



Federalism, Race, and the Politics of Turnaround: U.S. Public Opinion on Improving Low-Performing Schools and Districts

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Keywords: school turnaround, state takeover, public opinion, politics, survey research

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The turnaround—dramatic improvement through outside intervention—of low-performing schools and districts remains a major policy challenge. It is also a persistent source of controversy concerning the appropriate balance of authority between the different tiers in America’s federal system of government. As the entities formally charged with providing K–12 education—schools are mentioned in all 50 state constitutions but not in the U.S. Constitution—states would seem to have primary responsibility for addressing chronic underperformance. Indeed, courts in more than half of states have ruled that state lawmakers must ensure that local districts have access to adequate or equitable school funding (Jackson, Johnson, & Persico, 2016). At the same time, the nation’s strong tradition of local control over education creates political and practical barriers to state intervention in the management of schools. Meanwhile, the federal government in recent decades has set out a series of mandates concerning the identification and improvement of low-performing schools.

The Obama administration's signature initiative in this area, the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program, required local districts to implement one of four federally defined interventions in struggling schools. While a handful of rigorous studies focused on specific states have shown that the grants had positive effects on student achievement (e.g., Dee, 2012), national studies of the program provide little evidence that the initiative resulted in the kind of dramatic improvements that would constitute “turnaround” on a wide scale (e.g., Dragoset et al., 2017).

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Partly in response to criticism that the SIG program was overly prescriptive on the part of the federal government, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 devolved greater turnaround authority to states and localities (Mann, 2016). Under the new law, states must identify their lowest performing five percent of schools and are tasked with determining how best to fix them. Many states in turn provide districts with considerable discretion on how to remedy low performance. There are no longer federal rules about which interventions must be implemented in these settings (Barone, 2017).

Since the late 1980s, state takeover of entire school districts has been used as a mechanism for addressing both financial and academic struggles (Wong & Shen, 2003). In the more recent era of test-based accountability, state takeover has become an increasingly common response to low academic performance. Eleven states passed or debated legislation to create state-run districts in 2015 alone (Layton, 2016), and at least 34 states now have explicit authority to take over the management of schools, districts, or both (Jochim, 2016).

The effectiveness of state takeovers as a turnaround strategy is unclear. The primary previous study tackling this question found that states had some success at improving district finances but less success at increasing academic achievement (Wong & Shen, 2003). However, this research was conducted in the pre-No Child Left Behind era and may not generalize to our current test-based accountability context. A handful of more recent case studies provide both positive (e.g., Harris and Larsen, 2016; Schueler, Goodman, & Deming 2017) and negative proof points (e.g., Zimmer et al., 2015), suggesting that the success of state takeovers likely depends upon aspects of the local context and strategies employed.

Regardless of its promise as a turnaround strategy, the conventional wisdom is that state takeover is politically unpopular within communities subjected to it. Takeover has generated

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significant resistance in places like New Orleans (Buras, 2015; Jabar, 2015), Memphis (Glazar & Egan, 2018), Newark (Morel, 2018; Russakoff, 2015), Buffalo (Duke, 2016), and Georgia (Welsh, Williams, Little & Graham, 2017). One source of controversy is the fact that, in many of these settings, takeover involved a majority-White legislature taking power from local Black officials (Morel, 2018). Some Black and Hispanic school board members have even asserted that takeover functions as a form of racial targeting (Oluwole & Green, 2009). In contrast, rare cases of takeover have generated more limited conflict (Schueler, 2018). However, the levels of public support for state takeover and the factors shaping opinions on takeover nationally are largely unknown.

Investigating public opinion on school turnaround and district takeover is valuable for at least three reasons. First, a strong policy-opinion connection is a foundational aspect of a functional democracy (Key, 1961; Dahl, 1989; Gilens 2012), and understanding the public's views is necessary to determine the degree to which public policy aligns with the public will. Second, a large literature illustrates that public support for a given reform effort is critical to its success and sustainability over time (Stone, Henig, Jones & Pierannunzi, 2001; Patashnik, 2014; Jochim, 2013). Indeed, in the specific context of turnaround, case studies of improved districts suggest that the effective navigation of politics increases the odds of success (e.g., Honig & Coburn, 2008; Johnson et al., 2015). The views of key stakeholder groups, particularly those responsible for enacting a given policy, can also influence policy implementation and success (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1974; Lipsky, 2010). Third, an understanding of public opinion could provide guidance for turnaround leaders on their choice of policies, framing, and target settings in order to ease the navigation of turnaround politics.

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Despite these reasons to study public perceptions, little empirical evidence exists about the public's views on how policymakers should go about trying to improve low-performing schools. For instance, which level of government does the public believe is most responsible when schools fail and most capable of generating improvement? How do their preferences compare to their beliefs about which level of government currently takes the lead on school turnaround? In other words, are public preferences in this area grounded in reality or misinformation? Under what conditions do Americans support state efforts to assume control of school districts in cases of persistent academic underperformance or financial mismanagement?

To explore these issues, we deploy questions and embed experiments in a nationally representative survey to address the following research questions:

- 1) What level of government (federal, state, or local) does the public believe *currently plays* the largest role in identifying and fixing low-performing schools?
- 2) What level of government does the public believe *should play* the largest role in identifying and fixing low-performing schools?
- 3) Does the public support state takeover of troubled school districts?
- 4) Does the stated rationale for state takeover of districts (academic underperformance vs. financial mismanagement) affect support for takeover?

