



ARTICLE

MAKING EVERY MINUTE COUNT



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Every school day depends on information moving efficiently. Student records, enrollment forms, individualized education plans (IEPs), classroom materials, transportation requests, parent communications, and countless other documents support the work happening inside each district. While these processes often take place behind the scenes, they directly influence how effectively educators, administrators, and support staff can serve students.

When information is difficult to access, approvals take too long, or staff must repeatedly print/scan/email/re-enter the same information, administrative work starts to compete with instructional time. Repeated across classrooms and departments, small inefficiencies can have a significant impact on productivity and the overall educational experience.

As districts continue to modernize their operations, classroom technology often receives the most attention. Equally important, however, are the administrative workflows that support teaching, connect departments, and keep schools running smoothly. Improving those processes isn't simply about reducing paper or digitizing documents. It's about helping educators spend less time managing information and more time supporting students.

Before You Digitize, Simplify

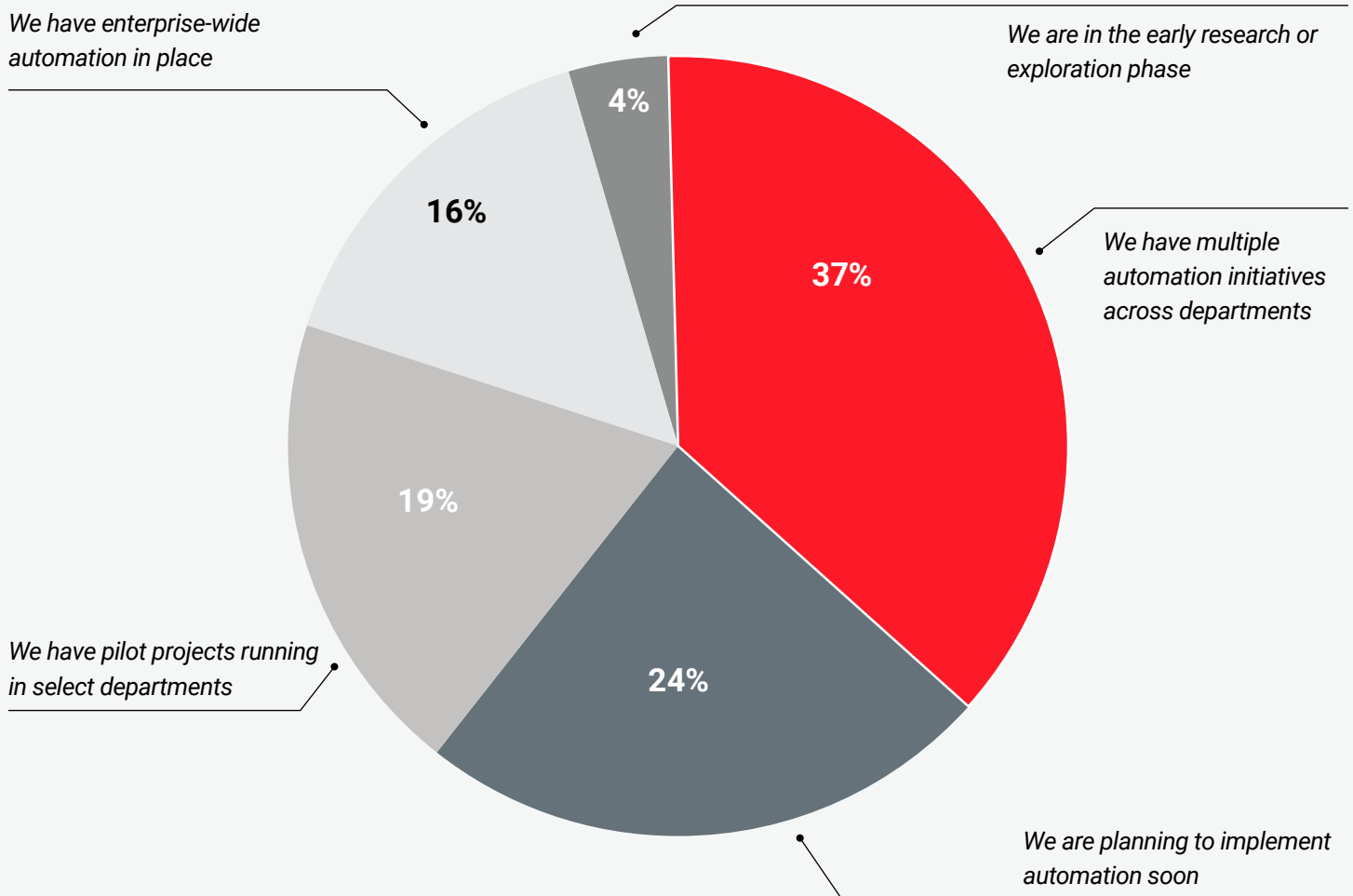
Improving classroom and administrative workflows doesn't begin with technology. It begins with understanding how information moves across the district. Enrollment packets, purchasing requests, student records, IEP documentation, classroom materials, and other processes often involve multiple departments, leading to delays, duplicate work, and unnecessary manual effort.

