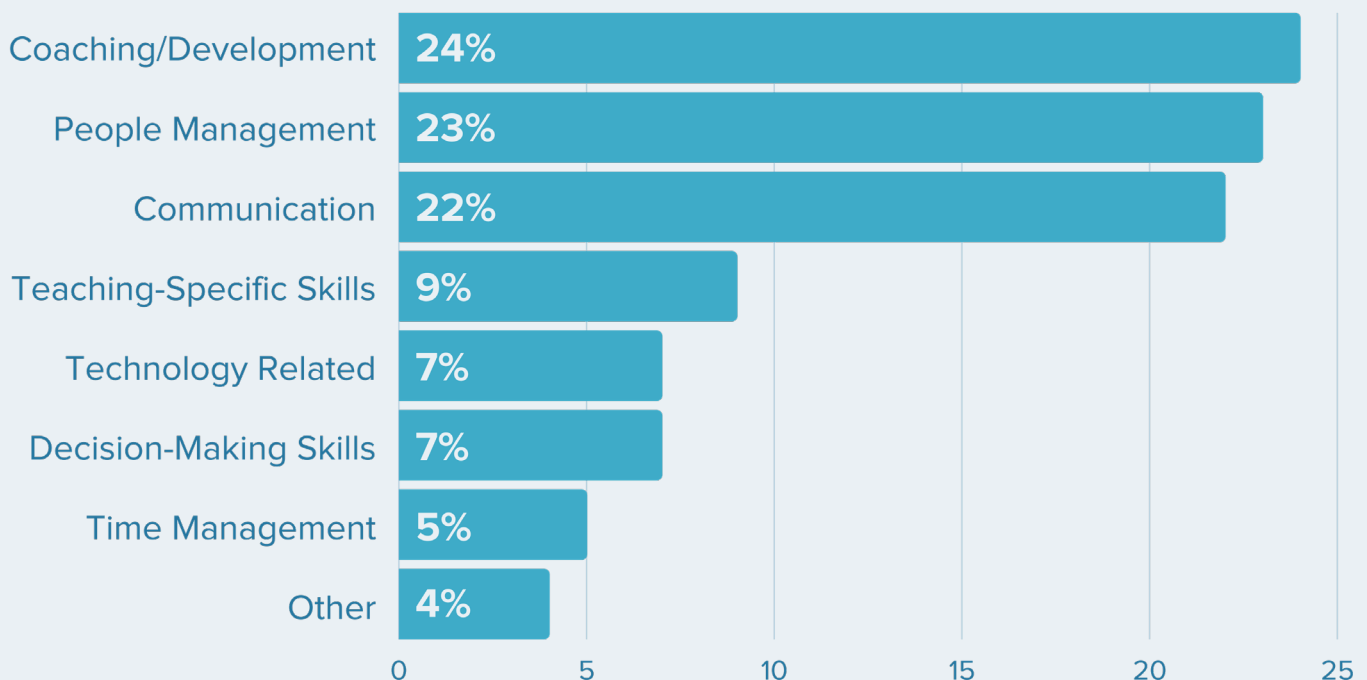
Offering Variety

Educational institutions offer a variety of upskilling opportunities, with in-person (76%) and virtual (72%) training courses at the top of the list (Figure 9). While training courses tend to be an easier, traditional form of employee development, more hands-on opportunities like mentoring and challenge projects can offer deeper learning, as well as accommodate employees with different learning styles.

Figure 9
Employee Development Opportunities Provided

Category	Percentage
In-Person Training Courses	76%
Virtual Training Courses	72%
Continuing Education	62%
Mentoring	48%
School Service Projects	36%
Challenge Projects	15%
None/ Limited	5%

NEXT STEPS

Thanks for reading the
2023 Trends Report by NEOED.

We hope these peer insights, data analyses, and resources have been helpful.

NEOED, powered by NEOGOV, serves education HR with a comprehensive suite of solutions for recruitment, onboarding, performance management, staff development, managing employee information, and more. To learn how NEOED's HR software can help your organization, ***sign up for a free consultation today.***

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