We further examine whether and how the answers to these questions vary depending on relevant characteristics of respondents and the school district contexts in which they reside. In particular, we hypothesized that the opinions of those most likely to be directly affected by interventions into low-performing schools and districts might differ from the opinions of the average citizen. For instance, teachers are more likely to be directly affected by school and district turnaround intervention. Teachers' opinions also diverge from those of the broader public

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on a number of education policy issues (Peterson, Henderson & West, 2014). We therefore tested for differences in opinion between teachers and other citizens.

We also tested for differences in opinion based on race and ethnicity. Students of color tend to be more highly concentrated in low-performing schools than their White peers, and Morel (2018) finds that districts with more African American local political representatives are more likely to experience state takeover (Morel, 2018). Furthermore, Nuamah (2018) finds that Black and Latino Chicago residents with a greater likelihood of exposure to school closings in their neighborhoods express lower levels of support for these closures than White residents.

More generally, those living in the lowest-performing districts in their states may be less supportive of state intervention than the general public due to the loss of local decision-making power that can come with state takeover and turnaround policy and the heightened attention to the reality of intervention in these contexts. On the other hand, residents in low-performing districts could be more supportive of takeover and turnaround because they are most likely to benefit from any positive changes resulting from reform. We therefore also separately examine the views of residents of the districts ranking lowest in terms of student achievement in each state.

Finally, due to the longstanding disagreement between the two major political parties concerning the federal role in education policy, we test for differences in opinions between Democrats and Republicans. While we would expect Republicans to be less supportive of federal involvement than Democrats, it is unclear what to anticipate with respect to partisan differences in support for the role of state versus local governments when it comes to improving low-performing school systems. We further hypothesized that Americans would be more supportive of state-level intervention if their own political party had unified control of state government

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given that they would have greater trust in members of their own party. Indeed, research suggests that own-party institutional control is an important predictor of trust in government and institutional approval (Gershtenson, Ladewig & Plane, 2006).

Data

Our data come from the 2017 *Education Next* Poll, conducted by the polling firm Knowledge Networks® in the spring of 2017. The sample (n = 4,214) was drawn from the probability-based KnowledgePanel, constructed using frames that cover more than 99 percent of the U.S. population. Respondents could complete the survey in English or Spanish. The survey covered a range of educational issues. We use post-stratification population weights provided by Knowledge Networks® that adjust for nonresponse and the over-sampling of teachers and Hispanic respondents to ensure that the sample is representative of the U.S. adult population (aged 18 and above). Several scholars have deployed this weighting strategy in studies of public opinion based on previous iterations of the *Education Next* poll (e.g., Chingos, Henderson & West, 2012; Barrows, Henderson, Peterson & West, 2016; Houston, in press; Schueler & West, 2015).

We merge the survey results with data from the Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA) 2.0 (Reardon, Ho, Shear, Fahle, Kalogrides & DiSalvo, 2017). This source provides performance data from the 2008-09 through the 2014-15 school years at the district level for all districts nationwide. We then identify which districts rank in the bottom five percent of districts within their state based on average student achievement levels over the seven-year period. This allows us to identify respondents in our survey sample who have the greatest likelihood of being directly impacted by turnaround policy and potential state takeover. We also test whether our

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findings are robust to expanding the set of low-performing districts to the lowest ten percent of districts within each state (we do not display these results in tables but do discuss them in the text).

Finally, we consulted the National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Governors Association to identify states with unified government (a single party with majorities in both chambers of congress at the state level and control of the governor's mansion) at the time of the survey administration.

Procedures

To assess citizen preferences about which level of government is best suited to improving low-performing schools, we had survey administrators experimentally assign respondents to one of two versions of the following set of questions. Specifically, the first version asked:

(1) Based on your best guess, what level of government currently plays the biggest role in each of the following:

(1A) Setting educational standards for what students should know

(1B) Deciding whether or not a school is failing

(1C) Deciding how to fix failing schools

Respondents were given the following three answer choices for each question: federal government, state government, local government. The second version asked:

(2) What level of government should play the biggest role in each of the following:

(2A) Setting educational standards for what students should know

(2B) Deciding whether or not a school is failing

(2C) Deciding how to fix failing schools

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In other words, one version asked which level of government should play the biggest role while the other asked which level currently does play the biggest role.

Survey administrators also randomly assigned respondents to one of the following two questions regarding state takeover of school districts:

(3A) Some states have laws allowing the state to take control of local school districts where academic performance has been low for several years. Do you support or oppose this policy?

(3B) Some states have laws allowing the state to take control of local school districts where there is evidence of financial mismanagement. Do you support or oppose this policy?

For both questions, respondents were given five answer choices: completely support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, completely oppose, neither support nor oppose. Appendix Table A1 demonstrates that randomization was generally successful at generating groups similar on observed dimensions and that the response rates to the relevant items were not significantly different across experimental groups.

Analysis

For most of our analyses, we simply report the percentage of respondents giving each answer choice for the sample as a whole and the various subgroups of interest. We use simple (weighted) t-tests to determine whether the share of respondents of a particular subgroup selecting a given answer option differs from the share of respondents not in that group. For example, we test whether the opinions of teachers differ from those of non-teachers. All

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differences discussed in the text are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level or higher unless otherwise noted.

To examine whether the rationale for state takeover of troubled school districts influences support for takeover, we use ordered logistic regression. We prefer this approach because we cannot know whether the distance between each answer choice on the survey is equal, an assumption required for a linear specification. Therefore, we rely on the following model:

$$\frac{\Pr (PREFERENCE_i > k)}{\Pr (PREFERENCE_i \leq k)} = e^{-(\mu_k + \beta_1 ACADEMIC_i + \gamma X_i)}$$

The outcome variable has five values representing the possible answer choices (completely oppose = 1, somewhat oppose = 2, neither support nor oppose = 3, somewhat support = 4, completely support = 5). $PREFERENCE_i$ represents the response given to the survey question by respondent i while k represents a particular answer choice. For example, if we let k equal the answer choice “neither support nor oppose,” then the model estimates the combined odds of giving an answer that is supportive of takeover (either “somewhat support” or “completely support”) versus the odds of giving an answer representing a lower or equal level of support (i.e., “neither support nor oppose,” “somewhat oppose” or “completely oppose”). On the right hand side of the equation, μ is a constant that varies depending on the value of the answer choice (k) and represents the estimated cutpoint on the underlying latent continuous variable used to differentiate answer choice k from answer choice $k + 1$ (e.g., the cutpoint between “completely oppose” and “somewhat oppose”).

