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Polarization, Partisan Sorting, and the Politics of Education

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Abstract:

Drawing on 16 years of nationally representative survey data from 2007-2022, I demonstrate that partisan gaps—the average differences in public opinion between Democrats and Republicans—have widened on many education issues. The growth of the partisan gaps consistently exceeds what would be expected due to the changing demographic compositions of the parties alone. In most cases, widening partisan gaps are primarily attributable to sorting (the alignment of one's party affiliation and one's issue positions) rather than polarization (increasing support for more extreme positions relative to more moderate positions). However, polarization is also increasing on some of the most divisive issues. Among those who are sorting, individuals are overwhelmingly switching their issues positions to align with their party affiliations rather than switching their party affiliations to align with their issue positions.

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Political battles in the United States over elementary and secondary education have often been fractious and fiercely contested, but they have seldom been explicitly partisan. Debates over school desegregation (Delmont, 2016), prayer in schools (McAndrews, 2010), sex education (Boryczka, 2009), and the teaching of evolution (Berkman & Plutzer, 2010) stoked bitter divisions in the American public—by race and religion in particular—but the fissures did not run neatly along party lines. These examples from only a few decades ago stand in contrast to the unequivocally partisan disagreements over recent and ongoing issues such as optimal COVID-19 mitigation strategies and how educators ought to teach about the role of racism in America's past and present (Collins, 2021; 2022; Houston et al., 2022b; Polikoff et al., 2022).

The unusual history of K-12 school governance—which produced school district boundary lines distinct from other political jurisdictions, school board elections held at different times than other elections, school board candidates without party affiliations, and only a modest role for the federal government—may partially explain the relatively muted influence of partisan politics (Davies, 2007; Tyack, 1974). However, some scholars have argued that the era of education's institutional exceptionalism may be coming to an end as mayors, governors, presidents, and other political actors from outside of the traditional educational ecosystem assume greater authority over K-12 schools (Henig, 2013; Mehta & Teles, 2011). The recent influx of outside money and attention toward local school board elections suggests that the politics of education no longer operates on a wholly separate wavelength from the rest of American politics (Henig et al., 2019).

On the other hand, there are also reasons to believe that the field of education is unusually resistant to the partisan dynamics that have shaped American political life over the last few decades. The history of federal education politics is replete with unexpected coalitions and

bipartisan legislation. From the late 1980's to the mid 2010's, both Democratic and Republican presidents strategically deployed moderate positions on education issues to appeal to swing voters and expand their electoral coalitions (Hess, 2021; McGuinn, 2006). George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush argued for a more forceful federal role in K-12 education, breaking from Republican orthodoxy. Similarly, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama adopted centrist or right-of-center positions on school accountability reform and school choice. These instances of presidential moderation fanned intra-party divisions while creating space for cross-party legislative collaboration (Rhodes, 2014). The two major federal education laws of this period—the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015—passed by wide bipartisan margins (H.R.1, 2001; S.1177, 2015). This is not to suggest that either law enjoyed the unalloyed support of majorities in either party; rather, both featured policy compromises and concessions that were thought to be mutually tolerable in service of policies considered at the time to be improvements over the status quo (Henig et al., 2017; McGuinn, 2017). Given these muddled and mixed signals as to where the two parties stood on questions of education policy, it follows that, as recently as 2015, the average differences in public opinion between rank-and-file Democrats and Republicans on these issues were modest (Shapiro et al., 2021).

I argue that we are potentially on the cusp of a new era of education politics: one that, absent a significant shift in our political institutions or the behavior of political actors operating within those institutions, is characterized by increasing policy divergence between Democratic-leaning and Republican-leaning states and localities, the emergence of large electoral minorities in most American communities that are opposed to new education legislation and regulation, more frequent calls for federal enforcement of civil rights protections, legislative inaction at the

federal level, recurring conflict between the executive and judicial branches, and heightened partisan animosity across all aspects of education politics.

I assemble 16 years of nationally representative survey data from the annual *Education Next* (EN) poll of public attitudes toward education issues from 2007 to 2022. I demonstrate that partisan gaps—defined as the average differences in opinion between self-identified Democrats and Republicans—on many long-standing education debates have widened over the last two decades. The largest divergences are visible on issues related to teachers' unions, teachers' salaries, the Common Core State Standards, and charter schools. Moreover, I show that the growth of these partisan gaps consistently exceeds what we would expect due to the changing demographic compositions of the parties alone. I reveal that, in most cases, these growing partisan gaps are primarily attributable to sorting (the alignment of one's party affiliation and one's issue positions) rather than polarization (increasing support for more extreme positions relative to more moderate positions). However, polarization is also increasing on some of the most divisive issues (e.g., the Common Core, charter schools, and teachers' unions). Lastly, using subsets of EN poll respondents who participated in two consecutive annual surveys, I determine that the sorting I observe is overwhelmingly the result of individuals switching their issue positions to align with their party affiliations rather than switching their party affiliations to align with their issue positions.

These analyses are motivated by and contribute to an extensive research literature on the nature of partisanship, polarization, and sorting as well as their consequences for politics and policymaking. Scholarly debates over these issues have been at the forefront of the discipline of political science for the last two decades (and have roots that go back much earlier). A few important exceptions aside, they have seen significantly less attention from students of education

policy. My objective with this project is two-fold. First, I aim to apply some of the concepts from this literature to a set of education policy debates, testing the extent to which the patterns observed in many other domestic policy domains generalize to the institutionally atypical field of K-12 education. Second, I seek to serve as a bridge between the disciplines, introducing education researchers to a set of debates that have animated political scientists for years and introducing political scientists to some of the issues that animate contemporary education policy. In keeping with this strategy, the literature review that follows draws primarily from the work of political scientists, while the discussion near the end of the paper applies these ideas, guided by the results of my analysis, to specific education policies.

Literature Review

Polarization and Sorting

The term "polarization" has become something of a catch-all for many types of contemporary political dysfunction. In most media contexts, to describe a political phenomenon as "polarized" is to signal to your audience that it is particularly uncompromising, divisive, or hostile. Researchers tend to adopt a narrower definition. According to McCarty (2019, p. 2), polarization is "the increasing support for more extreme political views relative to support for centrist or moderate views." If you were to envision the distribution of the American public's preferences toward a specific policy issue—for example, how much federal student-loan debt the Biden administration should cancel per borrower in the summer of 2022—a polarized distribution would be skewed toward the two poles ($0 and some significantly higher value) while a non-polarized distribution would be concentrated near the mean. The latter is not necessarily more normatively desirable than the former. The two scenarios merely describe how widely dispersed a given population's preferences are. Put simply, polarization is a measure of

variance in political views, the implications of which depend on issue and context.

There is overwhelming evidence that polarization among political elites—elected officials, campaign donors, and activists—has increased on a wide variety of issues since the 1970's (Abramowitz, 2010; Hacker & Pierson, 2005; Mann & Ornstein, 2016; McCarty et al, 2006; 2016; Rohde, 1991; Sinclair, 2006). The accumulated evidence is derived from both quantitative (Congressional roll-call votes, large-scale public opinion surveys) and qualitative sources (interviews and focus groups with elected officials and political activists). Specifically, within these highly engaged and informed political circles, we are observing *partisan* polarization. Relative to the range of views expressed in contemporary debates, Republican elites are adopting increasingly extreme conservative positions and Democratic elites are adopting increasingly extreme liberal positions. This pattern, however, features a considerable degree of asymmetry, with a larger conservative drift over time among Republicans than the analogous liberal drift among Democrats (McCarty, 2019). Elite polarization is the product of many factors, chief among which is the transition of the American South from a reliably conservative Democratic region to a reliably conservative Republican region in the decades following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Carmines & Stimson, 1989). In addition, the declining political fortunes of moderate and liberal Republicans in the Midwest and Northeast over the latter half of the 20th century have produced two non-overlapping ideological blocs in Congress composed almost entirely of left-leaning Democrats and right-leaning Republicans (Smith, 2022). Scholars have also explored other causes of elite polarization that coincide with and help explain these large political shifts, including increasing income inequality (McCarty et al., 2006; 2016), higher rates of immigration (McCarty et al., 2006; 2016), and changes in the media environment (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Lelkes et al., 2017;

Martin & Yurukoglu, 2017; Stroud, 2008).

At the federal level, heightened polarization among political elites intersects with two features of the American political system—one of which is contemporary while the other dates to the founding generation—to create gridlock and dysfunction. First, control of the House, the Senate, and the Presidency have all been narrowly contested over the last few decades (Sides et al., 2022). This has not always been the case. While the Presidency typically changes hands every few election cycles between the two major parties of a given era, Congress has had long stretches of single-party control. For example, Democrats held majorities in both chambers for 52 out of 61 years between 1933 and 1994 (U.S. House, 2022; U.S. Senate, 2022). Lee (2016) argues that closely contested control of legislatures engenders more heated party conflict between legislators. Because majority status confers significant benefits (e.g., determining when or whether a bill will go to the floor for a vote) and because majority status is plausibly within reach for either party every election, legislators in the minority have a stronger incentive to damage their majority counterparts politically and seek to regain majority status in the following election than to collaborate and thereby improve the other party's electoral prospects. As representatives and senators of both parties continue to polarize, fewer policy proposals remain that can garner bipartisan support. Given the electoral incentives generated by narrow party control, even these proposals can struggle to gain traction.

Second, the framers of the U.S. Constitution deliberately sought to inhibit party-driven politics (Madison, 1787). Bicameralism and the presidential veto ensure that party-line votes translate into law only when one party controls both chambers of Congress and the Presidency—a rarity given the different electorates and term lengths for each office. The Senate's cloture rules, which are not Constitutionally required but which date to the early 1800's, effectively

create a 60-vote minimum for all major legislation (Binder, 2003). Because of the narrow majorities described above, this threshold is also rarely met. As inter-party collaboration declines, the result is typically stalemate. The only legislation that is able to pass these institutional hurdles tends to be overwhelmingly bipartisan—albeit narrow in scope and limited to the small range of issues on which views remain unpolarized (Curry & Lee, 2019). An exception applies to those policies that meet the stringent requirements of the budget reconciliation process, a parliamentary procedure that allows the Senate to pass legislation with a simple majority vote but that also narrows the range of legislative possibilities (Heniff, 2016).

At the state and local levels, it is much more common for the majority party to have control of both legislative and executive branches, while supermajority voting or cloture requirements are unusual (Grumbach, 2018). As a result, greater polarization among political elites generally does not result in gridlock; instead, it promotes policy divergence. Republican-leaning states and localities have adopted increasingly conservative policies on a range of issues while Democratic-leaning states and localities have adopted increasingly liberal policies (Abramowitz, 2018; Caughey et al., 2017).

In contrast to the extensive evidence of polarization among political elites, the evidence of polarization among the general public is fairly weak. In fact, most Americans hold relatively moderate positions on a wide variety of issues—including some of the most contentious debates in contemporary politics, such as the conditions under which abortion ought to be legal (Fiorina, 2017; Fiorina et al., 2005). Instead, a distinctly different phenomenon has been taking place: partisan *sorting*. Beginning in the 1990's, rank-and-file members of each party have increasingly adopted issue positions that align with their party, even if they continue to avoid extreme versions of those positions (Bafumi & Shapiro, 2009; Levendusky, 2009). More specifically, the

overall variation in the public's policy preferences on a range of issues has increased only modestly over the last three decades, while the relationships between individuals' party affiliations and their policy preferences have grown considerably. Mass partisan sorting is likely a consequence of the clearer and more consistent signals provided by a polarized and sorted political elite (McCarty, 2019). The nature of this sorting tends to follow a consistent pattern: Individuals typically alter their issue positions in order to align with their already well-established party affiliations. The inverse, in which individuals change parties to align with deeply held issue positions, is rare (Levendusky, 2009).

