

***Education Next* — Program on Education Policy and Governance**

Trends in the *EdNext* Survey: Question wording and data over time

With the release of its 2020 poll, *EdNext* celebrates the 14th anniversary of its annual survey of American public opinion on K-12 education policy. An [interactive graphic available here](https://www.educationnext.org/ednext-poll-interactive-trends-through-2020-public-opinion/) presents trends in opinion on key issues over time among the general public, Republicans, Democrats, and teachers. Some of the wording in the questions presented in the graphic varied slightly from year to year; this document lists the variations and data.

<https://www.educationnext.org/ednext-poll-interactive-trends-through-2020-public-opinion/>

GRADING SCHOOLS

Questions: Local

Local (2011, 2015-2020): 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?

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

Local (2008): 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?

Responses

Responses: A, B, C, D, Fail*

Local

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support	43	40			46	47	49	47	52	55	54	51	60	58
	neither	38	35			36	35	35	35	34	32	33	34	32	29
	opposed	18	24			18	18	16	19	14	13	13	15	8	13
Republicans	support	46	40			47	49	49	47	52	54	54	50	62	58
	neither	36	35			34	32	35	34	33	32	32	32	30	28
	opposed	18	25			19	19	16	19	15	13	14	18	9	14
Democrats	support	41	41			45	46	49	47	52	55	55	53	59	59
	neither	40	36			38	37	35	36	36	31	34	35	33	29
	opposed	19	23			17	17	16	18	13	13	11	12	8	12
Teachers	support		62			63	61	71	63	65	69	66	67	62	69
	neither		23			27	26	26	26	28	25	24	23	30	23
	opposed		14			10	13	4	11	7	7	10	10	8	7

*For the "grading schools" questions, "% support" shows the percentage assigning schools an A or B grade; "% neither" shows the percentage assigning schools a C grade; and "% opposed" shows the percentage assigning schools a D or F grade

Questions: National

National (2015-2020): How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give them?

National (2009-2014): 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?

National (2008): How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally?

Responses

Responses: A, B, C, D, Fail*

National

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support	21	20	18	18	21	21	20	20	24	25	24	24	24	30
	neither	55	54	57	55	54	54	57	57	53	53	54	52	53	50
	opposed	24	26	25	27	25	24	23	24	23	22	22	23	23	20
Republicans	support	17	18	19	16	18	19	13	15	21	21	19	20	20	29
	neither	58	54	54	54	54	52	62	57	52	52	53	52	55	47
	opposed	24	28	27	30	28	29	25	28	27	27	28	29	24	24
Democrats	support	24	22	18	19	24	23	27	24	26	28	28	28	26	31
	neither	54	55	59	56	53	56	53	56	55	54	55	53	53	52
	opposed	23	24	23	25	23	21	20	19	19	18	17	19	21	17
Teachers	support		35	27	28	38	34	36	27	32	30	33	34	28	40
	neither		51	56	55	46	53	54	62	52	56	54	49	52	46
	opposed		14	17	17	17	14	10	11	16	14	14	17	20	14

*For the "grading schools" questions, "% support" shows the percentage assigning schools an A or B grade; "% neither" shows the percentage assigning schools a C grade; and "% opposed" shows the percentage assigning schools a D or F grade

SCHOOL SPENDING

Question: Uninformed

Uninformed: (2008-2020) Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Responses

Responses: Greatly increase, Increase, Stay about the same, Decrease, Greatly decrease*

Uninformed

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support		61	45	63	59	63	53	60	57	61	54	59	62	59
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	opposed		39	55	37	41	37	47	40	43	39	46	41	38	41
Republicans	support		50	33	52	46	52	41	46	42	51	40	44	48	39
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	opposed		50	67	48	54	48	59	54	58	49	60	56	52	61
Democrats	support		71	56	70	68	71	63	72	69	70	64	70	73	74
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	opposed		29	44	30	32	29	37	28	31	30	36	30	27	26
Teachers	support		78	56	72	71	68	67	75	74	75	73	72	74	73
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	opposed		22	44	28	29	32	33	25	26	25	27	28	26	27

*For the spending and salaries questions, "% support" shows the percentage supporting an increase, while "% opposed" shows the percentage in favor of spending and salaries staying the same or decreasing.

