

2024 Global Education Insights: Middle East

Addressing the Urgent, Shaping
the Future of Student Learning



The State of Education Across the Region

Education leaders worldwide have been working hard to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and rebuild education. The challenges of learning loss, absenteeism, and teacher shortages, as examples, have put all schools to the test.

But educators have responded. In the Middle East, we're encouraged to hear from educational institutions successfully addressing these challenges with zeal—stepping up to prioritise initiatives that help students succeed. Leaders are rethinking systems, inspiring their communities, and modernising teaching approaches to improve student outcomes.

"We are seeing strong demand for primary and secondary education technology solutions across the Middle East region and are in a unique position to provide best-in-class solutions tailored to educators throughout the Middle East who are investing in technology that will enable them to deliver high quality education for generations to come," said Hardeep Gulati, PowerSchool CEO.

PowerSchool has responded with its first Middle East Office based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The office serves a growing customer base in the region.

For this report, insights were given by educational leaders from throughout the Middle East, including United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and more.



Thank you to our partner AWS for their support gathering insights from educational leaders across the Middle East.

Top Trending Areas: Personalised Learning, Leadership and Data, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In speaking with education leaders in the Middle East, we learned they are focused on three separate but interconnected ideas: student-driven personalised learning, bold leadership and data, and AI's expanding role in education.

Based on our conversations and communication with Middle East education leaders, here are your top challenges and priorities within education and education technology.

Top Education Challenges & Priorities	
Challenges	Priorities
Scaling high-quality Tier 1 instruction	Achieving engaging high-quality Tier 1 instruction
Implementing effective student interventions	Student behavior management
Using AI tools	Responsible use of AI tools
Improving student attendance	Using existing edtech in the classroom to personalise learning

Top Education Technology Challenges & Priorities	
Challenges	Priorities
Implementing AI guidance	Understanding and applying new student-facing AI learning tools
Using student- and teacher-facing AI tools	Integrating tech solutions (in general)
Integrating technology to facilitate personalised learning	Achieving a "whole child" analytics view
	Understanding and applying new teacher-facing curriculum and instruction tools

Insights

1) Student-Driven Personalised Learning

Every student deserves the opportunity to learn in a way that matches who they are, where they are in life, and what motivates them. For students to succeed, they need to feel connected to learning in a personal way. But with the demands on educators, school systems, and families, the challenge has been how to truly personalise the educational experience.

But now, modern technology systems—including educational and operational technology—can combine to make it easier to create and deliver an experience designed for each student.

"Personalised learning is the 'holy grail' everyone is trying to achieve," says Dr. Joseph Nettikaden, CIO of Esol Education, headquartered in Dubai, UAE. "Access to contextualised data for each student is the foundation for personalised learning to maximise engagement. We've been on a data journey for the last ten years. As part of that journey, we started collecting data from different systems to put into a centralised dashboard. We are very data rich, but the question has always been: what are we doing with that data?"

Education leaders told us:

Hurdles for implementing personalised education

- Overcoming traditional beliefs about what education looks like
- Personalised curriculum and lesson planning
- Resource investments, including technology infrastructure, data security, curriculum development, and new assessment models focused on measuring competency

Your Voice:

"Technology can help address hurdles—from adaptive platforms that analyse student data across multiple systems to identifying key trends and areas of improvement to providing guidance on personalised learning. (Technology) can also enable communication and collaboration within school and home to ensure learning happens anywhere at any time."



Technology can help personalise each student's education

- AI virtual assistants/tutors for students
- Standards-based AI curriculum and lesson-planning tools
- Connected data across systems for analytics

Teacher roles, teams, and collaboration can change to move towards a more personalised education design

- Shifting toward skills and competencies to reinforce the idea that students learn for life
- Teacher support is needed from leaders as they transition to a more personalised, skills and competency-based educational design
- Teachers need to become more adept at using learning analytics tools and putting data insights into action

Your Voice:

"We're likely to see teachers finally make the shift from traditional sage on the stage, lecturers, to the facilitators, data analysts and technology integrators that we've talking about for many years. Making the shift requires a different type of collaboration amongst teachers, parents, technology suppliers and other education stakeholders to deliver on and sustain immersive personalised learning environments."

2) Bold Leadership and Data

What we found in our conversations with Middle East schools is that bold leaders are both data-driven and collaborative. Changing the education experience for students requires each of these qualities.

Currently, most schools operate through long-established systems of student grade cohorts and narrow measures of student learning and school quality based on English and math scores. To enact meaningful changes for a student-centred system like competency or mastery-based learning, leaders must collaboratively inspire and empower different thinking, values, and steps toward that larger vision.

We've also heard from schools in the UAE that they embrace a forward-driven thought leadership in utilising advanced technologies, aiming to automate as much as possible. Leadership is building the foundation with regulations around data, sovereignty, and data security.

Education leaders told us that bold leadership should include:

Building a data-driven infrastructure

- Major data modernisation and fully integrated data systems are necessary to deliver actionable insights
- As an example, Esol Education has been building a data-driven infrastructure for 10 years to measure student well-being and engagement
- Ensure data interoperability within education, labour, and other ministries' organisations

Your Voice:

"We are in the process of updating our legacy systems, undergoing a major data modernization effort to be better positioned to realize the possibilities of fully integrated data systems that can deliver actionable insights to our teachers and school administrators."