In addition to the greater alignment between party and issue positions, Americans have also increasingly sorted themselves into the two major parties along racial, ethnic, gender, educational, economic, religious, and geographic lines (Abramowitz, 2018; Mason, 2018). According to Mason (2018), who builds on a framework from the field of social psychology known as the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), these multiple, overlapping, and intersectional identities help foster stronger in-group attachments and out-group antipathies. As the social distance between the parties increases, one's attitudes toward the opposing party is characterized less by mere disagreement and more by active dislike (Iyengar et al., 2012). In particular, given America's stark history of discrimination and exclusion on the basis of race, the large racial divide between the two parties can heighten the perception of social and political difference. This dynamic arguably makes Americans feel more polarized despite the relative absence of polarized issue positions.

Implications for Politics and Policy

The distinction between polarization and sorting in the general public is key because the two dynamics have different implications for politics and policy in general and for the field of K-

12 education in particular. Polarization—whether or not it is accompanied by significant sorting—means that the center is genuinely hollowing out. Polarized preferences are bimodal: They represent a substantively large disagreement on optimal public policy, relative to the range of views expressed on the issue. Insofar as these disagreements correspond to different political jurisdictions (cities, states, school districts, etc.), we should expect to see greater variation in policy choices from place to place to reflect differences in public opinion.

The normative consequences of this dynamic are complex. While there is no definitive account of the necessary and sufficient conditions for representative democracy, any plausible attempt must include a nontrivial linkage between the preferences of the public and the actual policies that governments produce (Erikson et al., 1993; Houston, 2019; Lax & Phillips, 2012; Page & Shapiro, 1983). As V. O. Key, Jr. (1961, p. 7) pithily suggests, "Unless mass views have some place in the shaping of policy, all the talk about democracy is nonsense." While there may be administrative and logistical drawbacks of policy divergence in terms of coherence and consistency across the country, these downsides need to be weighed against democratic principles.

There are limits to this line of reasoning. Many of the persistent inequalities by race, class, gender, and other social identities in the United States are rooted in legislation and governmental regulation with discriminatory effects (e.g., Rothstein, 2017). A policy that maintains or exacerbates existing inequalities does not become just merely by being supported by a local majority (Kendi, 2019). Polarization in the general public is likely to lead to a wider variety of policy choices at the state and local level. To the extent that some of these policies actively discriminate against protected groups, increasing polarization may also prompt calls for stronger federal enforcement of civil rights protections. In the case of education policy, these

efforts might operate through the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education or via a new regulatory mechanism with a broader warrant than current federal anti-discrimination law (Office for Civil Rights, 2022).

The implications of partisan sorting in the general public—especially in the absence of significant polarization—may appear superficially similar, but there are nontrivial substantive and normative differences. Although mass sorting is primarily a consequence of elite polarization and sorting, once in place, mass sorting can reinforce and exacerbate partisan differences at the elite level (McCarty, 2019). In even modestly right-leaning or left-leaning communities, sorting among the public creates strong incentives for candidates and elected officials to pursue consistently conservative or consistently liberal political agendas. While this dynamic may also appeal to the virtues of representative democracy, it is important to remember that most Americans continue to hold relatively moderate positions on most issues and that few communities in the U.S. are overwhelmingly Democratic or Republican (Fiorina, 2017; Fiorina et al., 2005). Only 37% of counties (representing 29% of the population) voted more than 60% for either Biden or Trump in the 2020 presidential election (MIT Election Data and Science Lab, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022—author's calculations). In other words, roughly seven out of ten Americans live in a county where at least 40% of the voting population disagreed with the local outcome of the election. As the rate of split-ticket voting declines and the alignment between local and national election outcomes increases (Davis & Mason, 2015), this dynamic is likely to generate large electoral minorities in most communities that encounter political and policy landscapes that they consistently oppose. This scenario is equally common for white Americans as for Americans of color. Weighted by total population, closely contested counties were, on average, approximately 57% non-Hispanic white, while electorally one-sided counties

were approximately 58% non-Hispanic white.

Sorting-driven politics can also increase the potential for inter- and intra-governmental conflict. State-level divergence along party lines can prompt organized resistance to federal policy in circumstances when the two conflict, and local-level partisan divergence can prompt similar resistance to state policy (Bulman-Pozen, 2014). At the federal level, the combination of a well-sorted electorate, narrow party majorities, and the high bar to break a partisan filibuster often leads to congressional inaction or to symbolic voting on bills that are unlikely to pass but that may harm the opposition politically (Lee, 2016). In turn, a less effective legislature cedes power to the executive (Howell, 2003), while unilateral applications of presidential power often provoke judicial challenges (Epstein & Posner, 2018).

The research literature on the effects of mass partisan sorting also raises concerns about the toxicity of American politics more generally. Political environments that value ideological consistency can make running for public office less appealing to those with moderate views—an exclusion effect that appears to disproportionately deter highly qualified moderate women from entering the field (Thomsen, 2017). This dynamic can perpetuate a cycle that promotes intra-party consistency and inter-party hostility among candidates while also exacerbating gender inequality in political representation. Finally, on an interpersonal level, as party affiliation becomes more central to one's social identity, sorting can increase the animosity one feels toward members of the other party (Mason, 2018).

Research Design

Research Questions

The analyses in these pages explore the nature of partisanship, polarization, and sorting among the general public with respect to a series of education issues, beginning approximately at

the start of the Obama administration and concluding a few years into the Biden administration. Specifically, I pose four research questions. First, I begin with a straightforward descriptive inquiry: To what extent have Democrats and Republicans in the general public diverged, on average, in their views on various education issues? The time period of this study was one of noteworthy demographic transition for the country as a whole as well as for each party—particularly along racial and educational lines—prompting a second question: To what extent are increasing partisan gaps attributable to the changing demographic compositions of the parties? My third question reflects the important distinction between polarization and sorting detailed above: If partisan gaps are widening, is that growth a product of polarization, sorting, or both? Fourth, I examine the character of partisan sorting on education issues: Among individuals who are sorting, are they primarily switching their issue positions to align with their party, or are they primarily switching their parties to align with their issue positions? I conclude by discussing the implications of my findings for K-12 education politics and policy in the context of the existing literature on polarization and sorting.

Data Sources and Limitations

The analyses that follow are based on data from the 2007-2022 annual EN polls of Americans' attitudes toward various education issues. Each year's EN poll samples respondents from the KnowledgePanel®, an ongoing, nationally representative, online panel recruited via address-based sampling. In all years, respondents could elect to complete the survey in either English or Spanish. The number of respondents varies by year, ranging from a low of 1,410 in 2021 to a high of 5,251 in 2011. The typical EN poll features the responses of approximately 3,000-4,000 unique individuals. The EN polls also regularly include representative oversamples of Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and K-12 teachers. In every analysis, I incorporate

survey weights to account for these oversamples and for nonresponse among individuals from the KnowledgePanel® who were invited but declined to participate. For details regarding survey methodology for each individual poll, please see the EN poll website at https://www.educationnext.org/ednext-poll/.

I restrict my analysis to 16 survey items that were repeated with identical or near-identical question wordings in multiple survey administrations over the course of at least ten years. Specifically, I examine survey items that inquire about respondents' attitudes toward local public school quality ("Grading Local Schools"), public school quality nationwide ("Grading Schools Nationwide"), the Common Core State Standards ("Common Core"), national academic standards in general ("National Standards"), universal public vouchers for private-school tuition ("Universal Vouchers"), public vouchers for private-school tuition for low-income families ("Low-Income Vouchers"), charter schools ("Charter Schools"), tax credit scholarships for private-school tuition ("Tax Credit Scholarships"), general education spending when informed of average per-pupil expenditures in their local school district ("Spending – Informed"), general education spending without also being provided local spending information ("Spending – Uninformed"), teachers' salaries when informed of average teacher salaries in their state ("Salaries – Informed"), teachers' salaries without also being provided statewide salary information ("Salaries – Uninformed"), merit-based teacher pay ("Merit Pay"), annual standardized testing ("Annual Testing"), the option to take online classes in high school ("Online Classes in HS"), and respondents' evaluations of teachers' unions ("Teachers' Unions").

Please see the appendix for a detailed account of all minor question wording changes over time for each survey item. By including items with near-identical—rather than strictly identical—question wordings, I assume that while minor wording shifts may influence responses

overall (Schuman & Presser, 1981), such shifts are typically similar in magnitude and direction for respondents of both parties. As a strong test of this assumption, I refer the reader to the 2018 EN poll, in which respondents are randomly assigned to receive one of two different versions of both the "universal vouchers" question and the "low-income vouchers" question (Cheng et al., 2018). One pair of questions specifically refers to the proposed policies as "voucher[s];" the other pair of questions generically describes proposals that allow families "to enroll in private schools…with government helping to pay the tuition." Given the contentiousness of the debate over private-school vouchers, one could reasonably expect that such a difference in question wording might elicit different reactions along party lines. However, while the inclusion of the word "voucher" causes overall support for the proposed policies to drop, there is no evidence of heterogeneous effects by party affiliation. None of the question wording changes in the analyses that follow are as substantively or politically significant as the inclusion or exclusion of the word "voucher."

There is one systematic shift in the structure of the EN poll that merits mentioning here. In 2013, the EN poll designers moved "neither support nor oppose" from the middle of the list of possible response options to the end of the list for applicable questions (Henderson & Peterson, 2013). They initiated this change to prompt more respondents to choose either "support" or "oppose" options rather than gravitating toward the central option as a default. This change in question format has important ramifications for the analysis of polarization—defined as the overall variance in responses to a given survey item—over time. Indeed, I observe modest upticks in polarization on survey items about the Common Core, national standards, universal vouchers, low-income vouchers, charter schools, tax credit scholarships, spending (informed), salaries (uninformed), merit pay, annual testing, online classes in high school, and teachers'

unions between 2012 (or the next earlier available year) and 2013 (or the next later available year). However, none of the inferences I draw rely primarily on these 2012-2013 shifts. With respect to the issues that have polarized to a noteworthy degree (the Common Core, charter schools, and teachers' unions), the pattern extends well beyond 2013. In the case of increased partisan sorting—defined as the correlation between party affiliation and responses to a given survey item—I observe no evidence that 2013 was a particularly pivotal year in the EN poll data.

Methods

General Trends in Public Opinion on Education Issues

I begin by estimating overall public opinion on all 16 survey items for all available years between 2007 and 2022 (Figure 1; see the appendix for a complete list of the years in which each survey item appears). To calculate yearly averages, I convert all survey responses from five-point Likert scales (e.g., "strongly oppose," "somewhat oppose," "neither support nor oppose," "somewhat support," "strongly support") to five-point numeric scales (e.g., 1 = "strongly oppose" and 5 = "strongly support"). This approach has noteworthy advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, I am able to calculate both whole-group and sub-group averages that reflect the full balance of opinion (e.g., between strong support and strong opposition) rather than focusing on one portion of the distribution (e.g., the percentage of supporters). The latter is undesirable for an analysis of polarization and sorting because, to provide one example, it would conflate a scenario in which support and opposition are equally divided and a scenario in which non-supporters are split between a small opposition and a larger group of non-committal respondents. On the other hand, the intervals between response options are not necessarily equal in size, but a simple numeric conversion assumes this to be the case. If, for instance, it is a larger substantive shift to move from "neither support nor oppose" to "somewhat support" than to move

from "somewhat support" to "strongly support," then my approach would obscure such nuance. Ultimately, the upsides of capturing the balance of opinion on an issue in a single value—which is necessary both for many of the subsequent analyses and for the visual legibility of the figures depicting public opinion trends—outweigh the downsides of relying on imperfect distributional assumptions.

