



# School Finance Software Buying Guide

Your roadmap for  
choosing the right  
tools for your district



# Introduction

As K-12 finance grows more complex each year, financial leaders continually consider the best ways to streamline their critical tasks. This buying guide was made for you.

Finance leaders, CFOs, and superintendents have specific needs and aim to uncover the best resource planning and budgeting tools that will help solve them. In this guide, we reveal which software product features are truly useful for districts, what questions to ask vendors, and how to ensure your investments align with your schools' goals.



# Why School Finance Tools Matter

K-12 finance teams are balancing more demands than ever. From shrinking budgets to increasing transparency requirements, traditional tools like spreadsheets, stand-alone accounting software, or homegrown databases simply can't keep up. Today's education leaders need flexible, data-driven platforms that connect to other software products and support collaboration between district offices and schools.

School finance tools aren't just about keeping books balanced. Modern tools empower budget leaders to:

- Analyze how dollars directly support student learning
- Make equity-centered decisions using real-time data
- Reduce manual tasks and streamline compliance reporting
- Easily offer visibility and communications to all stakeholders

By adopting cloud-based K-12 ERP (enterprise resource planning) and budget planning systems, districts can ensure that modern finance managers have secure, role-based access to the insights they need for compliance.



# Features to Look For

Not all finance tools are created equal. We've found that budget leaders consistently prioritize the following key, most-requested features.



## SAVING TIME

Completing a budget book in hours instead of weeks



## REAL-TIME FORECASTS

Dynamic dashboards that reflect up-to-date budget statuses at district and school levels



## INTEGRATION WITH SIS AND HR SYSTEMS

Connected data across departments and systems eliminates silos and errors



## COMPLIANCE AND AUDIT READINESS

Automated tracking and documentation for smoother reporting cycles



## FORECASTING AND MULTIYEAR PLANNING

Project future scenarios to support sustainability and growth



## USER-FRIENDLY ACCESS

Ensure the right stakeholders can view, propose changes, revise, and approve budgets with ease

# Questions to Ask As You Evaluate K-12 ERP and School Finance Solutions

Selecting a finance system isn't just an IT decision—it's a strategic one. These questions can guide you:

- Does this system support your state and federal reporting needs?
- Can it scale as your district grows or changes?
- How easy is onboarding for school site users?
- What training and support are available?
- Is it purpose-built for K-12?
- Are there proven success stories from districts like yours?

Your finance team should also assess the internal readiness for change and willingness to allocate time and effort to train on a new finance solution.

## How to Evaluate Budget Tools

1

Ask how the software aligns with your reporting needs.

2

Request examples of customer success stories.

3

Consider how the tool can support onboarding and training.

# What's Important to Your Superintendent and Other Stakeholders?

You may want to ask whether your current system supports all your reporting needs:

- Does the system support all core operational functions (HR, payroll, finance, procurement, budgeting, etc.) in one place?
- Is the system user-friendly for both technical and non-technical staff?
- Can users easily access the information they need without relying heavily on IT support?
- Are there dashboards or reports that give real-time insight into district operations?
- How well does the ERP integrate with other district systems, such as your SIS, LMS, etc.?
- Are financial, HR, and operational reports easy to generate and customize?
- Do decision-makers get the data they need quickly, without excessive delays?



# 6 Ways Outdated ERP and Budget Tools Hold You Back

## 1 LACK OF REAL-TIME COLLABORATION

Systems without real-time collaboration can keep the central office and its schools working in silos, causing duplicative work, approval delays, inaccurate decisions, and fragmented planning that wastes precious time.

## 2 BUDGET BLIND SPOTS

When school leaders can't see accurate, up-to-date budgets year-round, they're forced to make decisions based on outdated snapshots—leading to overspending, missed investment opportunities, and reactive planning.

## 3 INCOMPLETE ALLOCATION OF DISCRETIONARY AND TITLE I FUNDS

Keeping discretionary and Title I funds unallocated limits schools' ability to meet student needs directly, reduces equity, and undermines efforts to close achievement gaps.

## 4 UNKNOWN IMPACTS

Without tools to align resources to student outcomes, spending decisions risk becoming guesswork that can waste resources and encourage redundancies, making it difficult to prove ROIs on learning.

## 5 UNCLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Legacy systems often can't show whether specific funding goes to the students who need it most, making it difficult to evaluate investments in initiatives and risking non-compliance.

## 6 INFLEXIBLE BUDGETS

ERPs designed only for tracking budgets—but not managing them flexibly—can lock districts into static plans that are hard to adapt. As we have all learned in recent years, schools must be able to adapt to changing needs, external risks, or economic realities. The wrong software can hinder a district's response to students' needs and ability to innovate for success.

## A Comprehensive Finance Solution for K-12

The right K-12 budget tools help finance leaders save time, deliver instant insights with connected data, ensure compliance, forecast with confidence, and empower stakeholders with transparent tools. PowerSchool's comprehensive finance platform is built around these needs.

