



K-12 SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS REPORT CARD

2013 NATIONWIDE EDUCATION STUDY



SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Motorola's 2013 study offers a valuable snapshot of the current state of communications in school districts across the country. Conducted in May and June, responses were gathered from a wide cross-section of K-12 schools and educational professionals in 43 states. Participants were rather evenly divided among different-sized districts, resulting in a good mix of U.S. schools.

Almost 45 percent of respondents were school administrators. Other participants included information technology (IT) and telecommunications, operations and maintenance, teachers and administrative staff, transportation and facilities directors, and safety and security management.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Results indicate that keeping students and staff safe and secure is top of mind for schools – with 99% of respondents saying this was their most important priority. This not only means preparing for disasters and weather events, but being able to respond and coordinate efforts instantly throughout the school or district. The mandate to improve safety extends beyond school property to keeping students safe on school buses, field trips and more.

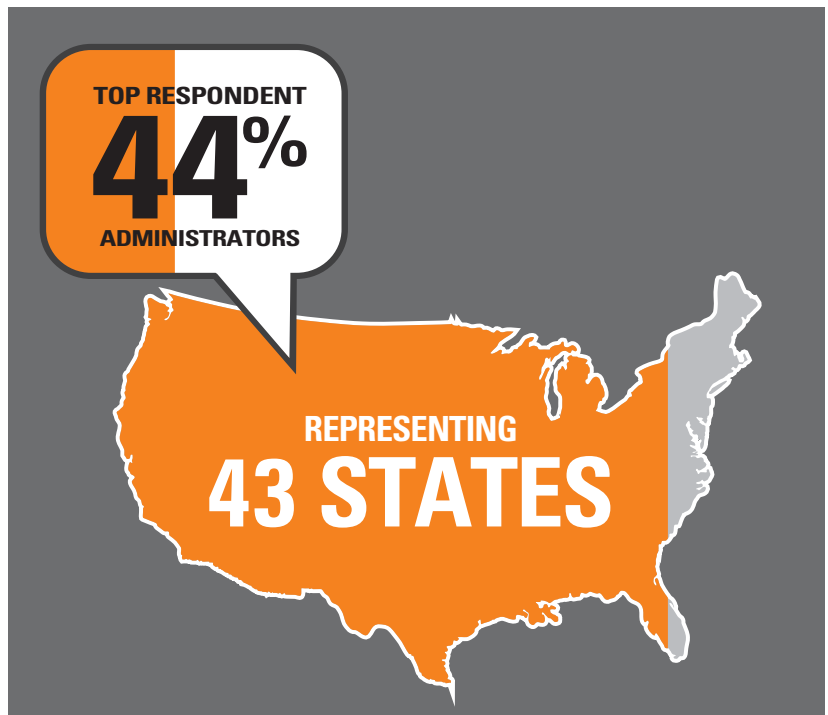
Respondents confirm that using a reliable communications device with long battery life is another top priority. This was closely followed by having uninterrupted communications with everyone in the school or district.

The research revealed that two-way radios are the primary means of communication for nearly half of the nation's schools (40 percent as the main form; an additional six percent use radios along with email, text messaging, etc.). Eighty-five percent have their own private two-way radio system and 15 percent lease access time.

Interestingly enough, 22 percent use landlines, 16 percent cell phones and 15 percent the Internet, despite the potential for power failures, outages, weather events and stronger safe-driving laws restricting cell phone use.

Additionally, the research found that insufficient funding is the main barrier to introducing or improving communication solutions.

Elementary and high schools in 26 states are receiving less state funding in the 2012-13 school year than they did last year, and in 35 states, school funding now falls below 2008 levels.¹ As K-12 schools confront these budget shortfalls, they must be smarter about how they spend their dollars.