Questions: Informed

Informed (2012-2020): According to the most recent information available, \$X 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?

Informed (2008, 2009, 2011): According to the most recent information available, in your district \$X 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?

Responses

Responses: Greatly increase, Increase, Stay about the same, Decrease, Greatly decrease*

Informed

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support		51	37		45	43	43	43	48	45	39	47	50	45
	neither		-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	opposed		49	63		55	57	57	57	52	55	61	53	50	55
Republicans	support		39	26		28	37	33	33	28	31	27	33	38	31
	neither		-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	opposed		61	74		72	63	67	67	72	69	73	67	62	69
Democrats	support		59	44		58	48	48	53	63	57	50	58	59	56
	neither		-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	opposed		41	56		42	52	52	47	37	43	50	42	41	44
Teachers	support		70	51		54	60	52	49	63	60	58	55	56	59
	neither		-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	opposed		30	49		46	40	48	51	37	40	42	45	44	41

*For the spending and salaries questions, "% support" shows the percentage supporting an increase, while "% opposed" shows the percentage in favor of spending and salaries staying the same or decreasing.

COMMON CORE AND TESTING

TESTING

Questions

Question (2015-2019): 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

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

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support									67	69	63	68	74	-
	neither									13	11	12	12	6	-
	opposed									21	20	24	19	19	-
Republicans	support									65	67	62	69	78	-
	neither									11	10	11	10	5	-
	opposed									24	23	27	21	17	-
Democrats	support									69	72	66	70	73	-
	neither									13	11	11	11	7	-
	opposed									18	18	23	19	20	-
Teachers	support									47	50	44	48	46	-
	neither									7	5	4	2	6	-
	opposed									46	46	52	51	48	-

COMMON CORE AND TESTING

COMMON CORE

Questions: Common Core, named

Common Core (2014-2020): 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?

Common Core (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?

Responses

Responses (2013-2020): Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Common Core, named

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support							64	53	49	42	41	45	50	43
	neither							23	21	16	16	20	17	10	19
	opposed							13	26	35	42	38	38	40	38
Republicans	support							64	43	37	35	32	38	46	36
	neither							22	20	13	12	17	13	7	14
	opposed							14	37	50	53	51	50	47	50
Democrats	support							67	63	57	49	49	52	52	49
	neither							22	21	18	19	23	18	13	23
	opposed							12	17	25	32	28	30	36	28
Teachers	support							76	46	40	41	45	43	44	37
	neither							12	14	10	8	10	6	11	10
	opposed							12	40	50	51	44	51	46	53

Questions: Common Core, not named

Common Core, not named (2014-2020): 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

Responses (2014-2020): Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Common Core, not named

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support								68	54	55	61	61	66	53
	neither								16	16	17	19	14	9	16
	opposed								17	30	28	20	26	25	30
Republicans	support								68	50	53	64	58	67	56
	neither								14	12	13	15	13	9	14
	opposed								18	38	34	21	29	24	30
Democrats	support								69	58	58	61	64	66	52
	neither								16	18	18	21	13	8	17
	opposed								14	24	25	17	23	26	30
Teachers	support								53	48	46	46	48	51	44
	neither								10	8	7	12	10	8	4
	opposed								37	45	46	43	42	41	52

SCHOOL CHOICE

CHARTERS

Questions

Question (2013-2020): 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

Responses (2017-2020): Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Responses (2013-2016): Completely support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither support nor oppose

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support							51	54	51	51	39	44	48	44
	neither							24	18	22	21	25	21	13	19
	opposed							25	28	27	28	36	35	39	37
Republicans	support							60	64	62	60	47	57	61	54
	neither							21	15	18	19	22	17	13	16
	opposed							19	21	19	21	30	27	27	30
Democrats	support							44	47	42	45	34	36	40	37
	neither							25	19	24	22	26	22	11	20
	opposed							31	33	34	33	41	42	48	43
Teachers	support							41	43	39	41	40	33	42	34
	neither							12	11	7	11	9	12	9	6
	opposed							48	47	53	48	51	55	49	60

VOUCHERS

Questions: Universal Vouchers

Universal Vouchers (2017-2020): 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?

Universal Vouchers (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?

Universal Vouchers (2013-2014): 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?