Rather than attempting to digitize every workflow at once, many districts start by identifying the processes that consume the most time or create the greatest administrative burden. Mapping those workflows often reveals unnecessary approvals, duplicate data entry, and manual steps that have accumulated over time. Simplifying the process before introducing new technologies helps ensure that improvements are sustainable and easier for staff members to implement.

Keypoint Intelligence™'s research shows that document process automation is already well underway across the education sector. While organizations are at different stages of maturity, nearly all have moved beyond the research phase and are actively planning, piloting, or expanding automation initiatives. The question for district leaders is no longer whether to modernize document processes, but how to do so in a way that delivers meaningful operational improvements.

Figure 1: Document Process Automation in Education

How would you describe your organization's current stage of document process automation?



N = 49 Education Respondents in the United States

Source: 2025 Digital Transformation IT Decision-Maker Survey, Keypoint Intelligence 2025

Districts don't need to modernize everything at once. Starting with one or two high-impact workflows builds confidence, demonstrates value, and creates a foundation for broader improvements over time.



Every Process Affects a Student

Administrative workflows may take place behind the scenes, but their impact is felt throughout the school community. Enrolling a new student, processing special education documentation, coordinating transportation, or updating emergency contact information all require information to move quickly between departments. When those processes are delayed or disconnected, the effects are often seen first by students and their families.

Because these workflows involve multiple stakeholders, they also present some of the greatest opportunities for improvement. Rather than attempting to modernize every process at once, forward-thinking districts start with workflows that touch several departments and have a direct impact on the educational experience. Enrollment, special education documentation, and student records are often good starting points because the improvements will benefit administrators, educators, students, and parents alike.

The greatest value doesn't come from moving documents faster, but from ensuring that information reaches the right people at the right time. This enables schools to respond quicker, reduce administrative delays, and provide better support throughout the student journey.

Giving Time Back to the Classroom

Teachers do far more than deliver instruction. Every day, they prepare lesson materials, complete required documentation, communicate with families, manage classroom records, and access student information. These tasks might seem routine when viewed individually, but they collectively consume valuable time that could otherwise be spent supporting students.

While many of these administrative tasks can't be eliminated, they can often be simplified. Districts that take the time to review classroom and administrative workflows frequently uncover opportunities to reduce duplicate data entry, simplify document access, and remove unnecessary steps that contribute little value to the teaching process.

The most successful improvements are often the least disruptive. Simplifying access to instructional materials, reducing the number of systems teachers need to navigate, or making student information easier to locate can save valuable time without changing how educators teach. When repeated across hundreds of classrooms, even small operational improvements can have a meaningful impact on productivity across the district. The work surrounding instruction needs to be simpler, more efficient, and less time-consuming. Once this goal is achieved, teachers can focus on what matters most: helping students learn.

Better Information, Better Decisions

Each department within a school district depends on timely, accurate information. Human resources, transportation, finance, special education, school offices, and classrooms all generate and rely on documents that support daily operations. When information remains isolated within individual departments or disconnected systems, staff members often spend unnecessary time searching for records, verifying information, or recreating documents that already exist elsewhere.

