

Data Dashboard User Guide



Introduction

The [LEARN Network Data Dashboard](#) helps educational product developers, researchers, and community members understand how school leaders make decisions about procuring educational products and how they use research and evidence in those decisions.

The dashboard presents findings from [RAND's 2023 American Educator Panels \(AEP\)](#) survey, which was administered to a nationally representative sample of K–12 public school leaders. The survey focused on the procurement of three product types: core curriculum, supplemental instructional materials, and professional development programs. It asked about what motivated procurement decisions, who was involved, what sources of information and evidence were used, and what barriers and supports shaped the process.

This guide is designed to help you:

- Understand how the dashboard is structured
- Use tabs, filters, and slicers to explore the data
- Interpret and apply what you see
- Find examples of how different users might use the data
- Learn more about the survey sample and methods

You don't need to read the whole guide to get started. Jump to the section most relevant to your goals or use the quick-start examples in Section 3 to guide your exploration.

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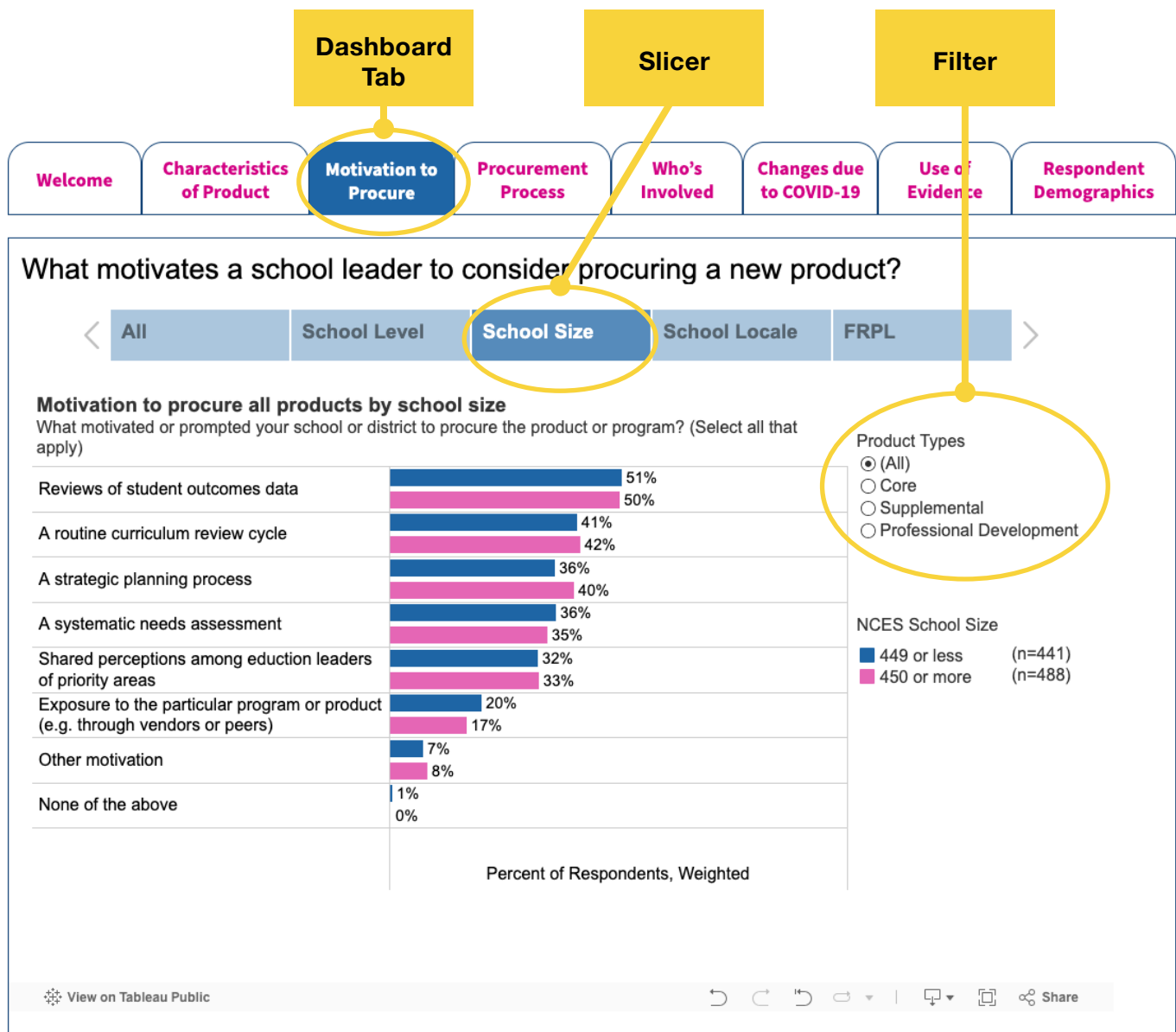