Responses

Responses (2017-2020): Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Responses (2013-2016): Completely support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Universal Vouchers

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support							43	49	46	45	45	54	55	51
	neither							19	12	18	12	18	15	8	14
	opposed							37	39	36	44	37	31	37	36
Republicans	support							47	45	47	41	54	64	61	56
	neither							14	11	15	10	13	9	6	11
	opposed							38	44	38	49	33	27	34	33
Democrats	support							41	52	47	49	40	47	52	47
	neither							21	12	19	13	19	18	8	15
	opposed							38	36	35	39	41	35	40	38
Teachers	support							41	38	36	33	40	34	37	31
	neither							1	9	7	10	0	8	4	4
	opposed							58	53	57	56	59	58	59	65

Questions: Vouchers Targeted to Low-Income Families

Vouchers Targeted to Low-Income Families (2017-2020): 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?

Vouchers Targeted to Low-Income Families (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?

Responses

Responses (2017-2020): Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Responses (2015-2016): Completely support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Vouchers Targeted to Low-Income Families

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support									42	37	43	43	49	48
	neither									17	15	17	13	9	14
	opposed									41	48	41	44	41	38
Republicans	support									36	31	42	39	44	45
	neither									17	15	17	12	6	13
	opposed									47	54	42	49	50	43
Democrats	support									47	42	44	47	52	52
	neither									17	14	16	12	11	14
	opposed									36	43	40	41	37	35
Teachers	support									29	29	27	29	39	31
	neither									13	6	10	9	7	7
	opposed									57	66	63	62	54	62

TAX CREDITS

Question

Question (2014-2020): 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

Responses (2017-2020): Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Responses (2014-2016): Completely support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither support nor oppose

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support								60	55	53	55	57	58	57
	neither								14	19	18	21	17	16	16
	opposed								26	26	29	24	26	26	27
Republicans	support								59	54	49	56	58	65	59
	neither								14	18	17	19	16	12	14
	opposed								27	28	33	25	27	22	27
Democrats	support								61	56	57	54	58	56	56
	neither								14	19	17	21	17	16	17
	opposed								25	25	26	25	26	29	27
Teachers	support								38	43	42	48	47	49	41
	neither								15	10	10	12	9	12	12
	opposed								48	47	48	40	44	39	47

TEACHER POLICIES

MERIT PAY

Questions

Question (2017-2020): Do you support or oppose basing part of the salaries of teachers on how much their students learn?

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

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

Responses

Responses (2017-2020): Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Responses (2013-2016): Completely favor, Somewhat favor, Somewhat oppose, Completely oppose, Neither favor nor oppose

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support							49	57	51	53	46	48	47	47
	neither							12	11	16	13	16	16	13	16
	opposed							39	31	34	35	38	36	40	37
Republicans	support							52	62	56	57	54	55	53	55
	neither							10	9	14	10	15	14	13	12
	opposed							38	29	30	33	31	31	35	33
Democrats	support							47	55	47	50	40	44	43	41
	neither							13	11	16	13	16	16	13	18
	opposed							41	34	37	37	44	41	44	41
Teachers	support							19	21	19	19	15	22	20	15
	neither							2	6	6	4	6	5	6	5
	opposed							79	73	75	77	78	73	74	80

TENURE

Questions

Question (2017-2019): Teachers with tenure cannot be dismissed unless a school district follows detailed procedures. Some say that tenure protects teachers from being fired for arbitrary reasons. Others say that it makes it too difficult to replace ineffective teachers. Do you support or oppose giving tenure to teachers?

Question (2013, 2015, 2016): Teachers with tenure cannot be dismissed unless a school district follows detailed procedures. Some say that tenure protects teachers from being fired for arbitrary reasons. Others say that it makes it too difficult to replace ineffective teachers. Do you favor or oppose giving tenure to teachers?

Question (2014): Teachers with tenure cannot be dismissed unless a school district follows detailed procedures. Some say that tenure provides teachers with the necessary independence for their work. Others say that it makes it too difficult to replace ineffective teachers. We want to know what you think of tenure. Do you favor or oppose giving tenure to teachers?