SCHOOL SIZE

11%

**LESS THAN
600 STUDENTS**

31%

**600-2499
STUDENTS**

32%

**2500-9999
STUDENTS**

25%

**OVER 10,000
STUDENTS**

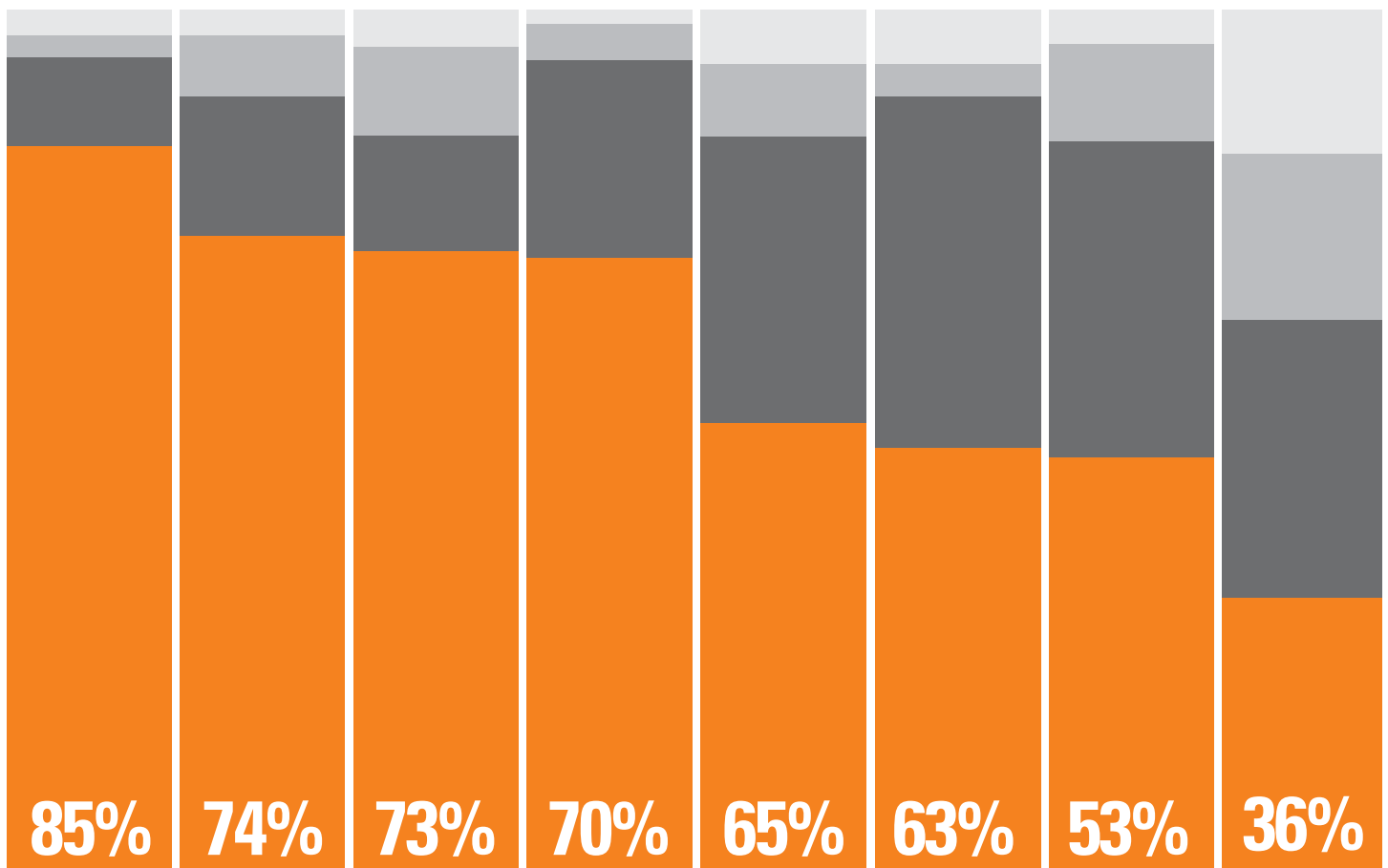
TOP PRIORITIES FOR TODAY'S SCHOOL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

In ranking the priorities they expect from their school or district communications systems, respondents place the most emphasis on creating a safer, secure environment for students and staff – with over 85 percent saying it is “very important” and 99 percent confirming it is “important.”

It's also significant to note that three of the next responses relate to the capabilities of the communication device or system itself. Educators emphasized how important it is to have a reliable device with long battery life that enables them to connect throughout the district – and one that enables them to hear clearly in noisy environments.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING FOR YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS?

VERY IMPORTANT IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT NOT IMPORTANT



ARE SCHOOL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS MAKING THE GRADE?

With two-thirds of respondents using a two-way radio system as their main form of communication, only a third said they were able to communicate with everyone in their district, anywhere they traveled, such as bus drivers on their routes.

Forty-three percent felt the clear communications were limited in some way – 22 percent saying there were gaps in coverage or trouble spots and 21 percent indicating communications were clearest only in buildings. Contrast this with 94 percent who emphasize “uninterrupted communication with everyone in the school or district” as a top priority, and there is room for improvement. The clarity, coverage and capacity of two-way radios must be extended beyond school buildings and district boundaries to be effective.