Estimating Partisan Gaps

Next, I disaggregate the overall trends by party affiliation in order to estimate the magnitude and direction of the average gap between self-identified Democrats and self-identified Republicans for each survey item in each year (Figure 2). Following the standard convention in research on political partisanship, I include self-identified independents who indicate that they "lean" toward one party or the other in each partisan category. Prior research has demonstrated that so-called partisan "leaners" behave in similar ways to their counterparts who more directly state their affiliation with a party (Keith et al., 1992; Magleby et al., 2011).

I then plot the partisan gap—defined as the absolute value of the average difference between Democrats and Republicans—for each survey item and year (Figure 3, solid purple lines). To estimate the average annual rate of growth in the partisan gap for each survey item, I employ the following ordinary least squares (OLS) regression equation:

$$Gap_t = \alpha + \beta Year_t + \epsilon_t,$$

where Gap is the partisan gap in year t, $Year$ is a linear time trend, and ϵ is the error term. At most, this simple analysis contains a sample size of 16 observations for a given survey item. As such, while this equation offers a straightforward approach to estimating the quantity of interest—which is captured by β (Figure 3, dotted gray lines)—the accompanying tests for statistical significance are conservative.

Partisan Gaps and the Changing Demographics of the Parties

To explore the extent to which these changing partisan gaps can be explained by the changing demographic compositions of the two major parties during this time period, I conduct a series of analyses. First, I consider the extent to which attitudes toward the 16 survey items are associated with the various demographic predictors of education policy preferences identified by Peterson et al. (2014):

$$Y_{it} = \boldsymbol{\delta_t} + \boldsymbol{\beta X_{it}} + \epsilon_{it},$$

where Y is the response to one of the 16 survey items for individual i in year t, $\boldsymbol{X}$ is a vector of demographic characteristics (party affiliation, race/ethnicity, family income, educational attainment, sex, age, parental status, homeowner status, and K-12 teacher status), $\boldsymbol{\delta}$ are survey year fixed effects, and ϵ is the error term. The results of these analyses amply demonstrate that all of these demographic characteristics are noteworthy predictors of attitudes toward the education issues that structure this study (Table A1). Therefore, changes in the parties' compositions along these dimensions could account for some of the changes in the partisan gaps.

The second analysis in this series tracks the parties' compositional changes directly using the EN poll data (Figure 4). For each year from 2007 to 2022, I estimate the proportions of both Democrats and Republicans for whom the aforementioned demographic identities apply, revealing modest but nontrivial demographic shifts over time.

To understand the extent to which the increases in the partisan gaps are attributable to these demographic changes, I estimate the following OLS equation for each survey item using data exclusively from the first year in which the item appears, which I refer to as year $t = 1$ (e.g., 2007 for "Grading Local Schools"):

$$Y_{i,t=1} = \alpha + \boldsymbol{\beta X_{i,t=1}} + \epsilon_{i,t=1},$$

where Y is the response to one of the 16 survey items for individual i in year $t = 1$, $\boldsymbol{X}$ is the same vector of demographic characteristics, and ϵ is the error term. The various values of $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ reflect the conditional associations between each demographic characteristic and the outcome. Using this equation, I estimate $\hat{Y}_{i,t=1}$ for each of the 5,184 possible combinations of the demographic characteristics contained in $\boldsymbol{X}$. For example, one combination would be: Democrat; Black, non-Hispanic; family income between $50,000-$100,000; graduated from a four-year college; male; less than 40 years old; parent; non-homeowner; K-12 teacher (e.g., the predicted local school grade for such an individual in 2007 is 3.37 on a five-point scale). Next, for each subsequent survey ($t = 2$, $t = 3$, …), I impute $\hat{Y}_{i,t=1}$ for each respondent based on their demographic characteristics. Finally, I estimate the partisan gaps for each survey item and year based on these imputed values, capturing the gaps that we would have observed if the β's from year $t = 1$ remained constant while the demographic identities of the respondents from each party changed (Figure 3, dashed green lines). In brief, this analysis demonstrates that the compositional shifts in the parties explain little if any of the growing partisan gaps.

Polarization or Sorting

Next, I proceed to distinguish whether polarization or sorting is the primary mechanism behind the widening gaps. Following McCarty's (2019, p. 2) definition of polarization, "…increasing support for more extreme political views relative to support for centrist or moderate views," I operationalize polarization as the variance in responses to a given survey item, or $Var(Y)$. Similarly, I follow Levendusky's (2009, p. 3) canonical definition of sorting: "I refer to this alignment of partisanship and ideology as *sorting*; sorted Democrats are liberals, and sorted Republicans are conservatives" (emphasis in the original). In the case of a single issue, this definition can be extended to the correlation between party affiliation and attitudes toward

that issue, operationalized as $Cor(Dem, Y)$ or $Cor(Rep, Y)$, where Dem and Rep are dichotomous variables for Democrat or Republican, respectively. I then compute these measures of polarization and sorting for each survey item and year (Figure 5). To reduce year-to-year volatility in the measures of sorting, I calculate 5-year moving averages. To compare the rate of change in polarization and sorting, I convert both measures to percent changes from year $t = 1$, allowing me to make statements such as, "Polarization on issue Y has increased m% from 2007, while sorting has increased n% over the same time period." To quickly summarize: Sorting has risen substantially across a wide variety of issues; polarization has risen substantially in a few select cases.

The Nature of Partisan Sorting

Finally, I consider whether the sorting I observe is predominately attributable to individuals switching their issue positions to align with their party affiliations or to individuals switching their party affiliations to align with their issue positions. In order to make this determination, I need to observe the same respondents over multiple survey administrations. From 2013-2018, the EN poll designers prioritized re-sampling a portion of the previous years' respondents in order to track individual-level changes over time (Houston et al., 2022a). These subsets of respondents who participated in two consecutive surveys are no longer nationally representative, but they offer a unique opportunity to distinguish between position-switching and party-switching among individuals who engage in partisan sorting (Table A2).

Exact operationalizations of position-switching (i.e., maintaining the same party affiliation but changing one's position to align with that party) and party-switching (i.e., maintaining the same or similar position but changing one's party to align with that position) are dependent on the issue. At the crux of the matter is the occasional ambiguity regarding what

constitutes the Democratic and Republican positions in a given debate. I propose the following approach to define these concepts generically over a two-year time period ($t = 1$ and $t = 2$).

With respect to position-switching, three criteria must be met:

1. $Party_{i,t=1} = Party_{i,t=2}$
2. $\left|Y_{i,t=1} - \bar{Y}_{t=1}^{out-party}\right| < \left|Y_{i,t=1} - \bar{Y}_{t=1}^{in-party}\right|$
3. $\left|Y_{i,t=2} - \bar{Y}_{t=2}^{in-party}\right| < \left|Y_{i,t=2} - \bar{Y}_{t=2}^{out-party}\right|$

where $Party$ is individual i's party affiliation, Y is i's issue position, $\bar{Y}^{in-party}$ is the average issue position among i's co-partisans, and $\bar{Y}^{out-party}$ is the average issue position among members of the other party. In other words, to be classified as a position-switcher, individual i must maintain the same party affiliation in $t = 1$ and $t = 2$, their issue position in $t = 1$ must be closer to the out-party mean than the in-party mean, and their issue position in $t = 2$ must be closer to the in-party mean than the out-party mean.

With respect to party-switching, three criteria must be met:

1. $Party_{i,t=1} \neq Party_{i,t=2}$
2. $\left|Y_{i,t=1} - \bar{Y}_{t=1}^{out-party}\right| < \left|Y_{i,t=1} - \bar{Y}_{t=1}^{in-party}\right|$
3. $\left|Y_{i,t=2} - \bar{Y}_{t=2}^{in-party}\right| < \left|Y_{i,t=2} - \bar{Y}_{t=2}^{out-party}\right|$

Individual i must switch party affiliations in $t = 1$ and $t = 2$, their issue position in $t = 1$ must be closer to the out-party (as of $t = 1$) mean than the in-party (as of $t = 1$) mean, and their issue position in $t = 2$ must be closer to the in-party (as of $t = 2$) mean than the out-party (as of $t = 2$) mean.

As the reader will observe in Figure 6, these operationalizations generally perform better for issues in which there is a clear distinction between Democratic and Republican means. Their primary downside is that they tend to exaggerate the degree of position-switching when

Democratic and Republican means are similar. Moreover, some amount of both position-switching and party-switching will inevitably be the result of measurement error (i.e., respondents misrepresenting either their actual party affiliations or issue positions, whether intentionally or inadvertently) rather than genuine changes. Lastly, this approach is unable to capture the behavior of young adults entering the electorate for the first time and pre-emptively choosing a party that aligns with their issue positions. One could conceivably construe such behavior as party-switching if the individual in question chooses a party affiliation that deviates from what one might expect based on their family or social networks.

Findings

General Trends in Public Opinion on Education Issues

Figure 1 displays overall trends in public opinion on the 16 issues that structure this analysis. Recall that responses for each item are converted to a five-point numeric scale; therefore, the value 3.0 on the y-axis serves as the midpoint at which positive and negative responses net out (a partial exception applies to "Grading Local Schools" and "Grading Schools Nationwide," in which a grade of "C" is not universally considered a neutral midpoint).

The reader should note two primary findings from this initial descriptive exercise. First, with a few important exceptions, public opinion on a wide range of education issues is remarkably stable over time. This is consistent with earlier research indicating that, while few individuals provide unwaveringly consistent responses to the same question over multiple years (Converse, 1964; Houston et al., 2022a), such deviations tend to cancel out in the aggregate, revealing meaningful changes in mass public opinion over time (Page & Shapiro, 1992). The exceptions apply to policies that encountered organized political resistance (e.g., the Common Core State Standards after they were associated with the Obama administration and charter

schools after they were associated with the Trump administration) or that became newly relevant in a changing context (e.g., online classes in high school during the COVID-19 pandemic) (Barnum, 2021; Harris, 2019; Whitman, 2015). Second, positive and negative reactions to many contemporary education issues are approximately evenly divided. It is common for average responses to fall somewhere between 2.5 and 3.5. The exceptions apply to broadly popular policies such as annual standardized testing, increasing teachers' salaries, and, to a lesser extent, increasing general education spending.

Estimating Partisan Gaps

Figure 2 disaggregates these trends by respondents' self-identified party affiliations. Three relevant patterns emerge from this visualization of the data. First, the reader can observe the party-specific shifts that help explain the sharp changes in overall opinion noted above, such as Republicans' swift turn away from the Common Core and Democrats' declining enthusiasm for charter schools. Second, one can quickly distinguish between policies without sizable partisan gaps (e.g., grading local schools, national standards, tax credit scholarships, annual testing, and online classes in high school) and policies with large average differences between the parties (e.g., Common Core, charter schools, general education spending, teachers' salaries, and teachers' unions). Third, Figure 2 provides a first impression of the widening partisan gaps on many—although not all—of these issues. This figure also provides a graphical representation of whether the growing gaps are the result of both parties moving apart in equal measure or if one party is driving the overall divergence.