$ACADEMIC_i$ is an indicator equal to one if a respondent was asked about academic state takeover and zero if s/he was asked about takeover in the case of financial mismanagement. As a result, β_1 is our estimate of the effect of an academic (vs. a financial) rationale for takeover. X_i represents a vector of covariates including respondent gender, age, race/ethnicity, education

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level, income, homeowner status, household size, marriage status, and region of residence. We also control for whether a respondent is a parent, teacher, and Democrat. We include these controls to increase the precision of our estimates, but our findings are not sensitive to this choice. Finally, to test whether any effect varies by group, we add interactions between our treatment indicator and binary subgroup variables.

Results

Public Support for State- and Local-led Turnaround Policy

We begin by exploring which level of government citizens believe currently plays the greatest role on school turnaround (research question 1) as well as their preferences about which level should take the lead (research question 2). We find that a majority of the public believes that state governments are the primary player when it comes to school turnaround policy—an arguably accurate assessment given the powers delegated to states under the Every Student Succeeds Act. As we display in Figure 1, a large majority of Americans believe that states currently play the greatest role in both identifying (61 percent) and fixing (58 percent) failing schools. Only 16 and 17 percent of respondents say that the federal government plays the greatest role in identifying and fixing schools, respectively. This is in contrast to the “setting standards” policy area in which 38 percent of the public holds the inaccurate belief that the federal government plays the largest role, possibly due to confusion over federal involvement in promoting the Common Core State Standards. Even so, a 51 percent majority of respondents correctly views states as the primary actor in this area.

In terms of their policy preferences, we find that the public tends to support a greater role for local governments than the public believes they currently play. Figure 1 also illustrates the

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contrast between respondents' perceptions and preferences. While the plurality prefer that states play the greatest role in identifying (49 percent) and fixing (48 percent) failing schools, a large share of participants prefer that local governments play the largest role in both areas (38 and 37 percent, respectively). In Appendix Table A2, we show that the differences between respondents' perceived and preferred level of involvement for local governments are statistically significant using multinomial logistic models.

The pattern of responses to the preferences items across subgroups suggests that those more likely to be directly affected by turnaround reforms tend to prefer a greater role for local governments in both identifying and fixing failing schools than the public as a whole. We display these findings in Figure 2. For instance, teachers prefer a more decentralized approach to school turnaround, with only 7 percent preferring that the federal government play the greatest role in identifying failing schools and 43 percent preferring local governments play the greatest role in fixing failing schools. Black Americans also appear to prefer a greater role for local governments in identifying (46 percent) and fixing (40 percent) struggling schools than the public as a whole. However, only the difference between teachers and non-teachers regarding the federal role in identifying failing schools achieves statistical significance.

The main exception to this theme is that a majority of respondents in the lowest-performing five percent of school districts want states to take the lead in both identifying (64 percent) and fixing failing schools (56 percent) and a smaller percentage prefer a greater role for local governments than the public as a whole (though the differences on the fixing failing schools question and on the federal role do not achieve statistical significance). Respondents in the lowest performing ten percent of districts also prefer states play the greatest role in

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identifying (75 percent) and fixing (55 percent) failing schools (though these differences are only marginally statistically significant).

Democrats prefer a greater federal role in both identifying (15 percent) and fixing (19 percent) failing schools than those who do not identify with the Democratic party. Republicans, meanwhile, are less likely than non-Republicans to prefer that the federal government take the lead in these areas—and more likely to favor state leadership on identifying failing schools. However, in each case the plurality still prefers that states take the lead.

Public Support for State Takeover

Next, we examine public opinion regarding state takeover of troubled school districts (research question 3). Overall, we find high levels of support for state takeover, regardless of the rationale. In Figure 3 we report that 70 percent of the public supports academic takeovers while 77 percent support takeover in the case of financial mismanagement. Opposition to both forms of takeover is correspondingly low. Specifically, 16 percent opposes academic takeover and only ten percent opposes financial takeover. Roughly 15 percent take no position on academic takeover and 13 percent on takeover in the event of mismanagement.

We also find important subgroup differences and display these findings in Figure 4. Again, the overarching implication is that those who are most likely to be directly affected by takeover express lower levels of support for takeover than the public as a whole. For academic takeovers, teachers express the lowest levels of support (50 percent) and the highest levels of opposition (40 percent) of any subgroup. Teachers are more supportive of takeover in the case of financial mismanagement (68 percent) but are still less supportive of this form of takeover than non-teachers. Black respondents also express lower levels of support for financial takeover (64 percent) than other respondents while Hispanic respondents tend to align with the general public.

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Importantly, levels of support for takeover are also substantially lower among those respondents living in the lowest performing districts in their states, which are the most likely targets for takeover. Only 53 percent of these respondents support academic takeover. Even in cases of financial mismanagement, support among these citizens is lower (55 percent) and opposition higher (25 percent) than most other subgroups, including teachers. Residents of bottom-ten-percent districts have slightly higher levels of support than bottom-five-percent districts but still lower support than the public as a whole for both academic (58 percent) and financial (68 percent) takeovers and higher levels of opposition (21 percent for academic and 19 percent for financial takeovers).