[LEARN MORE](#)

# PowerSchool Helps Schools Overcome Critical Challenges with School Finance

The most effective K-12 finance systems do more than build budgets—they enable smarter spending, greater equity, and stronger outcomes. PowerSchool’s comprehensive finance solutions are designed to directly address the challenges finance leaders face, so that you can turn obstacles into opportunities.

PowerSchool’s Resource Planning tools empower districts with a comprehensive, K-12-focused finance and HR platform that streamlines core administrative operations—from budgeting and payroll to strategic resource allocation. At its foundation is eFinancePlus, a cloud-based ERP designed exclusively for education, which simplifies finance and HR processes and enhances reporting accuracy. Complementing this are the Allovue tools—Allovue Allocate, Manage, and the Budget Suite—which provide intuitive budgeting, spending controls, and alignment of expenses to district goals.

Together, these tools enable districts to build data-driven strategic budgets, transparently allocate funds based on student needs, and forecast enrollment trends to inform staffing and program decisions. With PowerSchool’s integrated analytics and AI-powered insights, finance teams can optimize workflows and ensure resources meaningfully support every student.



# 6 Ways PowerSchool Helps Finance Leaders

## 1 BREAK DOWN SILOS WITH REAL-TIME COLLABORATION

Finance teams must work closely with HR, curriculum, facilities, and other departments. Collaborating on our platform keeps everyone working with the same live data. This eliminates duplicative work, accelerates approvals, and creates a seamless planning process, making decisions quicker, more accurate, and better aligned with district goals.

## 2 PROVIDE YEAR-ROUND BUDGET VISIBILITY

Our dynamic dashboards offer real-time views of district and school-level budgets. District leaders and finance teams gain constant clarity on spending, helping them anticipate needs, avoid overspending, and proactively reallocate resources as priorities shift throughout the year.

## 3 ALLOCATE FUNDS DIRECTLY TO SCHOOLS TO SUPPORT SUCCESS

Our solutions help you confidently allocate discretionary and Title I funds at district and school levels. By giving principals control over these dollars, your district can target student interventions and support where they're needed most—ensuring resources are distributed equitably and effectively.

## 4 CONNECT SPENDING TO STUDENT OUTCOMES

Our platform links each expenditure to specific goals and programs, helping you evaluate precisely how spending impacts learning. This clarity turns every dollar into data that shows the impact of investments and helps you gauge which decisions will benefit students.

## 5 TRACK AND REPORT TITLE I FUND EFFECTIVENESS

PowerSchool's finance tools include detailed tracking and reporting features for Title I funding so you can measure the effectiveness of interventions, meet compliance requirements, and clearly demonstrate how federal dollars are closing achievement gaps.

## 6 MANAGE DYNAMIC BUDGETS WITH FLEXIBILITY

Unlike static ERP systems, PowerSchool supports real time budget management. This helps you adjust your plans in case of unexpected changes or shifting economic conditions. You can model scenarios, forecast future needs, and stay agile to keep your district prepared for future needs.

With PowerSchool, your finance system becomes a strategic asset, not a barrier—aligning financial decisions with your district's mission to support students and drive success. Our solutions aren't retrofitted corporate tools; they're purpose-built for K-12, helping you save time, empower leaders, ensure compliance, and plan for a stronger future.

Want to learn more?

SCHEDULE A DEMO

# Partnering With Us

PowerSchool offers:



## TIME-SAVING PROCESSES

Reduce manual tasks and complete budget books in hours instead of weeks with streamlined, automated workflows that let staff focus on strategic priorities.



## REAL-TIME, DYNAMIC BUDGETS

Access live dashboards that update instantly with the latest data from both district and school levels, so financial decisions are always based on the most current information.



## SEAMLESS INTEGRATION WITH SIS AND HR SYSTEMS

Break down data silos by connecting finance, student information, and HR systems—reducing errors and ensuring everyone works from a current, single source of truth.



## COMPLIANCE AND AUDIT READINESS

Automate tracking and documentation to simplify reporting and keep your district audit-ready with accurate, transparent records.



## POWERFUL FORECASTING AND MULTI-YEAR PLANNING

Project future scenarios with advanced forecasting tools to plan for sustainability, anticipate funding needs, and support long-term growth.



## USER-FRIENDLY, ROLE-BASED ACCESS

Equip school and district leaders with intuitive tools to view, edit, and approve budgets, making collaboration seamless and ensuring every stakeholder can engage with confidence.

PowerSchool's K-12-specific finance solution unites these critical capabilities in a powerful, integrated solution, aligning every financial decision with your district's goals for student success. Unlike retrofitted business systems, PowerSchool's platform is built from the ground up for education—helping you budget smarter, invest more effectively, and improve outcomes for every student.



**Schedule a demo today to see how PowerSchool can help your district move forward with clarity and control.**

**SCHEDULE A DEMO**



**PowerSchool**

[www.PowerSchool.com](http://www.PowerSchool.com)