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OUTLOOK 2017

DA's third annual outlook issue predicts K12 trends for the year

By Angela Pascopella

The third annual *District Administration* outlook edition looks ahead at K12 trends for 2017, including the incursion of artificial intelligence and more comprehensive support for students with disabilities—all while the nation anticipates a shift in education policies under the administration of President Trump.

This special section offers in-depth insights from readers and experts into curriculum, technology, potential legislation and other pressing issues. You'll also find trend forecasts and survey results covering topics ranging from top-speed wireless connections to more effective technology-centric professional development avenues.

At the same time, many readers wonder how public education will look under a new Republican president. In a DA survey of readers last summer, a minority, 38 percent, felt Donald Trump would be a stronger supporter of public education than would Hillary Clinton.

Trump's nominee for education secretary, Betsy DeVos, is a conservative education activist who will spearhead his plan to expand charters and vouchers for private schools with a proposed \$20 billion in federal funds for school choice. Trump has also called for an end to the Common Core standards, although the executive branch has no actual power to accomplish that. We discuss the outlook for education under the Trump administration in our story "The elephant in the room" by Special Projects Editor Ray Bendici on page 45.

Educators who responded to our recent 2017 trend survey expressed a strong desire to expand social emotional learning, which readers who participated in the 2016 survey also saw as

growing in importance. Readers also expressed concern about more competition from private schools and a need for separation between church and state, and many said they would mount online crowdfunding campaigns to deal with the increasing costs of education.

Improving data-based decision-making across all levels of the education system to better support students is one of several solutions DA readers want to see. "We need to create thinkers and risk-takers for the age of knowledge, yet we set up our classrooms like we did 100 years ago," one reader writes.

Many respondents of the survey, who come from districts with enrollments of up to 5,000 students, worry about funding pension plans, with 59 percent saying they are "very concerned." Seventy-five percent say they are "very concerned" about the cost of employee health insurance. But that also might change under the Trump administration.

Some respondents worry about the impact the heroin epidemic has on learning, but 71 percent say it shouldn't change from its impact in 2016. More than 28 percent of readers say providing nutritious and healthy school meals will increase in importance this year.

More than 60 percent say they are either launching a building or renovation project or expanding an initiative to repair or replace aging buildings. More than 40 percent of readers say their district will likely invest in surveillance cameras and 35 percent say they will prepare for a potential active shooter.

We hope you find the insights in this section worthy and helpful. And please see our website so you can share stories and charts with colleagues and provide your own feedback. ►