Unified communications is one of the greatest needs revealed in this survey – particularly when it comes to connecting and coordinating personnel. Recent statistics show that while an average shooting event spans 13 minutes, it takes the average first responder 10 minutes to arrive on scene. Any opportunity to improve or accelerate communications and increase the safety and security of students and staff is absolutely critical.²

Q: How do you alert and coordinate staff without alarming students?

It's 11:27 a.m. and you receive a call from local law enforcement about an assault that occurred in your community, blocks from your school. How do you instantly make sure security personnel, teachers and staff know about this alert? How do you communicate effectively without alarming students?

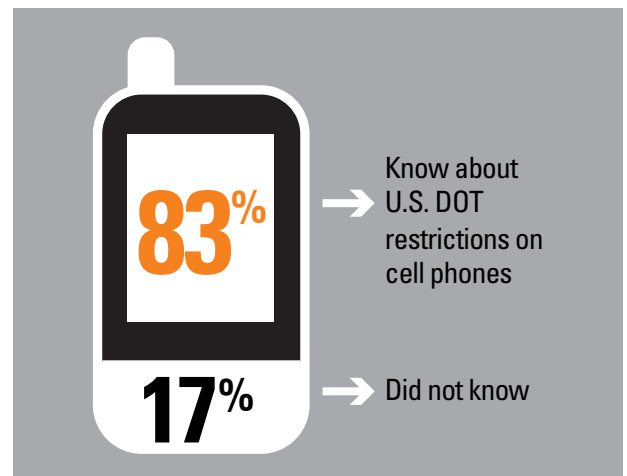
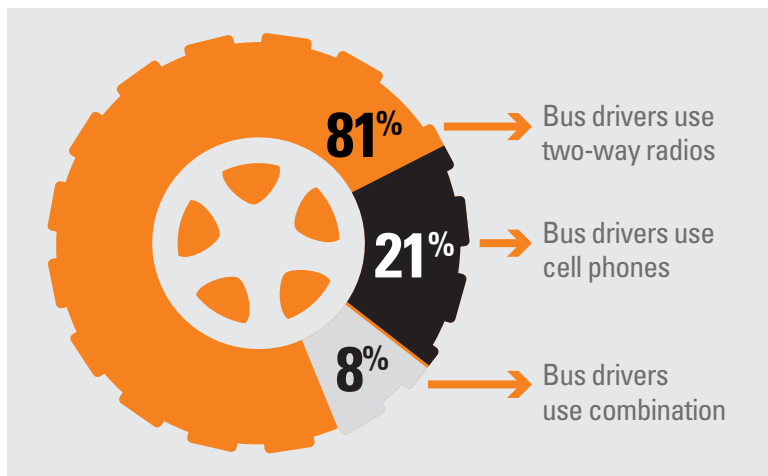
A: Instant staff communication with transmit interrupt and text messaging.

When emergencies or potential threats emerge, transmit interrupt on a two-way radio helps ensure the right personnel get the message the moment they need it. With emergency voice interrupt, you can prioritize critical communication immediately. Text messaging allows you to inform teachers without students hearing a word.

DRIVING BETTER COMMUNICATION DISTRICT WIDE

Almost 65 percent of responding schools own or manage their own buses and nearly as many have a district-wide communication system to connect their schools to bus drivers. Eighty-one percent use two-way radios, approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) as a safe and legal way for drivers of commercial motor vehicles to communicate on the road.

Twenty-one percent of today's school bus drivers use cell phones and nine percent use a combination or other form of communication. Yet, when asked if they were aware of the DOT's restriction on the use of cell phones by bus drivers, 83 percent of educators said yes.



Q: How do you locate staff, students and buses?

It's 7:15 a.m. and your school buses are on the road, picking up students. What if a child falls ill on the bus, a storm approaches or an accident occurs ahead? How will your district keep drivers and staff connected safely, track buses on their routes, alert and redirect drivers?

A: Integrated GPS helps you monitor their location and manage logistics.

School officials can use integrated GPS on their two-way radios to pinpoint each school vehicle, maximize security, enhance student safety and effectively respond to emergencies, weather events, traffic incidents and more.

DOING THEIR HOMEWORK ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

When it comes to their communication systems, the majority of school districts feel they are prepared for an emergency: 30 percent say "very prepared" and 64 percent feel "somewhat prepared." While 22 percent indicate their current system is fine, nearly 40 percent believe that their district needs an updated communication system to better meet their school's needs – particularly for emergencies.

In addition, 22 percent have problems with the clarity or coverage of their communications, 17 percent want more capabilities for increased efficiency, such as GPS and data applications, and 11 percent are in the process of improving or upgrading their system.

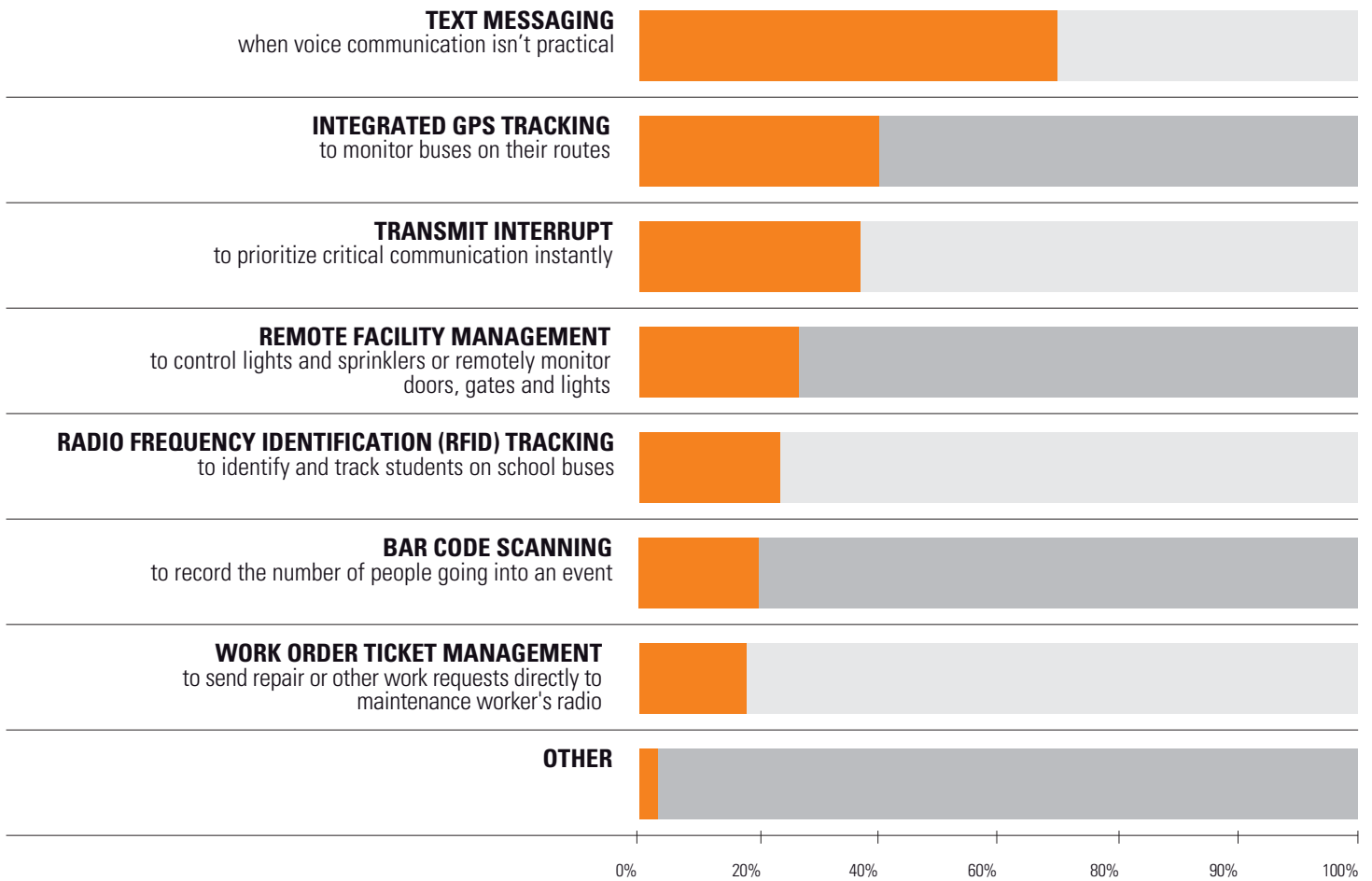
WHAT SCHOOLS WANT MOST – A CLEAR PASS OR FAIL

When asked which capabilities are most important in their school communications system, 67 percent expressed the need for text messaging when voice simply isn't practical. This was followed by two equally significant safety concerns – the desire for integrated GPS to track and monitor buses on their routes (41 percent) and the importance of a transmit interrupt feature so that school officials could prioritize critical communications instantly (38 percent).



**ALMOST
40%
NEED BETTER
COMMUNICATION
FOR EMERGENCIES**

WHAT CAPABILITIES ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM



Q: How do you know which students are on the bus?

It's 2:45 p.m. and a third grade class is returning to their buses after visiting a museum on a field trip. How do you quickly and accurately account for these students? How do you know they are all on board?

A: Radio frequency identification (RFID) scanning helps you identify and track students.

By using a wireless Bluetooth® RFID scanner, schools can accurately and efficiently identify and track students. As students board the buses, a tag on their IDs is read and each child is accounted for. Administrators know who is on the bus at the beginning and at the end of the field trip. The result is greater awareness and increased student safety, on and off school grounds.

ROADBLOCKS TO IMPROVING SAFETY AND SECURITY

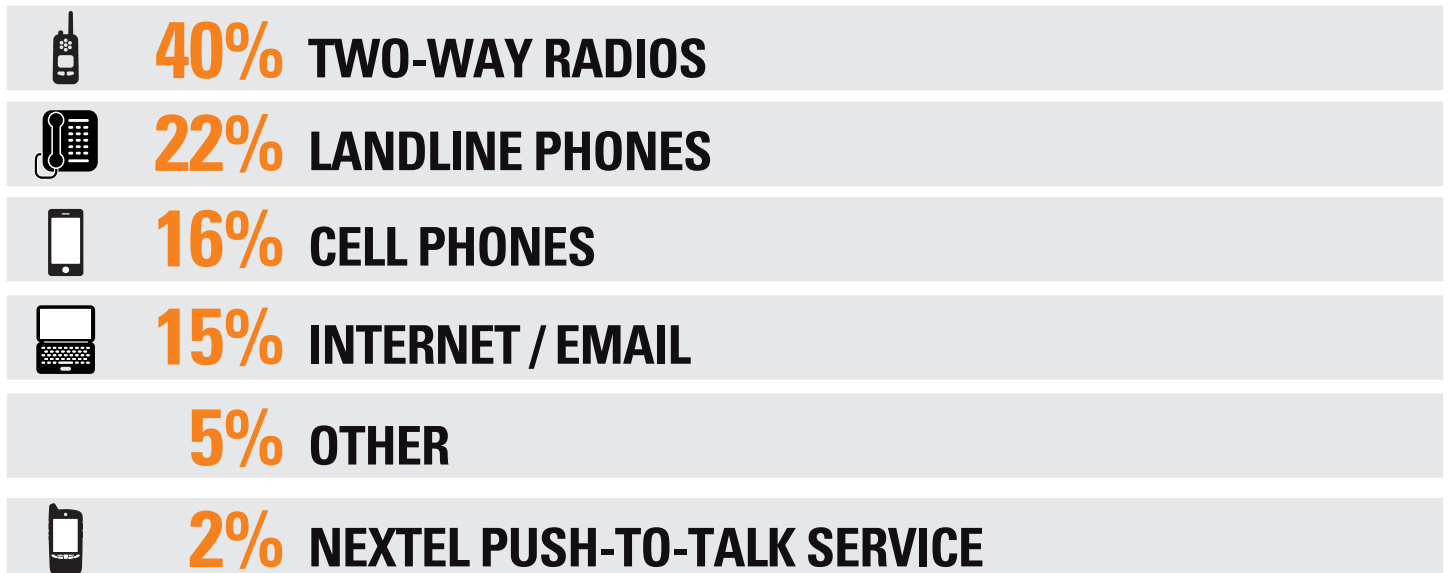
No question, fewer dollars are driving communication decisions. Funding is tighter for the 2012-13 school year than the previous year in 26 states, and 35 states are providing less funding for K-12 schools than they did in 2008. And this comes on top of already-deep cuts from previous years.¹

Over 65 percent of respondents confirmed the budget barrier, noting that insufficient funds are preventing their school from improving communications. Thirteen percent indicated they did not know about new technologies and nine percent responded they don't need it. (The latter is primarily due to the fact that they are implementing new communication systems now or upgrading in the near future.)

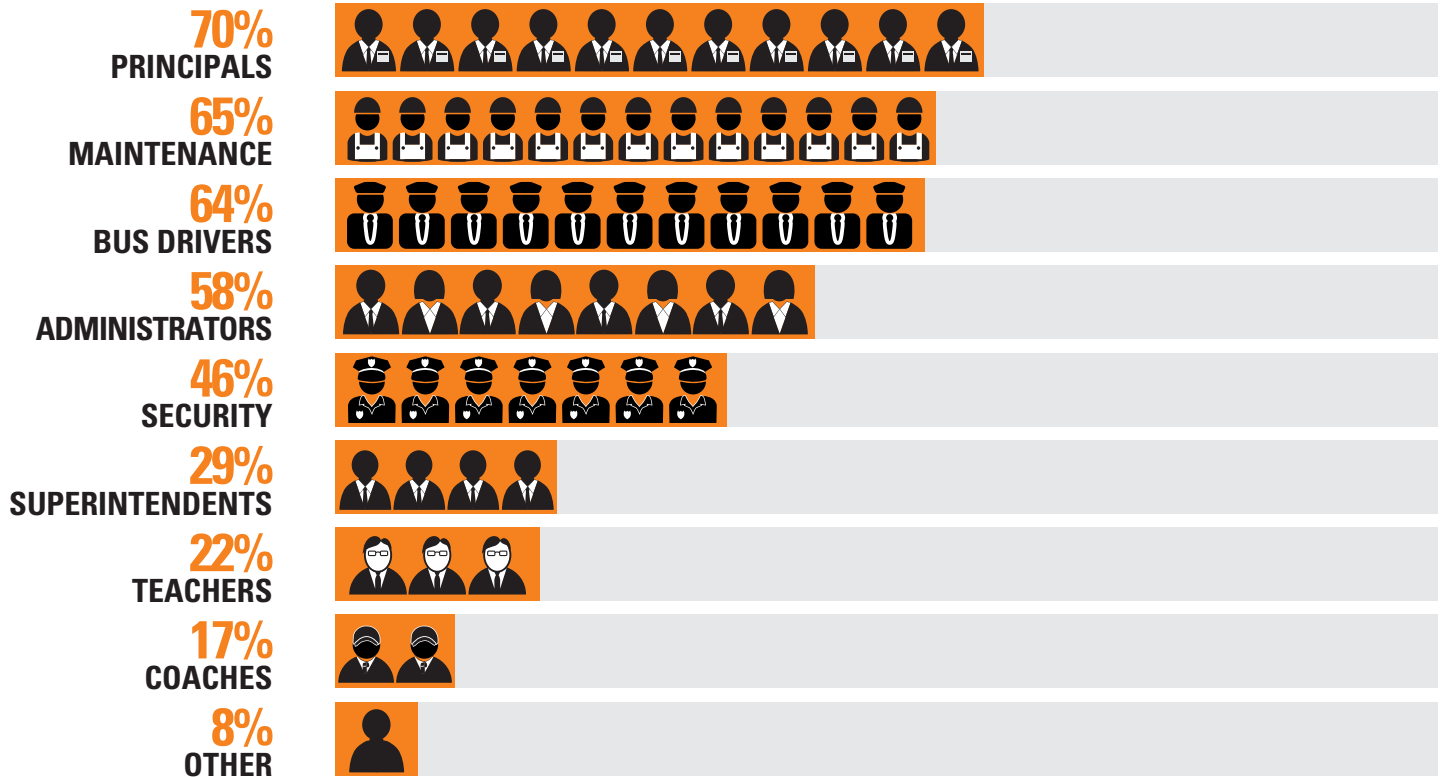
66% SAY BUDGET IS THE GREATEST BARRIER



WHICH COMMUNICATION SCORES HIGHEST



WHICH PERSONNEL RELY ON TWO-WAY RADIOS



The 2013 study is part of an ongoing Motorola research initiative to help identify and report on trends affecting communications technology. For more information on planning and deploying a unified communication solution to help improve safety, security and operational efficiency, talk with your local Motorola representative or go to www.motorolasolutions.com/MOTOTRBO

SOURCES

¹"New School Year Brings More Cuts in State Funding for Schools," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Sept. 4, 2012

²"Unified Communications, Improving School Safety", Business Solutions, March 11, 2013

Motorola Solutions, Inc. 1301 East Algonquin Road Schaumburg, Illinois 60196, U.S.A. 800-367-2346 motorolasolutions.com

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