I examine the changing magnitudes of the partisan gaps more rigorously in the analyses depicted in Figure 3. I plot the absolute value of the average difference between Democrats and Republicans for each survey item and year (solid purple lines) as well as the average annual rate

of change (dotted gray lines; slopes represented by β). Partisan gaps are widening with respect to public opinion on the Common Core ($\beta = 0.053$); teachers' unions ($\beta = 0.036$); charter schools ($\beta = 0.029$); teachers' salaries, uninformed ($\beta = 0.024$); teachers' salaries, informed ($\beta = 0.021$); general education spending, uninformed ($\beta = 0.019$); grading schools nationwide ($\beta = 0.013$); general education spending, informed ($\beta = 0.011$); grading local schools ($\beta = 0.010$); merit-based teacher pay ($\beta = 0.010$); and online classes in high school ($\beta = 0.010$). The rate of change in the partisan gap is statistically indistinguishable from zero with respect to public opinion on low-income vouchers ($\beta = 0.006$), universal vouchers ($\beta = 0.001$), tax credit scholarships ($\beta = 0.000$), annual testing ($\beta = -0.003$), and national standards ($\beta = -0.006$).

To put these values in context, an average yearly rate of change of 0.03 would equate to a 0.3-point increase in the partisan gap over ten years. The standard deviation of responses for most issues is approximately one point on a five-point scale, ranging from a low of 0.72 points for teachers' salaries (informed) in 2014 to a high of 1.52 points for universal vouchers in 2022, with most values hewing closely to one. Therefore, a 0.3-point increase over ten years is roughly equivalent to three-tenths of a standard deviation.

Partisan Gaps and the Changing Demographics of the Parties

I next consider the extent to which the increases in the partisan gaps may be attributable to the changing demographic compositions of the parties. I begin by estimating the empirical relationships between various demographic characteristics and each of the 16 survey items that structure this analysis. As the results in Table A1 in the appendix demonstrate, even after holding party affiliation constant, a wide range of demographic characteristics are significantly associated with attitudes toward these education issues. This set of independent variables collectively explain a small but nontrivial proportion of the variation in each outcome, ranging

from two percent (online classes in high school) to 17 percent (teachers' unions). The details of each individual relationship are less important here than the general acknowledgement that these elements of one's identity are modest predictors of one's opinions on contemporary education policy debates.

The period from 2007 to 2022 has been one of noteworthy demographic change in the country as a whole and for both of the major political parties. Figure 4 displays the changing demographic compositions of the parties as represented by the respondents of the EN polls during this timeframe. The reader should note three relevant findings. First, the biggest shifts appear to relate to family income. However, these changes occur in parallel for both parties, rendering them largely irrelevant to this analysis. Moreover, the income trends are likely exaggerated by the fact that I do not adjust respondents' self-reported family incomes in a given year for inflation (respondents' income data in the EN poll are organized into broad categories that change from year to year, making such adjustments possible but crude and fairly noisy). Second, there are also demographic shifts by race/ethnicity and educational attainment that vary by party and are therefore pertinent to this inquiry. Between 2007 and 2022, the Democratic party has grown less white and more educated. Meanwhile, the proportion of white Republicans has remained relatively constant, while an educational split has recently emerged in which individuals without a college degree are slightly more likely to identify as a Republican and individuals with a college degree are slightly more likely to identify as a Democrat. Third, despite these shifts—which may have significant electoral consequences and therefore have been the subject of extensive media attention—it would be inaccurate to suggest that the demographic compositions of the two parties have changed dramatically during this time period. Rather, the shifts have generally been gradual and modest in magnitude.

Using A) the empirical relationships between these demographic characteristics and respondents' attitudes toward the 16 education issues in the initial year in which each survey item appeared and B) the demographic characteristics of the respondents in each subsequent iteration of the EN poll, I simulate the partisan gaps that I would expect to observe if the aforementioned relationships remained unchanged while the demographic compositions of the parties shifted as usual (please see the "Methods" section for more detail). The dashed green lines in Figure 3 represent the simulated partisan gaps. In every case, these lines are essentially flat. In other words, the magnitudes of the partisan gaps would have largely remained the same if the only factor at play was the parties' changing demographics.

Polarization or Sorting

Having established that the partisan gaps are widening on many education issues and that these increases are not merely the result of compositional changes in the parties themselves, I now move to the question of whether the growing gaps are a function of polarization (greater variation in individuals' responses), sorting (a stronger relationship between party affiliations and issue positions), or both. Figure 5 displays the results of these analyses. Polarization has increased moderately on a subset of the issues from the first year in which a survey item appears to the most recent available year: the Common Core (118%); national standards (69%); charter schools (48%); teachers' unions (46%); grading schools nationwide (27%); universal vouchers (23%); annual testing (22%); teachers' salaries, uninformed (17%); general spending, informed (16%); low-income vouchers (12%); teachers' salaries, informed (12%); grading local schools (12%); merit-based teacher pay (8%); online classes for high school (4%); tax credit scholarships (3%); and general spending, uninformed (1%).

Meanwhile, with a few exceptions in which the relationship between party affiliation and

issue position is getting weaker over time, partisan sorting has increased dramatically for many issues: online classes for high school (D: 251%, R: 180%); grading local schools (D: 219%, R: 242%); grading schools nationwide (D: 173%, R: 163%); charter schools (D: 159%, R: 79%); teachers' salaries, uninformed (D: 116%, R: 161%); teachers' salaries, informed (D: 112%, R: 94%); the Common Core (D: 89%, R: 110%); general spending, uninformed (D: 57%, R: 68%); merit-based teacher pay (D: 57%, R: 23%); teachers' unions (D: 40%, R: 33%); general spending, informed (D: 31%, R: 28%); low-income vouchers (D: 26%, R: 16%); tax credit scholarships (D: -26%, R: -33%); annual testing (D: -27%, R: -60%); universal vouchers (D: -28%, R: 23%); and national standards (D: -43%, R: -9%).

On their own, these percent changes have the potential to be misleading. In some cases, a large percent increase can simply be the result of a trivial degree of polarization or sorting in the initial year. However, by comparing the increases in polarization and sorting for a given issue, it is possible to determine the mechanism behind the growth in the partisan gap. Take, for instance, grading schools nationwide. The partisan gap on this issue has increased, on average, by 0.013 points per year from 2007 to 2022 (Figure 3). During this time, sorting has increased by 173% or 163%, depending on whether one uses a Democrat/non-Democrat or a Republican/non-Republican dummy variable to define party affiliation, while polarization has only increased by 27% (Figure 5). This pattern indicates that the widening partisan gap with respect to evaluating the nation's public school system is primarily driven by Democrats offering responses increasingly aligned with the mean Democratic position (a relatively higher assessment of school quality nationwide) and Republicans offering responses increasingly aligned with the mean Republican position (a relatively lower assessment of school quality nationwide). The significant partisan sorting observed here is accompanied by only a comparatively minor increase in the

overall variance in responses.

For many of the survey items with increasing partisan gaps, the rise in sorting clearly outpaces the rise in polarization. However, for three issues, greater sorting appears to be occurring hand-in-hand with greater polarization: the Common Core (and, to a lesser extent, national standards considered generically), charter schools, and teachers' unions. In these cases, not only are individuals' issue positions becoming better aligned with their party affiliations, but those issue positions are also shifting toward the poles at the expense of the center. In other words, these are instances of partisan polarization, in which Democrats are taking increasingly extreme Democratic-aligned positions, Republicans are taking increasingly extreme Republican-aligned positions, or both scenarios are occurring simultaneously.

The Nature of Partisan Sorting

The final analysis explores the extent to which sorting is primarily the result of individuals switching their issue positions to align with their party affiliations (position-switching) or switching their party affiliations to align with their issue positions (party-switching). Table A2 in the appendix displays the demographic compositions of the two-year survey panels that I use to answer this question. The reader should note that the two-year panels tend to be whiter, more educated, and more likely to be a K-12 teacher than the nation a whole. To the extent that rates of position-switching and party-switching vary by these characteristics, this inquiry may over or underestimate the true rates in the population. The reader should also note the rates of stability and change in party affiliation at the bottom of the table. Specifically, changing one's party affiliation is relatively rare. Fewer than 10% of repeated respondents switched between the two major parties over a two-year period. Accordingly, the rates of sorting by means of party-switching hover slightly above zero across all 16 survey items, as depicted in

Figure 6. By contrast, rates of sorting by means of position-switching typically fall between 10%-15%, with a few outlier cases for survey items in which the Democratic and Republican mean positions were essentially the same (please see the "Methods" section for more detail about the limitations of my position-switching and party-switching operationalizations). In short, in any given two-year period, a small but nontrivial proportion of respondents appears to be sorting by changing their issue positions to align with their party affiliations. Very few respondents appear to be sorting by changing their party affiliations to align with their issue positions.

Discussion

In light of this evidence of an increasingly sorted—and in some cases polarized—general public with respect to a range of education issues, I return to some of the research highlighted in the literature review to provide perspective on the potential implications for education politics and policy.

As Abramowitz (2018) and Caughey et al. (2017) suggest, increased sorting and polarization among the public can lead to greater policy divergence between Democratic-leaning and Republican-leaning states and localities. This pattern has already played out with respect to the Common Core State Standards, as Republican-leaning states were more likely to repeal the standards and withdraw from the associated testing consortia (Jochim & McGuinn, 2016). Similarly, school choice supporters declared 2021 a "breakthrough year" for the passage of legislation establishing publicly-funded alternatives to traditional district schools, primarily by Republican-led state legislatures (Greenblatt, 2021). Leading advocates of such reforms are actively debating whether the future of charter schools and other varieties of school choice will be concentrated in red states (Greene & Paul, 2022; Hess, 2022). Relatedly, even in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in *Janus* that weakened labor unions across the country, teachers'

unions in blue states continue to possess considerable organizational and financial advantages over their red-state counterparts (Finger & Hartney, 2019).

As political and policy environments diverge along partisan lines, most American communities—which, despite many popular portrayals suggesting otherwise, tend not to be overwhelmingly affiliated with one party or the other—will contain large subsets of the population who consistently oppose their state and local policies. Such opposition can come in a variety of ideological forms. One example of this phenomenon may be the "Red for Ed" teacher strikes in 2018 and 2019, in which educator work stoppages in mostly Republican-controlled states garnered widespread community support in favor of strikers' demands (Walker, 2019). Alternatively, in school districts across the country like Memphis-Shelby County Schools in Tennessee and Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District in California, small communities have seceded from their districts—typically in ways that maintain or exacerbate existing racial, ethnic, and economic segregation—citing policy differences and appealing to the values of local control (EdBuild, 2019; Siegel-Hawley et al., 2018).

Political and policy divergence at the state and local levels increases the likelihood of intergovernmental conflict (Bulman-Pozen, 2014). State-level divergence along party lines can prompt organized resistance to federal policy, such as when officials from 11 states sued the Obama administration over its guidance on bathroom access for transgender students in public schools (Montgomery & Blinder, 2016). Similarly, local-level partisan divergence can prompt organized resistance to state policy, such as when school districts in Florida and Virginia opted not to comply with state rules forbidding face-mask mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic (Natanson, 2022; Villegas & Kornfield, 2021).

State and local policy divergence will also likely prompt calls for heightened federal

enforcement of civil rights protections in communities where local majorities support policies with potentially discriminatory impact (Valant, 2022). Returning to the issue of transgender students' rights, the Biden administration recently issued an executive order arguing that federal law allows the U.S. Department of Education to require that public schools treat trans students according to their gender identities in circumstances ranging from bathroom access to athletic eligibility (Wall, 2022). This executive order has already prompted some state officials to order educators in their jurisdiction to ignore the guidance, setting the stage for a test of the strength of existing federal civil rights enforcement (Daily, 2022).