With respect to partisanship we find that Republicans are more supportive of academic takeover (75 percent) than non-Republicans while Democrats are less supportive (67 percent) than non-Democrats. However, we do not observe partisan differences when it comes to takeover in the case of financial mismanagement. In fact, a large majority of Democrats (77 percent) support this form of takeover. Respondents living in states where their own party holds unified control at the state level appear to be slightly more supportive of both academic (74 percent) and financial takeover (79 percent) than those living in other districts, although only the difference in levels of support for academic takeover achieve statistical significance.

In sum, while most subgroups who are more likely to be directly affected by state takeover of low-performing districts express lower levels of support than the public as a whole, all groups express majority support for both forms of takeover. That majority is narrowest for teachers (when it comes to academic takeover) and respondents living in the lowest-performing districts in their state (regardless of the rationale).

The Effect of Takeover Rationale on Takeover Support

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Finally, we use ordered logistic regression to formally examine how the rationale for takeover shapes opinion across the full distribution of response options (research question 4). Although the level of public support for states to take control of troubled districts is high regardless of rationale, the level of support is nonetheless influenced by the rationale provided. Specifically, an academic rationale reduces support for state takeover relative to a rationale related to financial mismanagement. In other words, there is greater support for takeover in the case of financial mismanagement. In Figure 3 we show the unadjusted differences for the two experimental conditions. Interestingly, the financial mismanagement rationale not only reduces opposition to takeover but also shifts a good share of those who “somewhat support” or are neutral when it comes to academic takeover to a position of “complete support” when asked about financial takeover. The estimate in the first column of Table 1 confirms that an academic rationale cuts the odds by more than a third that a respondent will give an answer that is more supportive of takeover ($\beta = 0.64$; $p < .01$).

The remaining columns of Table 1 test whether the effect of rationale varies by subgroup by including an indicator variable for the relevant subgroup and an interaction term between that variable and having been given an academic rationale in the takeover survey question. We find that, for Democrats (vs. non-Democrat) and White (vs. non-White respondents), emphasizing academic failure over financial mismanagement has a particularly large negative impact on levels of state takeover support. None of the other interaction terms are statistically significant. The estimated subgroup main effects in turn confirm that support for turnover is statistically significantly lower among Black respondents, residents of low-performing districts, and (at the $p < 0.1$ level) teachers even after controlling for their observed demographic characteristics.

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Discussion

This study provides a window into contemporary public opinion regarding school improvement policies and state takeovers of troubled districts. We find that the general public supports a greater role for state and local governments when it comes to school turnaround, with a large plurality preferring state leadership in this area and a substantial share wanting local governments to play a greater role than they currently play. Among members of several groups more likely to be directly affected by turnaround policies, a greater share prefer that local governments take the lead in this area than among members of the general public. On this dimension, the new major federal K-12 education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, appears aligned with public preferences given that it increases both state and local discretion on school and district turnaround relative to its predecessor, No Child Left Behind. Indeed, NCLB's failure to create a strong constituency in support of a robust federal role in school accountability and improvement may help to explain its eventual demise (cf., Patashnik, 2014).

Interestingly, our findings suggest that the public is more supportive of state takeover than readers might expect. We find majority support for takeover both overall and within all subgroups, although those majorities are slim for groups most likely to be directly affected by these reforms. This is a notable finding given our country's tradition of local control over education, press coverage of significant public resistance to recent high-profile state takeovers, and academic work documenting the political challenges that accompany state intervention in low-performing districts (e.g., Buras, 2015; Glazar & Egan, 2018).

However, our survey asked respondents about state takeover in the abstract. We may have found lower levels of support had we asked about a specific real-world case of takeover. While we find majority support for takeover even among those residents in our sample living in

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districts that are most likely to be taken over, these majorities are slim, there are meaningful levels of opposition, and the opposition could be even greater if we had the ability to narrow in on those districts that had actually experienced the reality of takeover in recent years.

Interestingly, when we narrow our sample to residents of the 22 states that have enacted takeovers, we do not find large differences in levels of support for state takeover. If anything, these respondents express slightly higher levels of takeover support. This could be due to selection into the sample (greater support for takeover makes takeover more likely) rather than exposure to takeovers. Homing in on takeover districts, rather than takeover states, might reveal a different result. Uncovering the views of those community members whose districts have actually undergone takeover—something we are unable to do with our current sample—would have important implications for policymakers considering takeover and for those concerned with the effects of centralization on the political agency of traditionally disadvantaged groups.

We find overwhelming levels of support for state takeover in cases where there is evidence of financial mismanagement, and higher levels of support than for academic takeover. This suggests that takeover may be more politically palatable in contexts that have experienced mismanagement or in instances when leaders frame the rationale for takeover around mismanagement rather than highlighting low performance. This phenomenon could be due to lower levels of public confidence in the ability of state departments of education to improve academic outcomes for students relative to their ability to help clean up district finances. Interestingly, the public's views in this regard are consistent with the limited existing research on the effectiveness of state takeover, which concludes that states undergoing takeovers have had more success at improving financial than student academic outcomes (Wong & Shen, 2003).

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Alternatively, cases of mismanagement may invoke a moral imperative in a way that academic failure on its own does not. This is consistent with the story of Massachusetts' takeover of the Lawrence Public Schools—a rare case of takeover that generated more limited controversy. Schueler (2018) finds that allegations of mismanagement and corruption against local Lawrence officials helped explain the relatively mild response to state intervention. Future research could devote more attention to teasing apart the mechanisms at play. Regardless, state leaders interested in pursuing takeover would be wise to prioritize targeting districts where there is evidence of mismanagement versus those struggling with academic performance alone and to frame their reasons for takeover with a focus on this mismanagement in order to improve their ability to navigate the politics of turnaround.