Improving how information is shared across the district helps reduce those inefficiencies. Rather than requiring staff to work around disconnected processes, districts are focusing on creating more consistent ways to access, manage, and share information while maintaining appropriate security and privacy controls. The result is faster decision-making, better collaboration, and fewer administrative delays.

Documents need to be moved more efficiently, but the objective is to ensure that the right people have access to the right information when they need it. Educators and administrators are then positioned to respond more quickly and make better-informed decisions.

Looking Beyond Individual Departments

The most important workflows in a school district extend well beyond a single department. Student enrollment, special education documentation, employee onboarding, transportation requests, purchasing, and records management all require information to move between multiple teams. While each department may manage its own responsibilities effectively, the total process often becomes fragmented as documents pass from one group to another.

This is where the greatest opportunities for improvement can be found. Rather than focusing on isolated tasks or individual technologies, district leaders should evaluate how information moves across the organization as a whole. Where are documents delayed? Where is the same information entered multiple times? Which approvals create bottlenecks? Asking these questions often uncovers operational inefficiencies that aren't obvious when departments work independently.

Evaluating workflows from an end-to-end perspective also helps build alignment across the district. Instead of optimizing one department at a time, schools can create more consistent processes that improve collaboration, reduce administrative effort, and make it easier for staff to access the information they need. In addition to a more efficient workflow, this approach delivers a stronger operational foundation that better supports educators, administrators, students, and families.

Choosing the Right Tool for the Job

Modernizing classroom and administrative workflows doesn't mean that all processes should become fully digital or every document should remain in print. The most effective districts evaluate each workflow based on its purpose, the people involved, and the desired outcome.

Across the education sector, organizations are taking a more strategic approach to how print is managed. Keypoint Intelligence's research found that more than eight in ten education organizations use a print management solution, reflecting a broader focus on visibility, security, and operational efficiency. For K–12 districts, the idea is not to reduce printing, but to ensure that printed resources are aligned with instructional and administrative needs.

Printed materials continue to play a key role in K–12 environments. Classroom handouts, testing materials, multilingual communications, emergency procedures, board packets, and student records often require the flexibility, accessibility, or permanence that print provides. At the same time, digital workflows can simplify approvals, improve collaboration, and make information easier to share across departments.

Rather than viewing print and digital as competing approaches, school districts are finding the greatest value by using both where they make the most sense. High-volume communications may be produced centrally, while classroom materials are created closer to the point of need. Digital workflows can support routine administrative processes, while printed materials remain essential for instruction, compliance, and community engagement. Every communication and every workflow should use the approach that best supports the departments involved.



Putting Strategy into Action

School districts don't need to rethink all processes overnight when working to improve classroom and administrative workflows. The most successful initiatives often begin with a careful assessment of how information moves throughout the organization, followed by targeted improvements that address the greatest operational challenges first.

As districts evaluate opportunities for modernization, five questions can help guide the conversation:

1. Which workflows consume the most staff time?
2. Where does information slow down or become duplicated?
3. Which processes have the greatest impact on educators, students, and families?
4. How can print and digital resources work together more effectively?
5. How will success be measured beyond technology implementation?

Answering these questions helps ensure that modernization efforts remain focused on outcomes rather than individual tools. Documents need to be digitized and administrative tasks need to be streamlined, but these aren't the ultimate goals. The true objective is to create workflows that reduce unnecessary effort, improve collaboration, and give educators more time to focus on teaching and supporting students. By taking a thoughtful, phased approach, districts can build a stronger operational foundation while ensuring that every improvement contributes to a more efficient and responsive learning environment.

Organizations that are hoping to evaluate and modernize their classroom and administrative workflows can benefit from working with experienced partners that understand both document processes and the unique operational needs of K–12 education.

If you're ready to take the next step, connect with Canon to explore what's possible for your organization.

For more information about how Canon U.S.A., Inc. can help your organization with your digital transformation goals, call 1-844-50-CANON or usa.canon.com/business

¹ Source: Keypoint Intelligence, 2026 Digital Transformation Survey, U.S. Higher Education respondents (n=30).

² Source: Keypoint Intelligence, 2026 Transactional Communications Survey, U.S. Higher Education respondents (n=30)

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