In Congress, elected officials appealing to increasingly sorted and polarized constituencies will typically find fewer opportunities for bipartisan collaboration. During an era of fierce competition for control of the House and Senate between the two parties, the result is often legislative inaction and/or symbolic voting meant to damage the political opposition (Lee, 2016; Sides et al., 2022). Successful legislation in this context tends to be overwhelmingly bipartisan—albeit narrow in scope—in order to overcome Congress' procedural barriers (Curry & Lee, 2019). The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 largely fits this pattern. Despite growing opposition to its previous iteration by members of both parties, the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, of which ESSA is the most recent incarnation, was frequently delayed and the revised legislation featured relatively modest changes to the structure of the law that could draw bipartisan support (Henig et al., 2017).

A less effective legislature tends to cede power to the executive (Howell, 2003), which may help explain, for example, the Obama administration's reliance on regulatory decisions by the U.S. Department of Education—rather than seeking new legislation—ending federal aid to for-profit colleges that could not demonstrate adequate rates of gainful employment among

graduates (Nelson, 2014). However, not only are executive actions frequently subject to critical judicial oversight (Epstein & Posner, 2018), they can also simply be reversed by the next presidential administration, as Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos did in the case of the rule described above (Green, 2019).

To the extent that the negative consequences of increased sorting and polarization in the general public are broadly distributed across issues, potential reformers may find it valuable to refocus their energies away from the details of particular policy debates and toward larger institutional changes meant to counter hyper-partisan politics. The education policy community has, for many years, traded blows over issues such as school accountability, testing, and choice. Moreover, new debates emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic (such as the decisions to close and reopen schools) and in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the growing influence of the Black Lives Matter movement (such as how educators ought to teach about the role of racism in America's past and present). Each of these issues is immensely important on its own, but they are all subject to the same centrifugal forces of an increasingly partisan political environment. In this context, educators and policymakers may come to view efforts to reform American political institutions as a natural extension to their efforts to improve education policy.

Conclusion

Among the general public, partisan gaps are widening on many long-standing education debates. The largest increases appear on issues related to teachers' unions, teachers' salaries, the Common Core State Standards, and charter schools. The growth of the partisan gaps consistently exceeds what would be expected due to changing party compositions alone. Widening gaps are, in most cases, primarily attributable to sorting. However, polarization is also increasing on some of the most divisive issues (e.g., the Common Core, charter schools, and teachers' unions).

Among those who are sorting, individuals are overwhelmingly switching their issues positions to align with their party affiliations rather than switching their party affiliations to align with their issue positions.

To the extent that political dynamics common to other polarized and sorted domestic policy domains generalize to the field of education, we ought to expect increasing policy divergence between Democratic-leaning and Republican-leaning states and localities, the emergence of large electoral minorities in most American communities that are opposed to new education legislation and regulation, more frequent calls for federal enforcement of civil rights protections, legislative inaction at the federal level, recurring conflict between the executive and judicial branches, and heightened partisan animosity across all aspects of education politics.

The local implications of these hypothesized trends will naturally depend on one's political disposition and context. For example, greater policy divergence at the local level may favor the preferences of progressive-minded individuals living in Democratic-leaning communities and conservative-minded individuals living in Republican-leaning communities—but only insofar as the scope of their political interests is restricted to their immediate surroundings. To the extent that the broader negative consequences of polarization and sorting are facilitated by America's peculiar political institutions—both in terms of general-purpose politics as well as those specific to K-12 education governance—the appropriate responses may be oriented more toward institutional reform rather than advocating for or against specific policies or programs.

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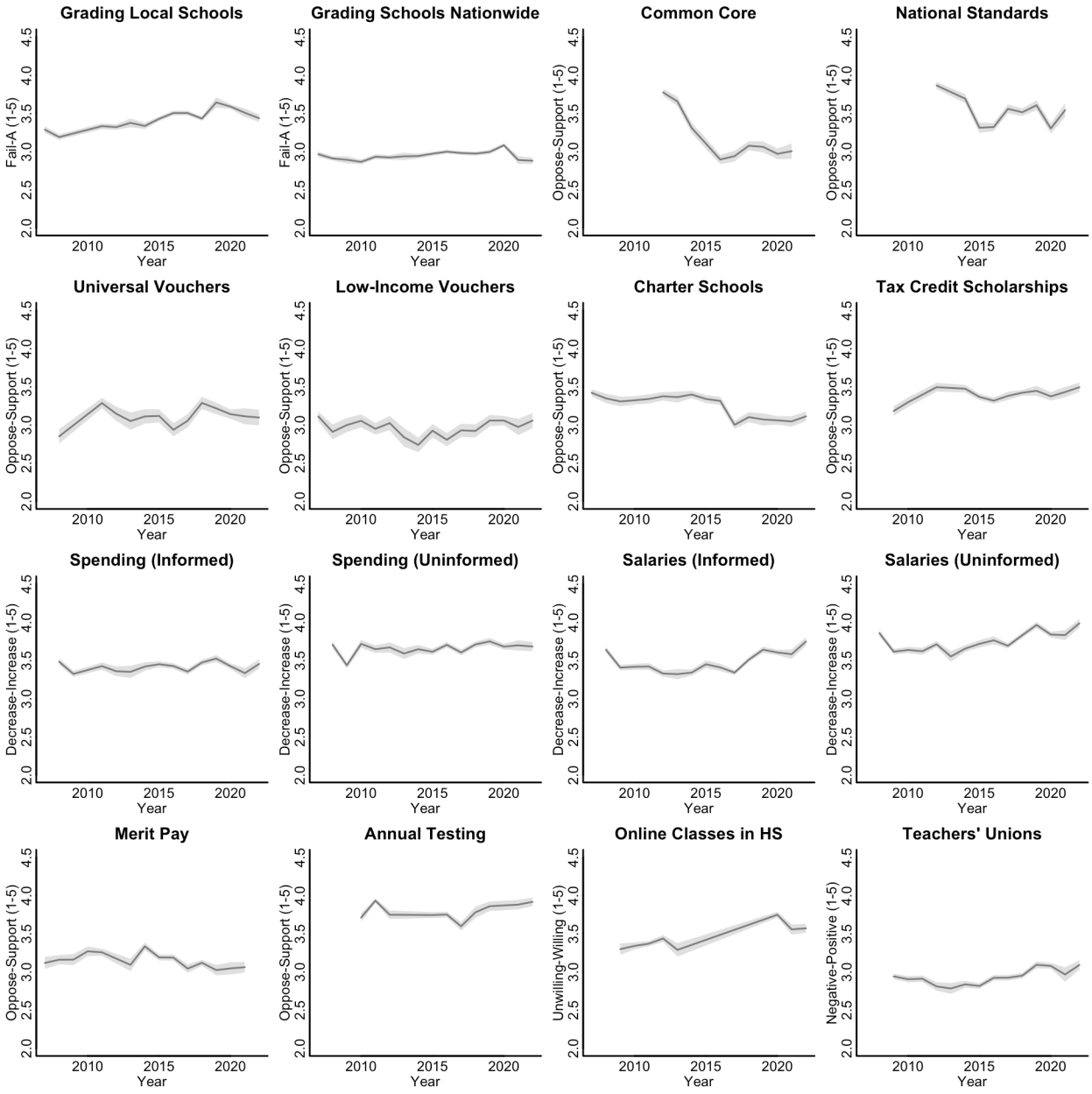
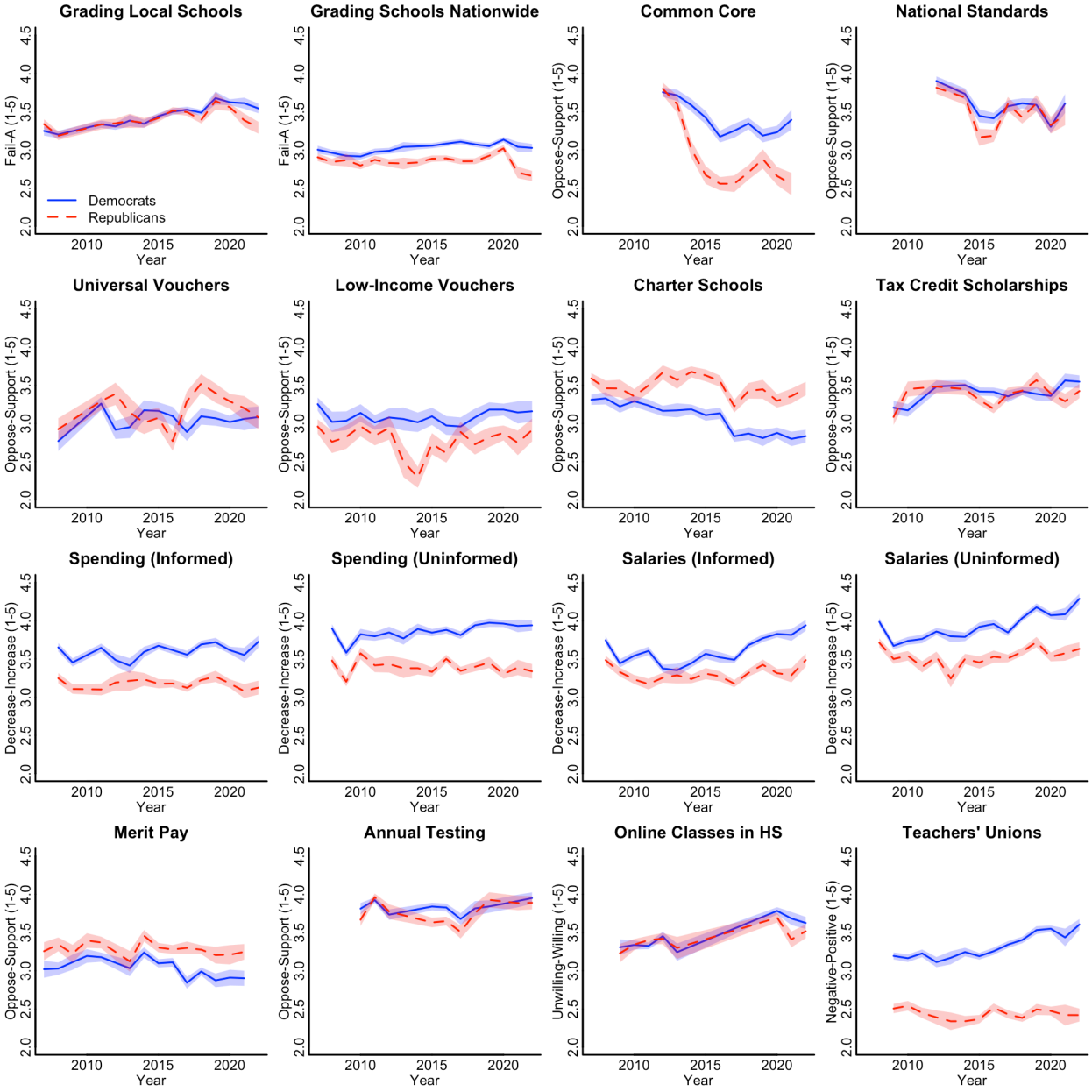
Figures and Tables