Understanding and Interpreting the Dashboard

Key Terms

- **Procurement:** The process of identifying, evaluating, selecting, and acquiring educational products.
- **Evidence:** Information from research studies showing a product's impact on student outcomes, often through randomized or quasi-experimental designs.
- **Research:** More broadly defined as systematic data collection and analysis, which may or may not include causal evidence.
- **FRPL:** Free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, used here as a proxy for student socioeconomic status.

Exhibit 1. Dashboard tabs, filter, and slicers





Dashboard Tabs

The LEARN Network Data Dashboard is organized around [key aspects of the K–12 procurement process](#) which includes discovering, selecting, and acquiring products. Each tab corresponds to a major theme from the survey. The first tab provides information about product type:

- **Characteristics of Products:** Describes the types of products schools procured, including product type, subject area, and format (print vs. digital).

The following tabs present data on procurement, including:

- **Motivation to Procure:** Highlights the factors that prompted schools to seek new products (e.g., review cycles, student data).
- **Procurement Process:** Describes how products were procured, including formal, informal, and cooperative methods.
- **Who's Involved:** Shows which roles participated in identifying, evaluating, and selecting products.
- **Changes Due to COVID-19:** Summarizes how procurement practices shifted during the pandemic and whether those changes persisted.
- **Use of Evidence:** Examines what sources of evidence influenced decisions, barriers to using evidence, and the degree to which tools to support evidence use are helpful.

The last tab provides context on survey respondents and the types of schools they represent:

- **Respondent Demographics:** Shows who completed the survey, including their school's grade level, locale, size, and percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL).

Each tab shows aggregated, descriptive results. Where applicable, you can filter by product type, slice the data by subgroup, and in some cases hover over visuals for additional information.



Filters and Slicers

You can filter the data by:

- **Product type:** Core, supplemental, or professional development

You can slice the data by:

- **Grade level served:** Elementary (K–5), middle (6–8), or high school (9–12)
- **Locale:** Urban, suburban, town, or rural, based on NCES designations
- **School size:** Small (≤ 449 students) or large (≥ 450 students)
- **Majority of students eligible for FRPL:** A common proxy for socioeconomic need, $> 50\%$ = “no”, $< 50\%$ = “yes”

The data sources for all the variables above, aside from product type, is the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). RAND created the variables based on the standard definitions used in the American Educator Panels survey.

Data on product type were collected from respondents via an SRI-created question. Product type filters only appear for questions that were asked in relation to a specific product category. Respondents were randomly assigned a product type based on their school’s procurement activity.

Interpreting the Data

The [RAND AEP sample](#) is scientifically drawn, probability-based, and weighted to produce nationally representative estimates of K-12 public school and district leaders, including those from charter management organizations.

Keep the following in mind when exploring subgroup differences:

- **Data are descriptive only:** The dashboard presents descriptive statistics. It does not show causal relationships or account for all possible confounding factors.
- **Differences may not be significant:** Some patterns may reflect small sample sizes or random variation. The dashboard does not display statistical significance testing.
- **Sample sizes vary:** When filtering by multiple variables, the number of respondents in a given subgroup may be small. Exercise caution in generalizing from these cases.
- **Context matters:** Patterns may differ due to policy environments, procurement norms, or access to research—especially across different locales or school types.

Note that NCES data that was appended to responses by RAND was not available for every school. As such, n-sizes for graphs that disaggregate by school characteristics (e.g., school level, size, locale, and students eligible for free/reduced price lunch) may not total to the N included on the graph showing all responses.