Perhaps the most interesting dynamic uncovered by our research is the tension between local and statewide preferences around state takeover, with support for takeover being lower among those living in the lowest performing five percent of districts in their states than those living elsewhere. Our data do not suggest that residents of low-performing districts are especially averse to a strong state role in identifying and fixing failing schools. Yet they are markedly less supportive than other respondents of state takeover. One possible explanation is that low-performing districts targeted for takeover tend to receive a large share of their funding from state sources. Citizens living outside of low-performing districts may dislike having their tax revenue funneled to failing districts and have little to nothing to lose by having the state assume control of districts that do not serve or employ members of their own communities.

In contrast, the districts that are the target of these interventions—often those serving large communities of color with high concentrations of low-income families—risk political disempowerment as locally elected school boards lose decision-making power. Importantly,

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school systems, including school boards, have historically served as a key avenue for people of color to enter elected offices (Henig, Hula, Orr & Pedescleaux, 1999). Studying state takeovers between 1989 to 2013, Morel (2016) finds that takeovers of majority-Black districts have tended to occur in contexts where African Americans have greater descriptive representation and that these takeovers ultimately decrease Black descriptive representation. In contrast, takeover of majority-Latino districts is actually more likely to open the door for greater Latino descriptive representation in part because the targeted districts are contexts in which Latinos had not previously been well represented in local government. This could perhaps help explain our finding that takeover support is lower among Black respondents than for non-Black respondents (particularly when it comes to financial mismanagement) but not lower when comparing Hispanic and non-Hispanic respondents.

Our finding that those most likely to be targeted for state intervention are the least likely to support takeover may be surprising since residents of low-performing districts have the most to gain if the resulting reforms are effective. However, this finding must be viewed in the context of the loss of political power that seems to accompany state takeover, particularly for majority African American communities. For example, studying public perceptions of the New Orleans school reforms implemented in the aftermath of the Hurricane Katrina tragedy, Morel and Nuamah (2019) find that Black, middle-class New Orleanians (who they argue were most likely to have lost political influence as a result of the reforms) expressed lower levels of approval for the post-Katrina schools than either Whites or the group of Black respondents as a whole.

Our results are also consistent with recent research on school closures in Chicago suggesting that those residents most likely to see their local neighborhood school shuttered express the highest levels of opposition to these closures (Nuamah, 2018). Eve Ewing (2018)

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explores how it is possible that these Chicagoans could express such vehement support for schools that have persistently underperformed on traditional accountability measures. She finds that the closure of neighborhood schools is viewed by these primarily African American parents, teachers, and students as part of a long history of racially targeted policy efforts that stand in the way of Black communities' self-governance. This is a recurring theme in the study of the politics of education where current policy does not occur in an ahistoric vacuum and where policies often have different effects at the local than the state level and on adults than they do on children.

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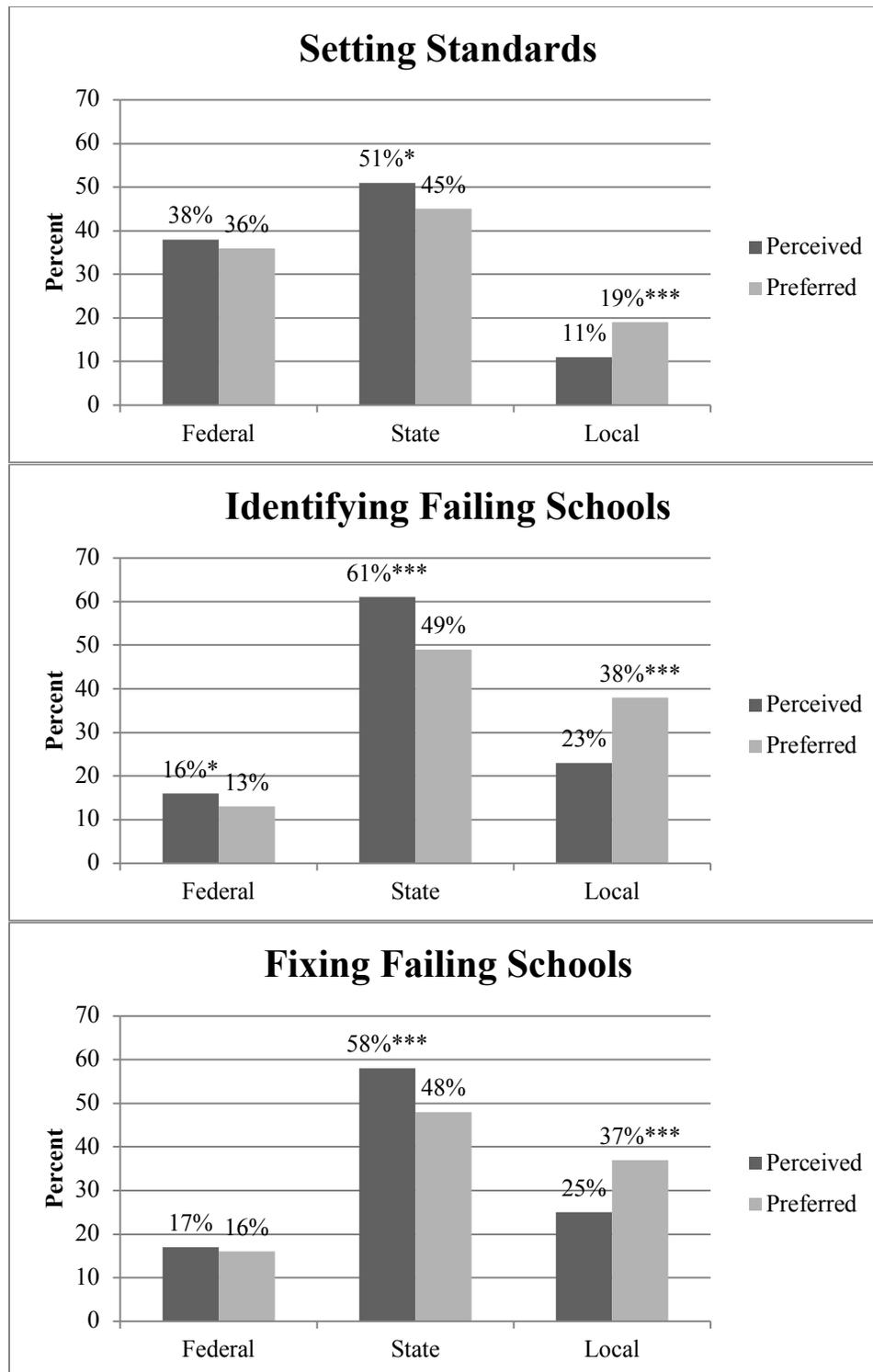