Figure 1. General Trends in Public Opinion on Education Issues



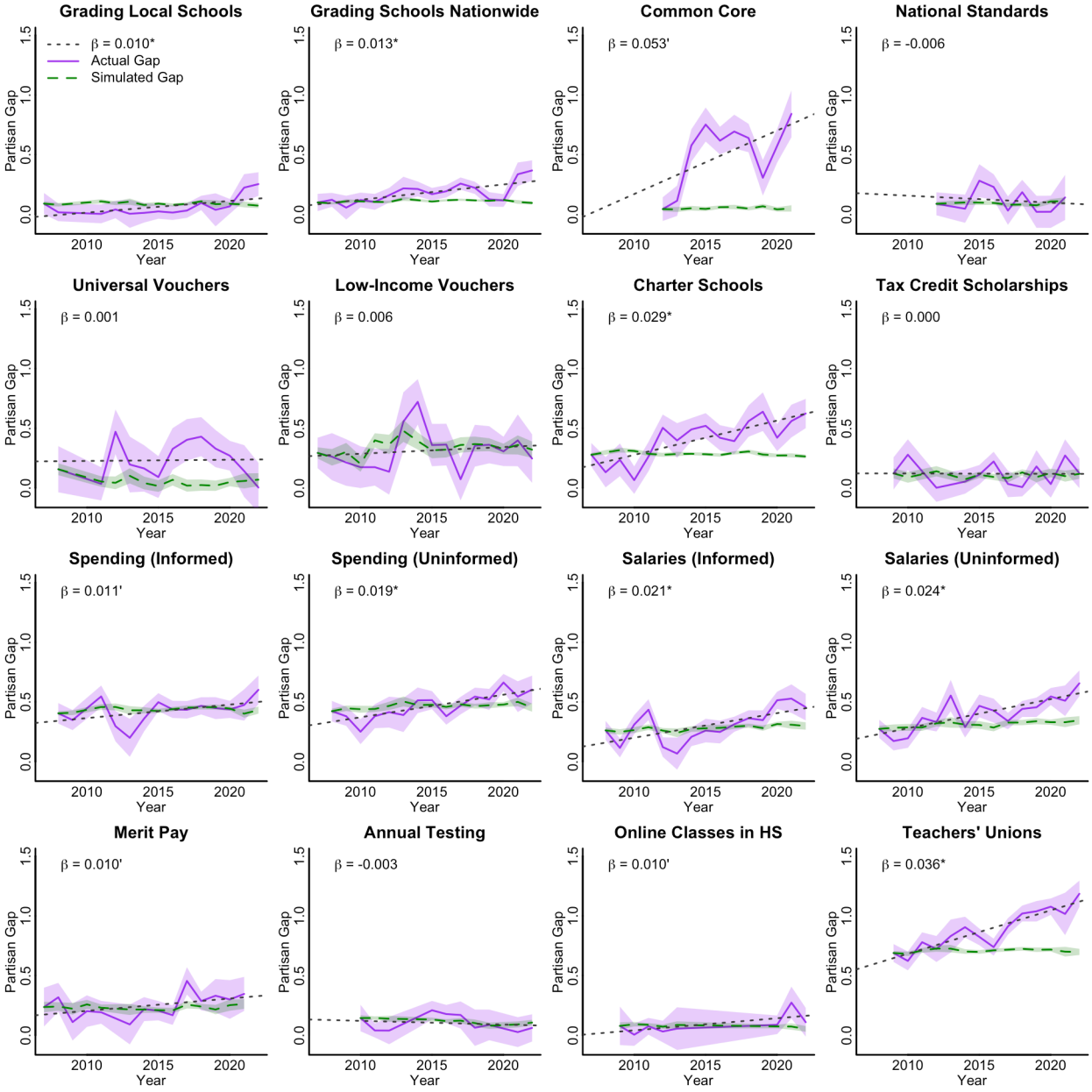
Notes: Shaded areas represent 95% confidence intervals. Sample size varies by issue and year. Analyses include survey weights. Question wording and response options available in the appendix. Source: 2007-2022 *Education Next* surveys.

Figure 2. Partisan Trends in Public Opinion on Education Issues



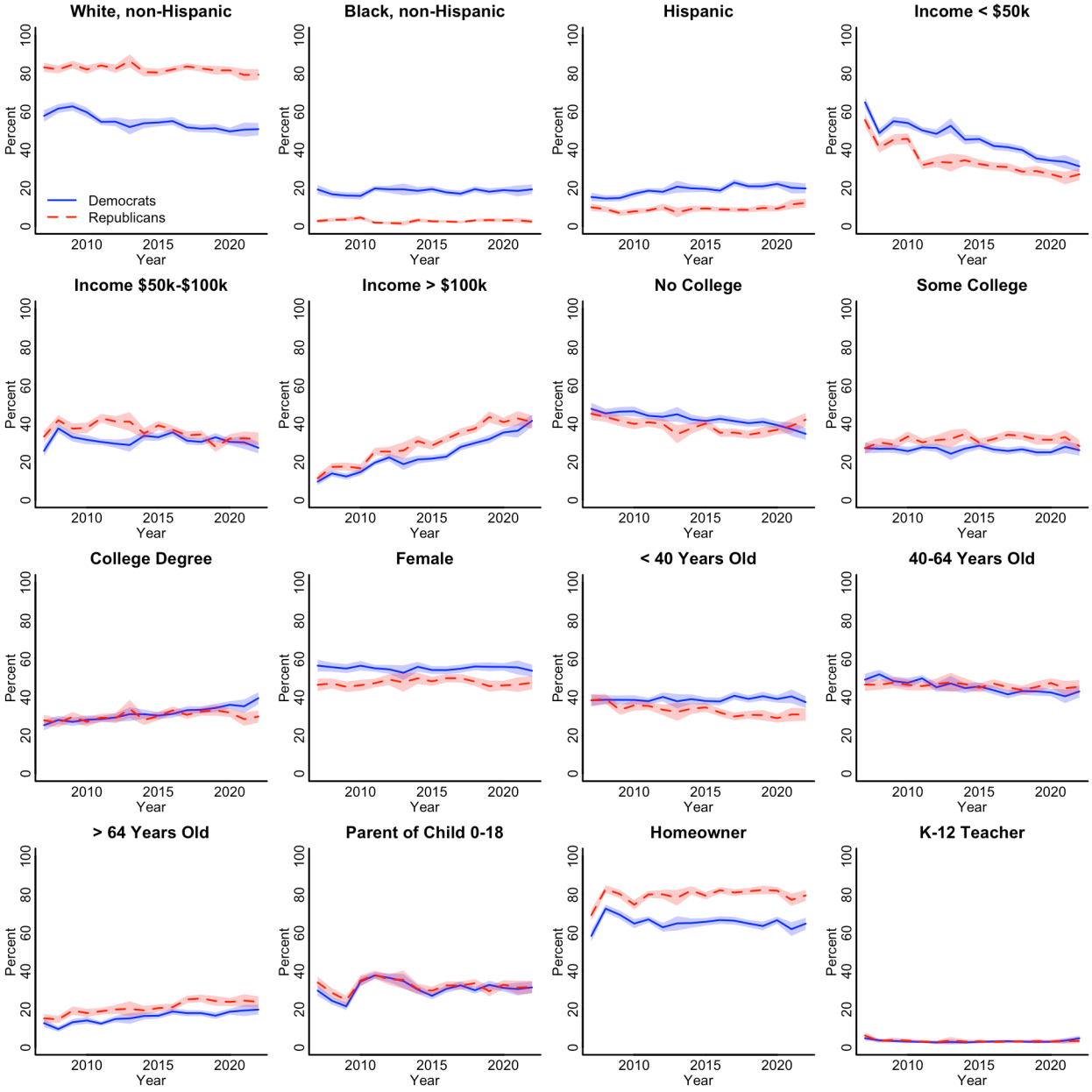
Notes: Shaded areas represent 95% confidence intervals. Sample size varies by issue and year. Analyses include survey weights. Democrats and Republicans include respondents who indicate that they "lean" toward one party.

Figure 3. Partisan Gaps on Education Issues



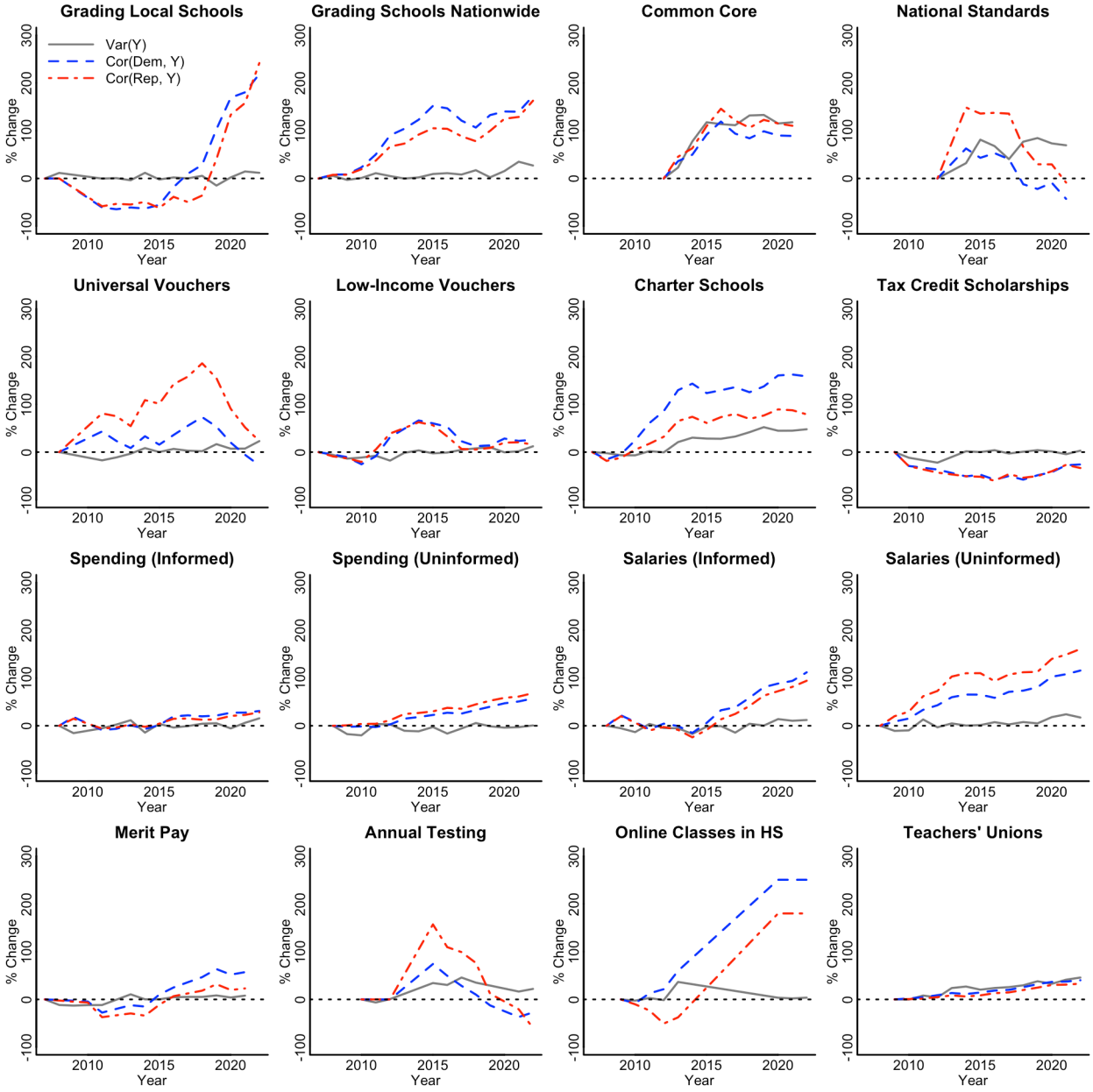
Notes: Shaded areas represent 95% confidence intervals. Sample size varies by issue and year. Analyses include survey weights. Partisan Gap defined as the absolute value of the average difference between Democrats and Republicans. Dotted line in each plot represents a linear regression of the outcome on survey year. β is the slope of the dotted line. Dashed line in each plot represents the predicted partisan gap based on demographic composition alone. ‘ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$.