Getting Started: Example Use Cases

The dashboard can support a wide range of users—including product developers, education support organizations, and researchers. You can mix and match filters and slicers on most tabs to explore differences by product type, school size, locale, or other characteristics. Below are a few example questions to help guide your exploration based on your role.

If you're a product developer and you want to know:

- What motivates school leaders to seek new products like mine?
 - Visit the **Motivation to Procure** tab.
- What kinds of evidence do decision-makers find most persuasive?
 - Explore the **Use of Evidence** tab and filter by product type.
- Who is involved in selecting products, and how can I better support them?
 - See the **Who's Involved** tab to identify key roles.

If you support schools or districts (e.g., technical assistance providers, advocacy groups) and want to know:

- What barriers do leaders face in using evidence during procurement?
 - Check the **Use of Evidence** tab, particularly the barriers section.
- What tools and supports do school leaders say they need most?
 - View the **Use of Evidence** tab and see what ranked highest.
- How have procurement practices changed since the pandemic?
 - Visit the **Changes Due to COVID-19** tab.

If you're a researcher and want to know:

- Where do school leaders turn for research and product information?
 - Review the **Use of Evidence** tab (e.g., evidence repositories, peer recommendations).
- How do decision-making patterns vary by school characteristics?
 - Where available, use the school characteristic slicers (e.g., locale, school size, FRPL).
- What common patterns exist across product types?
 - Where available, apply the **product type** filter to compare results.



Survey Content and Structure

The LEARN Network Data Dashboard is based on responses to [RAND's 2023 AEP](#) survey. The survey asked K–12 public school leaders about their procurement experiences over the past two school years (2021–22 and 2022–23), focusing on one type of educational product: core curriculum, supplemental instructional materials, or professional development. Respondents were randomly assigned a product type based on what they reported procuring.

Key Content Areas

The survey covered six major topics:

- **Motivation to procure:** What prompted leaders to look for new products, including curriculum review cycles, strategic plans, and student outcome data.
- **Procurement process:** How products were procured (e.g., formal RFP, sole source, cooperative purchasing).
- **Who's involved:** Which roles participated in identifying, evaluating, and selecting products.
- **Use of evidence:** What types of evidence and sources of information influenced decisions.
- **Barriers to using evidence:** What makes it hard for leaders to use research (e.g., lack of time, relevance, or access).
- **Changes due to COVID-19:** Whether and how procurement practices shifted during the pandemic.

Each topic area corresponds to a tab on the dashboard.

Grouping of Survey Items

Survey items were grouped by thematic alignment and displayed using summary visualizations. Not all survey questions appear in the dashboard—only those most relevant to understanding the procurement process and the use of evidence.

Methods and Sample Details

The dashboard reflects findings from a mixed-methods study conducted by the LEARN Network research team at SRI Education, with funding from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). This section summarizes how the school leader survey was developed, administered, and analyzed.

Survey Overview

- **Respondents:** 1,036 K–12 public school leaders
- **Survey window:** April–May 2023
- **Panel:** American School Leader Panel (ASLP), a nationally representative panel managed by RAND
- **Topics covered:** Procurement motivations, processes, roles, use of evidence, barriers to using evidence, and the degree to which procurement processes changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Product-Type Assignment

Respondents were first asked what kinds of products their school had procured in the past two years—core curriculum, supplemental materials, or professional development. Based on their responses, each participant was randomly assigned to answer follow-up questions about one product type.

This structure explains why product type filters are available only for certain questions in the dashboard.

Survey Development and Validation

Survey items were developed by the research team and drew from validated instruments and frameworks. Drafts were iterated with feedback from LEARN Network advisors and cognitive interviews with education leaders.

The research team developed the survey using items adapted and adopted from previously validated items as described in our [Study Methods](#) document.

Additional Resources

Looking to go further? These LEARN Network resources offer additional insights and tools:

- [LEARN Network Website](#)
Overview of the Network's goals, partners, and offerings
- [LEARN Blog](#)
Commentary and findings from across the research and technical assistance teams
- [LEARN Network Research Briefs](#)
Short publications summarizing findings on procurement practices, rural contexts, and product developer insights
- [Study Methods Report](#)
Technical appendix detailing the study design, sampling, and analytic methods



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To learn more about the LEARN Network, visit the website at <https://learntoscale.org/>