Responses

Responses (2017-2019): Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither support nor oppose

Responses (2013-2016): Strongly favor, Somewhat favor, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose, Neither favor nor oppose

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support							33	26	29	25	33	30	35	-
	neither							20	18	21	19	16	20	14	-
	opposed							48	56	51	56	50	50	50	-
Republicans	support							29	20	23	19	25	21	25	-
	neither							13	15	16	17	13	17	11	-
	opposed							58	65	60	65	63	62	64	-
Democrats	support							37	31	32	31	41	38	44	-
	neither							23	20	22	20	17	21	15	-
	opposed							40	49	46	49	42	41	41	-
Teachers	support							58	51	55	61	62	62	56	-
	neither							8	11	9	9	8	14	8	-
	opposed							35	38	36	30	30	24	36	-

UNIONS

Question

Question (2013-2020): 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

Responses (2013-2020): Strongly positive effect, Somewhat positive effect, Somewhat negative effect, Strongly negative effect, drop
Neither positive nor negative effect*

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support							32	33	30	32	37	37	43	41
	neither							25	26	30	35	26	25	23	26
	opposed							43	41	40	33	37	38	34	33
Republicans	support							22	20	19	21	23	17	26	22
	neither							16	21	25	33	22	23	18	24
	opposed							62	59	56	47	55	60	56	54
Democrats	support							43	45	41	42	50	53	57	56
	neither							30	29	32	35	28	24	24	26
	opposed							27	27	27	23	22	23	20	18
Teachers	support							56	59	57	60	64	64	60	66
	neither							12	18	17	21	14	10	14	16
	opposed							31	23	26	19	22	26	26	18

* "% support," "% neither," and "% opposed" show the percentage responding that unions' effect on schools is positive, neither positive nor negative, and negative, respectively.

SALARIES

Questions: Uninformed

Uninformed (2014-2020): Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

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

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

Uninformed (2011): Do you think that teacher salaries *at your local schools* should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Uninformed (2009, 2010): Do you think that teacher salaries in your state should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Responses

Responses: Greatly increase, Increase, Stay about the same, Decrease, Greatly decrease*

Uninformed

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support		69	55	58	55	64	55	62	63	65	61	67	72	65
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	opposed		31	45	42	45	36	45	38	37	35	39	33	28	35
Republicans	support		61	48	50	45	52	39	52	49	52	50	55	60	50
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	opposed		39	52	50	55	48	61	48	51	48	50	45	40	50
Democrats	support		75	59	65	62	73	68	70	74	76	70	77	83	77
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	opposed		25	41	35	38	27	33	30	26	24	30	23	17	23
Teachers	support		90	77	76	82	85	79	85	83	89	84	86	87	85
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	opposed		10	23	24	18	15	21	15	17	11	16	14	13	15

*For the spending and salaries questions, "% support" shows the percentage supporting an increase, while "% opposed" shows the percentage in favor of spending and salaries staying the same or decreasing.

Questions: Informed

Informed (2018-2020): Public school teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of \$X. Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Informed (2014-2017): As it turns out, public school teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of \$X. Do you think that public school teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Informed (2013): As it turns out, public school teachers in your state receive, on average, salaries of \$X. In your view, should their salaries increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

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

Informed (2011): According to the most recent information available, teachers in your state are paid an average annual salary of \$X. Do you think that teacher salaries *at your local schools* should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Informed (2009, 2010): In your state, teachers are paid an average annual salary of \$X. Do you think that these teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

Responses

Responses: Greatly increase, Increase, Stay about the same, Decrease, Greatly decrease*

Informed

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public	support		54	40	42	43	37	38	38	45	41	36	49	56	55
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	opposed		46	60	58	57	63	62	62	55	59	64	51	44	45
Republicans	support		47	37	30	28	32	33	30	38	33	27	38	43	40
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	opposed		53	63	70	72	68	67	70	62	67	73	62	57	60
Democrats	support		60	43	49	54	39	42	44	51	49	45	59	64	66
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	opposed		40	57	51	46	61	58	56	49	51	55	41	36	34

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Teachers	support		83	71	75	77	73	63	68	83	79	71	76	76	81
	neither		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-
	opposed		17	29	25	23	27	37	32	17	21	29	24	24	19

*For the spending and salaries questions, "% support" shows the percentage supporting an increase, while "% opposed" shows the percentage in favor of spending and salaries staying the same or decreasing.