Figure 4. Demographic Compositions of the Parties Over Time



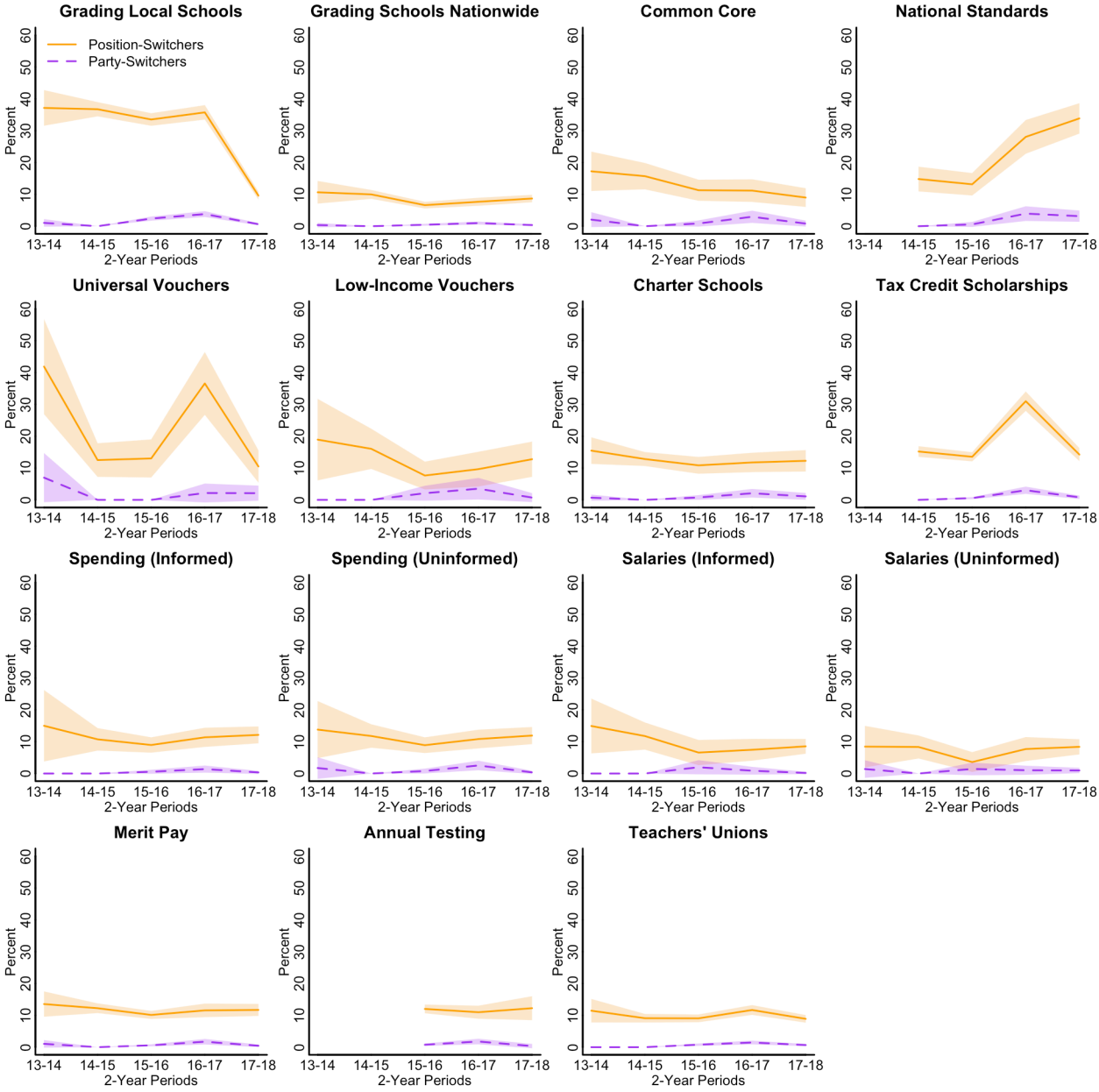
Notes: Shaded areas represent 95% confidence intervals. Sample size varies by year. Analyses include survey weights. Democrats and Republicans include respondents who indicate that they "lean" toward one party.

Figure 5. Polarization, Sorting, or Both



Notes: Y represents the outcome in each plot. $Var(Y)$, $Cor(Dem, Y)$, and $Cor(Rep, Y)$ measured as percent changes from the first year in which the outcome was measured. $Cor(Dem, Y)$ and $Cor(Rep, Y)$ lines represent five-year moving averages to reduce year-to-year volatility in these relationships. Analyses include survey weights.

Figure 6. Partisan Sorting: Position-Switchers or Party-Switchers



Notes: Shaded areas represent 95% confidence intervals. Sample size varies by issue and two-year period. Position-Switcher defined as a respondent who identifies with the same party in year $t = 1$ and $t = 2$, but they change their issue position to align with their party. Party-Switcher defined as a respondent whose issue position is the same or similar in year $t = 1$ and $t = 2$, but they change their party to align with their position. See text for more detail.

Supplemental Appendix

Table A1. Demographic Predictors of Attitudes Toward Various Education Issues

	Grading Local Schools	Grading Schools Nation-wide	Common Core	National Standards	Universal Vouchers	Low-Income Vouchers	Charter Schools	Tax Credit Scholar-ships	Spending (Inform-ed)	Spending (Unin-formed)	Salaries (Inform-ed)	Salaries (Unin-formed)	Merit Pay	Annual Testing	Online Classes In HS	Teachers' Unions
Republican	-0.09*	-0.14*	-0.42*	-0.10*	0.33*	-0.05	0.48*	0.10*	-0.39*	-0.41*	-0.26*	-0.31*	0.25*	-0.06*	-0.05*	-0.80*
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Independent	-0.14*	-0.11*	-0.19*	-0.24*	0.21*	-0.01	0.07	-0.03	-0.23*	-0.24*	-0.12*	-0.28*	0.05	-0.23*	0.10*	-0.43*
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.04)
Black	-0.22*	0.02	0.29*	0.05	0.47*	0.67*	0.25*	0.45*	0.16*	0.18*	0.26*	0.27*	0.00	0.06	-0.08*	0.19*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Hispanic	0.06*	0.24*	0.43*	0.16*	0.38*	0.52*	0.17*	0.38*	0.08*	0.12*	0.13*	0.13*	0.14*	0.21*	-0.13*	0.11*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Other R/E	-0.10*	0.00*	0.30*	0.23*	0.14	0.21*	0.11*	0.15*	-0.03	-0.01	-0.08*	-0.01	0.24*	0.18*	-0.04	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)
$50k-100k	0.07*	-0.01	-0.07	0.00	-0.13*	-0.24*	0.03	-0.13*	-0.01	-0.03	0.08*	0.01	-0.08*	-0.03	0.01	-0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
$100k+	0.18*	-0.01	0.04	0.00	-0.21*	-0.34*	-0.01	-0.17*	-0.03	-0.04	0.09*	0.02	-0.03	0.05	-0.06	-0.13*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Some Col.	-0.05*	-0.12*	-0.12*	0.00	-0.06	-0.07*	0.04	0.03	0.08*	0.04	0.07*	0.12*	-0.06*	0.01	0.04	-0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
BA+	0.11*	-0.04*	-0.07	-0.09*	-0.28*	-0.17*	0.02	-0.01	0.06*	0.03	0.14*	0.18*	-0.32*	-0.17*	-0.02	-0.07*
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Female	0.04*	0.07*	-0.04	-0.05	0.02	0.03	0.01	-0.03	0.06*	0.13*	0.08*	0.11*	-0.21*	0.00	-0.04	0.17*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Age 40-64	0.01	0.01	0.13*	0.22*	-0.08*	-0.14*	0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.04*	-0.07*	-0.09*	0.17*	0.21*	0.02	-0.15*
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Age 65+	0.07*	0.02	0.25*	0.41*	-0.13*	-0.22*	0.07*	-0.14*	-0.03	-0.07*	-0.01	-0.11*	0.24*	0.32*	-0.05	-0.17*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Parent	0.16*	0.07*	-0.13*	-0.06	0.26*	0.13*	0.08*	0.09*	0.13*	0.13*	0.06*	0.07*	0.05*	-0.06*	0.09*	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Homeowner	0.05*	0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.18*	-0.31*	-0.09*	-0.13*	-0.08*	-0.07*	0.01	-0.07*	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05*
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Teacher	0.19*	0.21*	-0.14*	-0.35*	-0.44*	-0.35*	-0.44*	-0.36*	0.25*	0.28*	0.53*	0.38*	-0.94*	-0.58*	0.04	0.66*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Survey Years	07-08, 11-22	07-22	12-21	12, 14-21	08, 11-22	07-22	07-22	09-10, 12, 14-22	08-09, 11-22	08-22	08-22	08-22	07-11, 13-21	10-12, 15-19, 21-22	09-13, 20-22	09-22
Obs.	39,537	45,572	14,509	13,611	13,839	17,184	25,997	28,720	20,310	21,055	20,816	20,612	30,058	24,180	20,284	40,048
R^2	0.04	0.04	0.11	0.05	0.08	0.11	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.11	0.10	0.12	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.17

Notes: Values are OLS regression coefficients (robust standard errors in parentheses). All models include survey year fixed effects. Outcome variables measured on a 1-5 scale. Republican and Independent compared to Democrat. Black, Hispanic, and Other Race/Ethnicity compared to White. Family Income $50k-100k and $100k+ compared to < $50k. Some College and BA+ compared to No College. Female compared to Male. Age 40-64 and 65+ compared to < 40. Parent (defined as having a child in the household age 0-18) compared to Non-Parent. Teacher (defined as K-12 teacher) compared to Non-Teacher. * $p < 0.05$.

Table A2. Demographic Compositions of the Two-Year Survey Panels

	Survey Year(s)					
%	**2013-2014**	**2014-2015**	**2015-2016**	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**	**2018**
Democrat	63.14	53.19	49.91	49.28	50.09	53.13
Republican	33.79	43.90	47.48	47.97	46.30	41.66
Independent	3.07	2.91	2.61	2.75	3.62	5.21
White, Non-Hispanic	51.54	66.63	79.49	80.57	72.49	64.45
Black, Non-Hispanic	25.94	14.00	6.01	5.39	5.25	12.12
Hispanic	19.11	15.31	8.89	8.65	16.58	16.22
Other Race/Ethnicity	3.41	4.06	5.61	5.39	5.69	7.21
Income: < $50k	44.03	40.40	35.68	34.61	33.69	35.75
Income: $50k-100k	31.74	36.39	39.50	39.66	38.40	32.04
Income: $100k+	24.23	23.22	24.82	25.73	27.91	32.21
No College	28.33	28.49	27.02	25.44	25.09	38.86
Some College	29.69	28.76	24.60	25.04	25.53	29.06
BA+	41.98	42.76	48.38	49.51	49.38	32.09
Female	50.17	51.48	52.60	51.06	50.40	52.72
Male	49.83	48.52	47.40	48.94	49.60	47.28
Age: < 40	29.69	24.31	22.31	20.34	29.67	35.88
Age: 40-64	53.58	51.81	52.78	51.69	47.00	43.32
Age: 65+	16.72	23.87	24.91	27.97	23.32	20.79
Parent of Child 0-18	31.06	26.73	26.12	26.30	42.02	31.59
Homeowner	73.72	76.89	78.64	80.40	76.98	71.60
K-12 Teacher	15.36	14.27	19.88	17.94	12.87	2.83
Dem. to Dem.	59.73	53.19	46.43	43.67	47.31	
Rep. to Rep.	32.76	43.90	44.23	42.58	43.25	
Dem. to Rep.	2.73	0.00	2.83	4.64	2.07	
Rep. to Dem.	1.02	0.00	2.70	4.41	2.25	
Observations	293	1,822	2,228	1,745	2,268	4,601

Notes: Characteristics measured in year $t = 1$. Analyses in 2018 column include survey weights; analyses in other columns do not. Parent of Child 0-18 defined as living in a household with a child age 0-18. Democrats and Republicans include respondents who indicate that they "lean" toward one party. Democrat to Democrat indicates a respondent who identifies as a Democrat in both year $t = 1$ and $t = 2$ (and likewise for other combinations).