PowerSchool has become our data source, a tool for communication with parents. We can integrate any system into PowerSchool, which makes the use and transfer of data between systems easier and accurate. We built other systems into PowerSchool ... and PowerSchool is the data hub.

KHULOUD HAJJIRI | Director, American Community School Amman, Jordan

Innovative operational efficiency

- Pilot innovation like facial recognition technology to help with attendance and to analyse behaviours
- Create fully equitable and inclusive education systems, serving all learners and communities
- Support cross-team collaboration, community engagement, and continuous reflection

Your Voice:

"Our leaders can ensure digital technologies contribute to greater equity and opportunity for all stakeholders by bringing together diverse teams with varied backgrounds, expertise, and lived experiences to ensure that as we employ more and more digital technologies, that these promote fairness and transparency and are culturally inclusive and equitable."

Preparing schools for change

- Thought-leadership is needed to embrace technology to prepare schools for exponential change that AI will bring
- Leaders need to start preparing teachers and staff now with specialised PD to work with AI tools
- Leaders need to help with evaluating and adopting AI, including prioritising use cases and developing ethical guidelines

Your Voice:

"Education is in need of an overhaul. To ensure success, we need to focus on interconnected components, including infrastructure, teacher training, curricula modernisation, and early childhood education."



Rethinking the teacher model

- Shift the traditional self-contained classroom model toward more specialised instructional teams
- Provide multi-layer supports throughout the year to ensure teachers are well-trained and re-licensed to master essential teaching methodologies
- Provide coaching and mentoring for all teachers
- Leverage technology to help teachers provide broader education to support students' social skills and content aligned to standards

Your Voice:

"In today's world of continuous change, we leverage technology to help teachers to provide broader education to support student's social skills as well as content aligned to standards. We believe technology has a key role to play, not in replacing teachers but to support them and their mission."

3) AI's Expanding Role in Education

As artificial intelligence (AI) has swept through education on a global scale, it's important to recognise that AI doesn't replace teachers. Instead, it assists teachers in becoming more vital educators for our students. Using AI empowers educators to personalise education, helping students to learn in a way that's right for them.

Most educators told us they believe generative AI can enhance teaching and learning—using AI as an assistant in student evaluation and feedback processes, in data analytics, and in creating personalised learning paths for students. Other respondents said AI tools can help save time for teachers from collating assessments, gathering feedback, and understanding students' knowledge gaps before teaching new topics.

Education leaders told us:

- One-third are piloting the use of AI
- One-quarter are developing AI guidelines or policies
- There's a mixed response about feeling supported in exploring AI for their professional role

Your Voice:

"We are in the early stages of exploring various AI applications and AI tools to support students, teachers and school administrators. We know we have a lot of work to do in the backend to address our data, our legacy systems, before we can move ahead and consider some of the opportunities presented by AI."

"Our focus now is equipping teachers and students with the skills to use these tools responsibly and to help students and teachers master the basic fundamental concepts of AI."

Top hurdles for AI

- Integration with existing edtech systems
- Data privacy and security concerns
- Lack of skilled staff with expertise in AI/ML

Concerns for AI's impact

- Data privacy and security
- Ethical issues around transparency, accountability, and use of student data
- Potential lack of personalisation in AI-generated lesson plans

Your Voice:

"We are confident that AI will help more students to learn at their own pace or to be used for personalised learning."



How PowerSchool Can Help

PowerSchool supports 55+ million students in 90+ countries with intuitive solutions built to improve security, centralise access to comprehensive data, and deliver AI-driven personalised learning that supports life readiness and workforce development initiatives.

"We recently switched to PowerSchool and are able to streamline many of our systems to pull from one platform. PowerSchool has been very easily customised to our school needs."

KHALID ABDELTAM | Director of Technology and eLearning, American International School Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Here are specific products PowerSchool provides to support education priorities in the Middle East:

Personalised Learning

- **Schoolology Learning:** Standardise planning practices and provide students with engaging digital learning experiences while saving teachers time, thanks to centralised access to ready-made resources.
- **AI-Driven Personalised Learning:** Give teachers time back with generative AI recommendations that help address students' unique learning needs.

Data

- **PowerSchool SIS:** Utilise flexible, innovative, and easy-to-use technology to power your organizational operations, all while reducing risks, enhancing data security, and cutting costs with cloud hosting.
- **Enrollment Express:** Save staff and parent time, reduce hard costs, and improve data accuracy with a configurable solution for all your enrollment needs.
- **Connected Intelligence:** Elevate your organisation's future-readiness with the first fully-managed data as a service (DaaS) platform for schools built to bring actionable data to key stakeholders.

Communication:

- MyPowerHub: Provide families with a single access point for their student's academic information and promote collaboration with enhanced communication tools.

PowerSchool in Arabic

PowerSchool is proud to offer multiple industry-leading products entirely in Arabic. This capability includes comprehensive translation as well as multiple localization features, including right-to-left user interface orientation and the Hijri calendar.

Learn more at powerschool.com/arabic-launch

PowerSchool Support in the Middle East

Learn more about how students and educators in the Middle East can benefit from intuitive solutions built to improve security, centralise access to comprehensive data, and deliver AI-driven personalised learning.

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