Figure 1. Comparing Public Perceptions and Preferences on Which Level of Government Currently Plays vs. Should Play the Greatest Role in Setting Standards, Identifying Failing Schools, and Fixing Failing Schools

Note: Asterisks refer to results of weighted t-tests for differences between perceptions and preferences for each answer choice (***) $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ^ $p < .10$).

SCHOOL TURNAROUND OPINION

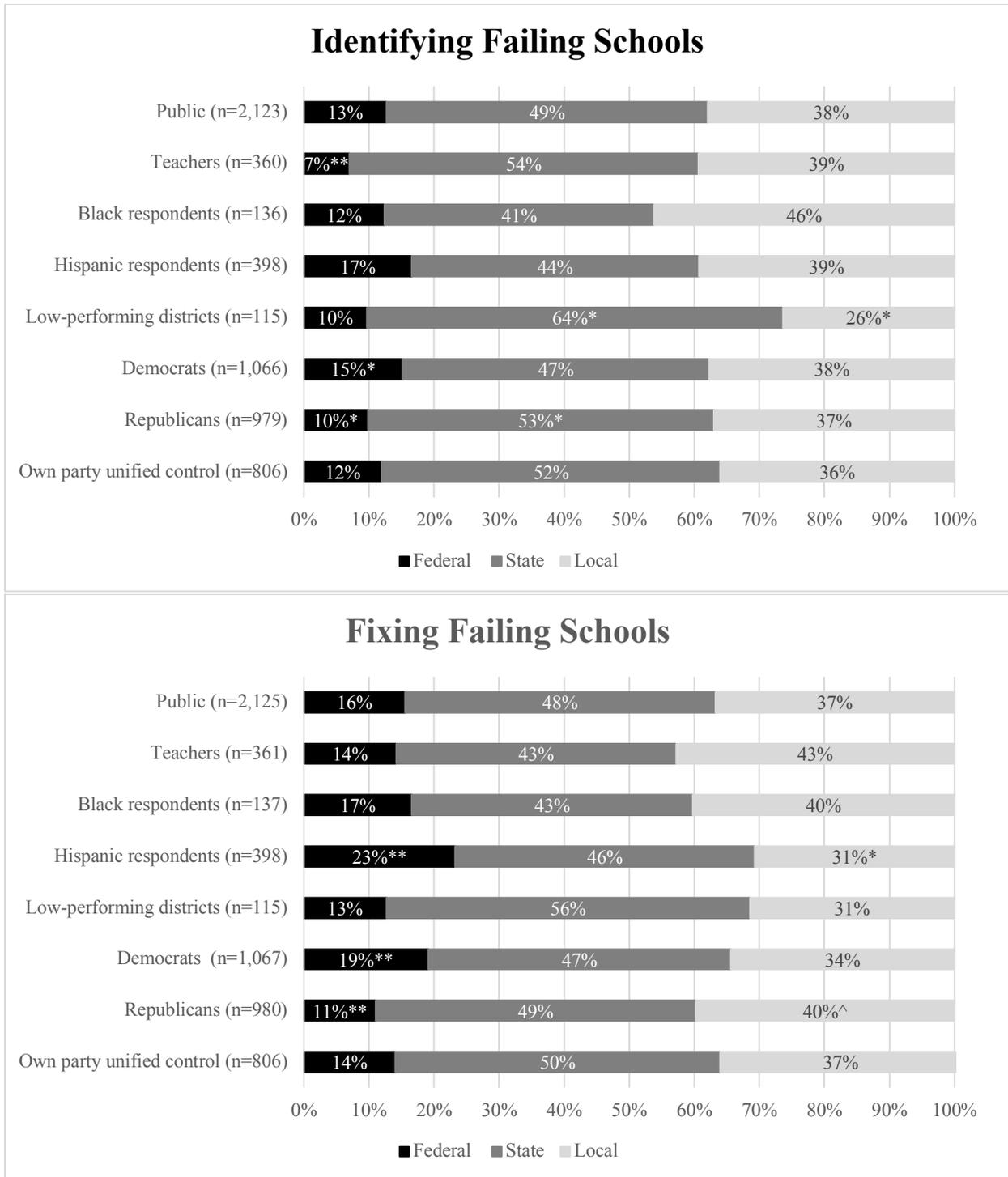


Figure 2. Public Preferences on Which Level of Government Should Play the Greatest Role in Identifying and Fixing Failing Schools by Subgroup
 Note: Asterisks refer to results of weighted t-tests for differences between members and non-members of a given group for each answer choice (***) p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, ^p<.10).

SCHOOL TURNAROUND OPINION

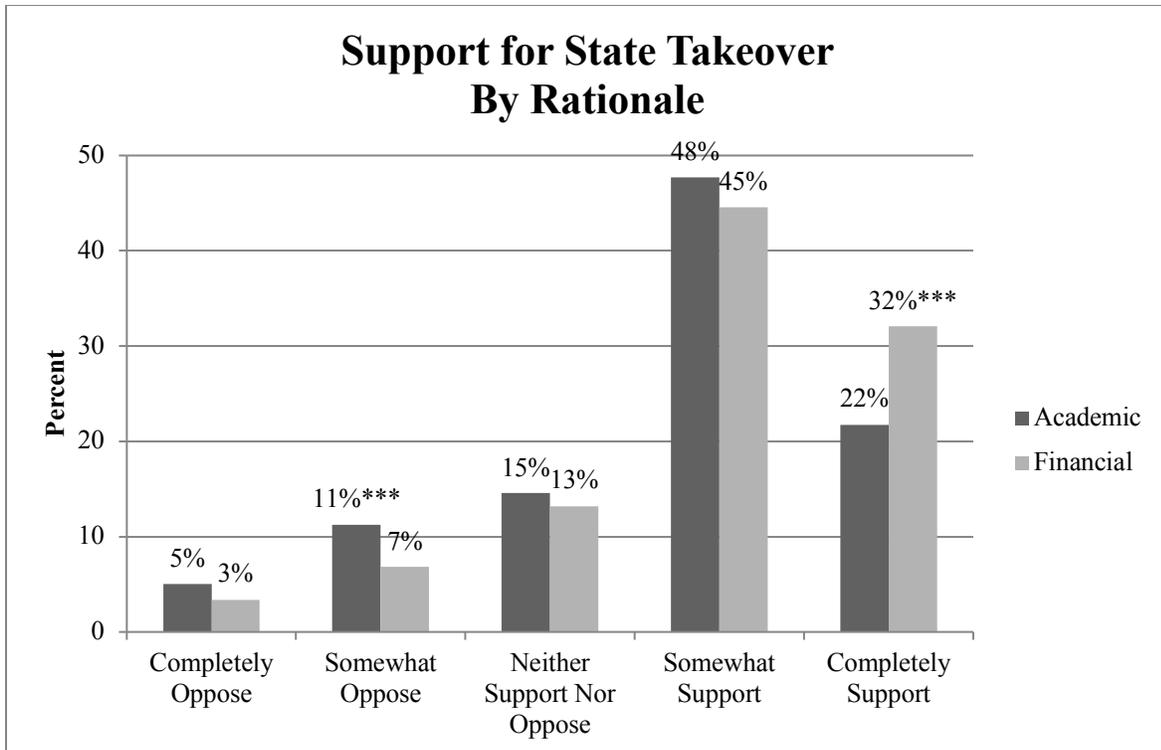


Figure 3. Public Opinion on State Takeover of School Districts by Takeover Rationale
Note: Asterisks refer to results of weighted t-tests for differences between academic and financial rationales for each answer choice (*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ^ $p < .10$).

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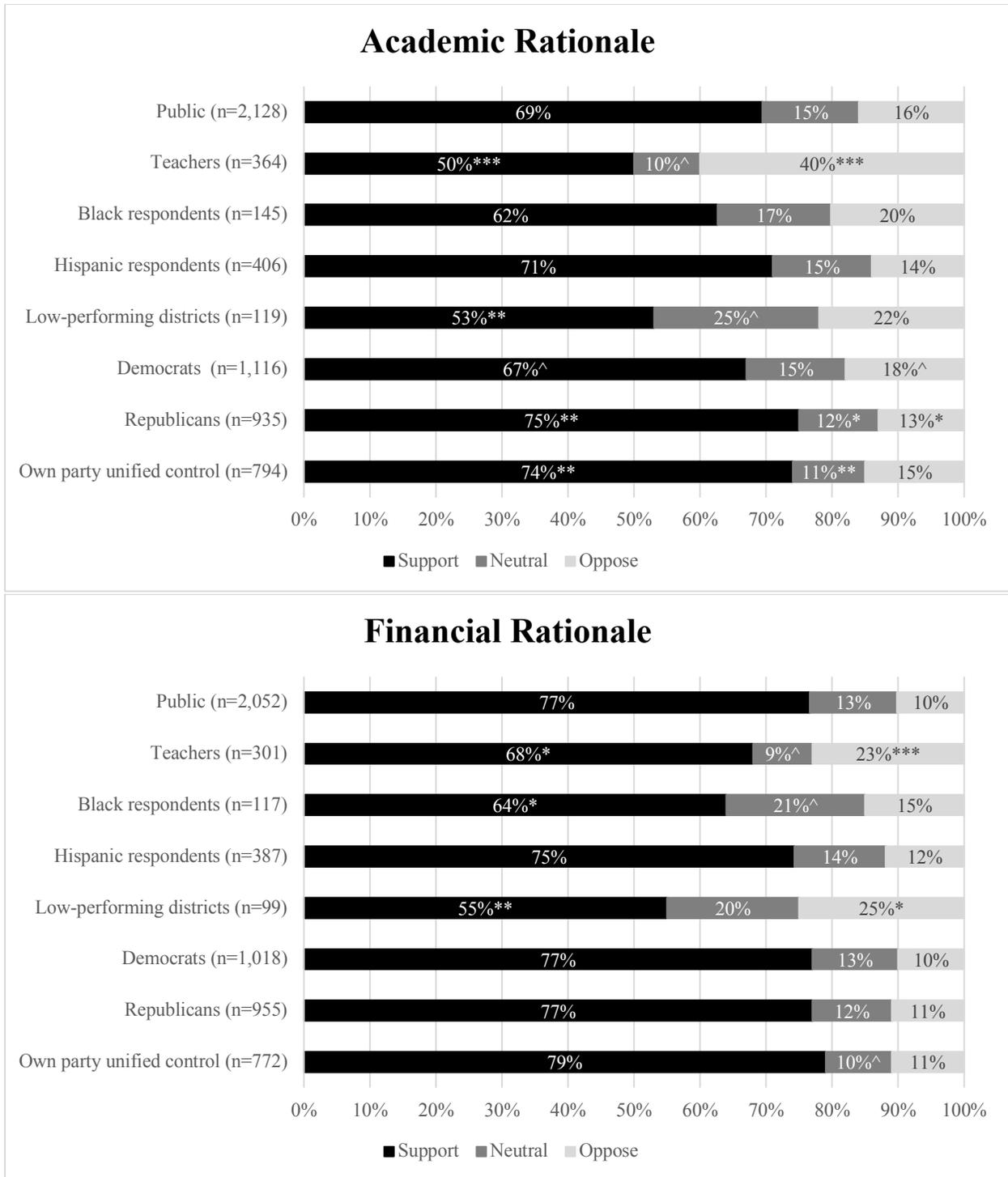


Figure 4. Public Opinion on State Takeover by Subgroup and Takeover Rationale
 Note: Asterisks refer to results of weighted t-tests for differences between members and non-members of a given group for each answer choice (***) $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ^ $p < .10$.

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Table 1. The Effect of Takeover Rationale on Support for State Takeovers (n=4,180)

	Public	Teacher	Black	Hispanic	White	Low-Performing Districts	Democrat	Own Party Unified Control
Academic	0.64*** (0.04)	0.65*** (0.04)	0.62*** (0.04)	0.63*** (0.04)	0.74** (0.07)	0.65*** (0.04)	0.74*** (0.06)	0.60*** (0.04)
Academic x Subgroup		0.61 (0.22)	1.29 (0.25)	1.07 (0.17)	0.80^ (0.10)	1.14 (0.30)	0.77* (0.09)	1.21 (0.15)
Subgroup		0.60^ (0.16)	0.66* (0.12)	1.00 (0.16)	0.86 (0.11)	0.53** (0.11)	1.02 (0.09)	1.05 (0.09)
Cut 1	-2.84	-2.84	-2.86	-2.85	-2.79	-2.70	-2.78	-2.84
Cut 2	-1.55	-1.55	-1.57	-1.56	-1.50	-1.42	-1.49	-1.55
Cut 3	-0.63	-0.63	-0.65	-0.64	-0.58	-0.48	-0.57	-0.63
Cut 4	1.45	1.46	1.43	1.44	1.51	1.60	1.51	1.46
N of Subgroup		669	262	805	2896	221	2149	1578

Note: The above ordered logit estimates are expressed in odds ratios. The coefficients represent the odds of giving response k (e.g., "completely support") versus the odds of giving response k - 1 (e.g., "somewhat support"). Each column represents result from a separate regression. All models control for gender, race, age, education, income, homeownership, household size, party, region, and whether respondent is a parent, a teacher, or married, and include survey weights (***) p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, ^p<0.10).

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Appendix Table A1. Characteristics of Respondents by Survey Question Type

	Failing Schools			State Takeover		
	Perceived	Preferred	p	Academic	Financial	p
N of Respondents	2,076	2,138	-	2,142	2,072	-
Missing Answer						
State Takeover	-	-	-	1	1	0.46
ID Failing Schools	1	1	0.83	-	-	-
Fix Failing Schools	1	1	0.44	-	-	-
Set Standards	1	1	0.41	-	-	-
Female	52	52	0.83	55	50	0.00
Age in Years	49	48	0.25	48	48	0.50
Black	10	11	0.09	11	10	0.54
Hispanic	16	17	0.24	17	16	0.81
Other	7	7	0.99	7	8	0.53
White	67	64	0.04	66	66	0.81
Education in Years	15	15	0.14	15	15	0.19
Income in Thousands	78	85	0.00	80	84	0.06
Homeowner	71	73	0.10	71	73	0.14
Single Family House	73	71	0.09	71	73	0.05
Household Size	3	3	0.68	3	3	0.37
Married	62	61	0.41	60	62	0.23
Parent	28	28	0.65	28	28	0.74
Teacher	3	3	0.67	3	3	0.19
Democrat	54	52	0.22	54	51	0.05
Northeast	18	18	0.63	16	19	0.01
Midwest	21	22	0.91	22	21	0.24
South	37	37	0.96	38	36	0.32
West	24	23	0.62	23	24	0.94
F-test		0.74			0.08	

Note: Data are weighted to be representative of the U.S. population as a whole. F-test refers to the p-values for joint tests of whether respondent characteristics predict assignment to a particular treatment condition.

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Appendix Table A2. Difference Between Perceived and Preferred Level of Government

	Identifying Failing Schools		Fixing Failing Schools		Setting Standards	
	State	Local	State	Local	State	Local
Should	0.00 (0.09)	0.72*** (0.10)	-0.11 (0.09)	0.47*** (0.98)	-0.04 (0.07)	0.67*** (0.10)
N	4,182		4,184		4,182	

Note: The above multinomial logit estimates are expressed in log odds. The baseline comparison group is "federal government." All models control for gender, race, age, education, income, homeownership, household size, party, region, and whether respondent is a parent, a teacher, or married, and include survey weights (***) $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, ^ $p < 0.10$).