Survey Questions

Local Grades (2007-2008, 2011-2022)

Questions

2007: Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here?

2008: How about the public schools in your local community? What grade would you give the public schools here?

2011, 2015-2016: Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same way. What grade would give the public schools in your community?

2012-2014: How about the public schools in your community? What grade would you give them?

2017: Next, we want to ask you a series of questions about elementary and secondary schools. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in your community?

2018: Next, we would like to ask you about K-12 education topics. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in your community?

2019-2022: Students are often given the grades A, B, C, and D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in your community?

Responses

2007-2008, 2011-2022: A, B, C, D, Fail

National Grades (2007-2022)

Questions

2007: How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally?

2008-2014: Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their

work. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in the nation as a whole?

2015-2018: How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give them?

2019-2022: How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give them?

Responses

2007-2022: A, B, C, D, Fail

Common Core (2012-2021)

Questions

2012-2013: As you may know, all states are currently deciding whether or not to adopt the Common Core standards in reading and math. If adopted, these standards would be used to hold the state's schools accountable for their performance. Do you support or oppose the adoption of the Common Core standards in your state?

2014-2021: As you may know, in the last few years states have been deciding whether or not to use the Common Core, which are standards for reading and math that are the same across the states. In the states that have these standards, they will be used to hold public schools accountable for their performance. Do you support or oppose the use of the Common Core standards in your state?

Responses

2012: Completely support, Somewhat support, Neither support nor oppose, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose

2013-2021: Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

National Standards (2012, 2014-2021)

Questions

2012: As you may know, all states are currently deciding whether or not to adopt the same academic standards in reading and math. If adopted, these standards would be used to hold the state's schools accountable for their performance. Do you support the adoption of these standards in your state?

2014-2021: As you may know, in the last few years states have been deciding whether or not to

use standards for reading and math that are the same across the states. In the states that have these standards, they will be used to hold public schools accountable for their performance. Do you support or oppose the use of these standards in your state?

Responses

2012: Completely support, Somewhat support, Neither support nor oppose, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose

2014-2021: Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Universal Vouchers (2008, 2011-2022)

Questions

2008: A proposal has been made that would use government funds to help pay the tuition of **all students** whose families would like them to attend private schools. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2011-2014: A proposal has been made that would give families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2015-2016: A proposal has been made that would give all families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2017-2018: A proposal has been made that would give all families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you support or oppose this proposal?

2019-2022: A proposal has been made that would give *all* families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you support or oppose this proposal?

Responses

2008, 2011-2016: Completely favor, Somewhat favor, Neither favor nor oppose, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose

2017-2022: Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Low-Income Vouchers (2007-2022)

Questions

2007: A proposal has been made that would use government funds to pay the tuition of low-income students who choose to attend private schools. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2008: A proposal has been made that would use government funds to help pay the tuition of **low-income students** whose families would like them to attend private schools. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2009, 2012, 2015-2016: A proposal has been made that would give low-income families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2010: Now we would like to ask about other schooling opportunities. A proposal has been made that would give low-income families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2011: A proposal has been made that would use government funds to help pay the tuition of low-income students whose families would like them to attend private schools. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2013-2014: A proposal has been made that would use government funds to pay the tuition of low-income students who choose to attend private schools. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

2017-2018: A proposal has been made that would give low-income families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you support or oppose this proposal?

2019-2022: A proposal has been made that would give *low-income* families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you support or oppose this proposal?

Responses

2008-2012: Completely support, Somewhat support, Neither support nor oppose, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose

2013-2016: Completely support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither support nor oppose

2017-2022: Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Charter Schools (2007-2022)

Questions

2007: Many states allow for the formation of charter schools, which are privately managed under a renewable performance contract that exempts them from many of the regulations of other public schools.
Do you support or oppose the formation of charter schools?

2008-2009: Many states permit the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but are not managed by the local school board. These schools are expected to meet promised objectives, but are exempt from many state regulations. Do you support or oppose the formation of charter schools?

2010-2022: As you may know, many states permit the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but are not managed by the local school board. These schools are expected to meet promised objectives, but are exempt from many state regulations. Do you support or oppose the formation of charter schools?

Responses

2008-2012: Completely support, Somewhat support, Neither support nor oppose, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose

2013-2016: Completely support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither support nor oppose

2017-2022: Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Tax Credit Scholarships (2009-2012, 2014-2022)

Questions

2009: A proposal has been made to offer a tax credit for individual and corporate donations that pay for scholarships to help low-income parents send their children to private schools. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

2010: A proposal has been made to offer a tax credit for individual and corporate donations that pay for scholarships to help parents send their children to private schools. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

2011: Another proposal has been made to offer a tax credit for individual and corporate donations that pay for scholarships to help parents send their children to private schools. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

2012: Another proposal has been made to offer a tax credit for individual and corporate donations that pay for scholarships to help low-income parents send their children to private schools. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

2014-2022: A proposal has been made to offer a tax credit for individual and corporate donations that pay for scholarships to help low-income parents send their children to private schools. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

Responses

2009-2012: Completely favor, Somewhat favor, Neither favor nor oppose, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose

2014-2016: Completely support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither support nor oppose

2017-2022: Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Spending, Informed (2008-2009, 2011-2022)

Questions

2008: According to the most recent information available, in your district $XXXX is being spent each year per child attending public schools. Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2009, 2011: According to the most recent information available, in your district [ADD VALUE HERE] is being spent each year per child attending public schools. Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2012-2014: As it turns out, according to the most recent information available, $[ADD VALUE (pps) HERE] is being spent each year per child attending public schools in your district. Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2015-2016: According to the most recent information available, $<INSERT PPS>] is being spent each year per child attending public schools in your district. Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2017: According to the most recent information available, [INSERT “PPS” DYNAMIC TEXT BASED ON LOOKUP TABLE]is being spent each year per child attending public schools in your district. Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2018: According to the most recent information available, [INSERT PPS] is being spent each year per child attending public schools in your district. Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2019-2022: According to the most recent information available, $[INSERT PPS] is being spent each year per child attending public schools in your district.
Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Responses

2008-2009, 2011-2022: Greatly increase, Increase, Stay about the same, Decrease, Greatly decrease

Spending, Uninformed (2008-2022)

Questions

2008-2022: Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Responses

2008-2022: Greatly increase, Increase, Stay about the same, Decrease, Greatly decrease

Salaries, Informed (2008-2022)

Questions

2008: According to the most recent information available, in your state public school teachers receive on average an annual salary of $XX,XXX. Do you think that teacher salaries in your state should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2009: In your state, teachers are paid an average annual salary of [ADD VALUE HERE]. Do you think that these teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2010: In your state, teachers are paid an average annual salary of $[ADD VALUE HERE]. Do you think that these teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2011: Teachers *in the United States* are paid an average annual salary of [ADD VALUE HERE]. Do you think that these teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2012: As it turns out, teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of $[ADD VALUE (teacher_salary) HERE]. Do you think that teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2013: As it turns out, public school teachers in your state receive, on average, salaries of $[XX,XXX]. In your view, should their salaries increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2014: As it turns out, public school teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of $[XX,XXX]. Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2015-2016: As it turns out, public school teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of $<INSERT PAY>. Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2017: As it turns out, public school teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of [INSERT "PAY" DYNAMIC TEXT BASED ON LOOKUP TABLE]. Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2018: Public school teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of [INSERT PAY]. Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2019-2022: Public school teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of $[INSERT PAY]. Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Responses

2008-2022: Greatly increase, Increase, Stay about the same, Decrease, Greatly decrease

Salaries, Uninformed (2008-2022)

Questions

2008-2010: Do you think that teacher salaries in your state should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2011: Do you think that teacher salaries *in the United States* should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2012: Do you think that teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2013: Do you think that public school teacher salaries in your state should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

2014-2022: Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Responses

2008-2022: Greatly increase, Increase, Stay about the same, Decrease, Greatly decrease

Merit Pay (2007-2011, 2013-2021)

Questions

2007: Do you favor or oppose basing a teacher's salary, in part, on students' academic progress on state tests?

2008-2010: Do you favor or oppose basing a teacher's salary, in part, on his or her students' academic progress on state tests?

2011: Do you favor or oppose basing the salaries of teachers *in your local schools*, in part, on their students' academic progress on state tests?

2013: Do you favor or oppose basing the salaries of teachers, in part, on their students' academic progress on state tests?

2014-2016: Do you favor or oppose basing part of the salaries of teachers on how much their students learn?

2017-2021: Do you support or oppose basing part of the salaries of teachers on how much their students learn?

Responses

2007-2011: Completely favor, Somewhat favor, Neither favor nor oppose, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose

2013-2016: Completely favor, Somewhat favor, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither favor nor oppose

2017-2021: Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Online Classes in High School (2009-2013, 2020-2022)

Questions

2009-2013, 2020-2022: Would you be willing to have a child of yours go through high school taking some academic courses over the internet?

Responses

2009-2012: Very willing, Somewhat willing, Neither willing nor unwilling, Somewhat unwilling, Very unwilling

2013, 2020-2022: Very willing, Somewhat willing, Somewhat unwilling, Very unwilling, Neither willing nor unwilling

Teachers' Unions (2009-2022)

Questions

2009-2010: Some people say that teacher unions are a stumbling block to school reform? Others say that unions fight for better schools and better teachers. What do you think? Do you think teacher unions have a generally positive effect on the schools in your community, or do you think they have a generally negative effect?

2011: Some people say that teacher unions are a stumbling block to school reform. Others say that unions fight for better schools and better teachers. What do you think? Do you think teacher unions have a generally positive effect *on your local schools*, or do you think they have a generally negative effect?

2012-2022: Some people say that teacher unions are a stumbling block to school reform. Others say that unions fight for better schools and better teachers. What do you think? Do you think teacher unions have a generally positive effect on schools, or do you think they have a generally negative effect?

Responses

2009-2010: Completely positive effect, Somewhat positive effect, Neither positive nor negative effect, Somewhat negative effect, Completely negative effect

2011-2012: Very positive effect, Somewhat positive effect, Neither positive nor negative effect, Somewhat negative effect, Very negative effect

2013-2022: Strongly positive effect, Somewhat positive effect, Somewhat negative effect, Strongly negative effect, Neither positive nor negative effect

Annual Testing (2010-2012, 2015-2019, 2021-2022)

Questions

2010: As you may know, this year Congress is expected to take action on the federal school accountability law. Some people have proposed to maintain the current requirement that all students be tested in math and reading each year in grades 3-8 and once in high school. Do you support or oppose this proposal?

2011: As you may know, this year Congress is expected to take action on the federal school

accountability law. Should the federal government continue to require that all students be tested in math and reading each year in grades 3-8 and once in high school. Do you support or oppose this proposal?

2012: As you may know, sometime in the next year or two Congress is expected to take action on the federal school accountability law. Should the federal government continue to require that all students be tested in math and reading each year in grades 3-8 and once in high school. Do you support or oppose this proposal?

2015-2019, 2021-2022: Do you support or oppose the federal government continuing to require that all students be tested in math and reading each year in grades 3-8 and once in high school?

Responses

2010-2012: Completely support, Somewhat support, Neither support nor oppose, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose

2015-2016: Completely support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither support nor oppose

2017-2019, 2021-2022: Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose