

Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty



Message Matters:

How effective messages
on education reform
shape opinions

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Executive Summary

In almost every context, words matter. Public opinion on particular issues can shift greatly depending on the language used, and education reform is no exception. To help answer that question, the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty conducted a statewide survey experiment of 1,500 adults. We tested a number of messages related to education reform, ranging from school choice to school funding. Some of the key results are described below:

School Choice Messaging

Significant statewide majorities support school choice in the form of an Education Savings Account (ESA). Across partisan, racial, and urbanicity subgroupings, ESAs enjoy a higher level of baseline support than charter schools or school vouchers. This suggests room for policymakers to be bold in promoting ESA-style reforms.

Republicans and Independents are the backbone of voucher and charter school support. School vouchers and charter schools enjoy near 50% support statewide. That support is driven by significant majority support among Republicans (71% for vouchers and 66% for charters) and plurality support among Independents (47% for vouchers and 51% for charters).

Support for Vouchers increases among Trump voters by discussing safety. 83% of Trump voters approve of vouchers in the safety condition relative to 69% in the baseline.

Democrats more willing to support school vouchers when given a diversity message. Democratic respondents were significantly more likely to support school vouchers when exposed to the message that school vouchers can promote student diversity. 51% of Democrats express support for vouchers in this condition relative to 24% in the baseline.

Charter school popularity increases when described as a public school. Regardless of partisan affiliation, informing respondents that charter schools are public schools increases support for charters to a statistically significant extent. 64% of respondents expressed support for charter schools in this condition relative to 49% in the baseline.

Using ESAs to pay for college courses increases support. All partisan subgroups are more likely to support ESAs when informed about their use to pay for classes at a local college or university. 75% of respondents expressed support for ESAs in this condition relative to 64% in the baseline.

In Wisconsin, “parents” trusted more than “families.” Respondents express higher trust in parents than families to make decisions about their children’s education.

Public Opinion-School Funding

Knowledge about true public school spending decreases support for spending increases.

All partisan subgroupings become less likely to say that spending on public schools is too low when exposed to information about the true level of spending in Wisconsin's Public Schools.

Perception of the public school's role in the community predictive of voucher opposition.

Controlling for partisanship and other factors, survey respondents who considered their public school to be a key part of their community's identity were less likely to support school vouchers.

Act 10 support still falls along partisan lines Republicans are more likely to believe that Act 10 was beneficial to both teachers and students than Democrats or Independents.

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The Study

We contracted with a national surveying firm to conduct a survey of 1,500 Wisconsin residents.¹ The sample is composed of 70% random digit dialing of landlines and 30% from a list of cellphone numbers kept by the surveying firm.² The cooperation rate for the survey was 31% using the standard calculations of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR 2017). The margin of error for reported topline results is ± 2.5 percentage points.

Our sample matches the composition of the state relatively well on a number of key demographic and geographic characteristics. Table 1 summarizes the composition of our survey as well as the best available state figures on those variables. The sample is 40.87% Democrats when leaners are included and 37.27% Republican. Excluding leaners, our sample 27.33% Democrats and 24.47% Republicans and 38.27% independents. These figures do not differ substantially from the long-term average of the Marquette Law School Poll, which has found 27% Republican, 30% Democrats, and 41% independents.

As is common in survey research, African-American respondents and Hispanic respondents are underrepresented. While these groups each represent approximately 6% of Wisconsin residents, they only represent approximately 3% and 3.87% of our sample respectively.

Table 1. Sample vs. Population, Wisconsin

	Survey	Actual	Source
Democrat	27.33%	31.00%	Marquette Law Polls
Republican	24.47%	27.00%	Marquette Law Polls
African American	3.00%	6.60%	Census Bureau(2017)
Hispanic	3.87%	6.70%	Census Bureau (2017)
Rural	36.33%	29.85%	Census Bureau (2010)
Gender-Female	50.67%	50.30%	Census Bureau (2017)
Have Children (school age)	34.67%	33.51%	Census Bureau (2017)

Because this is a survey experiment rather than a traditional public opinion survey, survey weights are not applied to the experimental conditions in which respondents were randomized into particular messages. However, survey weights are applied to the reported topline findings. These include weights for African Americans, Hispanics, rural residents, and gender. In keeping with the perspective that party ID is an opinion rather than a demographic characteristic, we do not weight the responses for partisanship.

The main purpose of this research is an examination of which messages, if any, are more effective at moving people toward support for school choice. To answer this, respondents were randomized into one of several conditions about Vouchers, Charter Schools, and ESAs that presented a certain type of information, plus a baseline group where only a definition of the type of school choice was provided. Following this randomization, respondents are asked about their

¹ The firm was Research Now Survey Sampling International

² No meaningful differences in responses were found in the results from the RDD portion of the sample and the cellphone portion.

level of support for school choice on a five point scale ranging from “strongly oppose” to “strongly support.” The movement effect of messages is derived by comparing the average response of those in the control group to the average response of those in each treatment group in a simple t-Test.

For each experiment, Let c equal the control group and t equal a treatment group. The t statistic is derived by:

$$T = \frac{\bar{Y}_c - \bar{Y}_t}{\sqrt{s_c^2/N_c + s_t^2/N_t}}$$

Where N_c and N_t represent the respective number of observations in categories c and t , and s represents the sample variances of c and t . The significance of the T-statistic is determined by a T-Table for which the cutoff points vary with the degrees of freedom in the analysis.

Baseline Results

In this section, we examine the results of our survey for various subgroups of respondents in the baseline condition, in which no more than definitional information was provided to survey respondents. Because this analysis is conducted on subsets of the sample, the margin of error is significantly greater, and varies with the number of respondents in each subgroup.

The figures below summarize our findings for private school vouchers, charter schools, and ESAs ordered by baseline level of support. While there is some variation in which categories have the highest and lowest levels of support between categories, some consistent patterns emerge. Across all types of school choice, Democratic respondents tend to have the lowest levels of support while Republican respondents tend to have the highest. It should be noted, however, that school choice issues in general are not as fully polarized as some hot button topics. Approximately a third of Democratic respondents voice support for charters and vouchers, and nearly half (45%) support ESAs. Support in the aggregate – the statewide number in our tables – hovers around the 50% threshold with the exception of ESAs. We will discuss these findings more in the ESA section of the paper.

Figure 1. Support for Vouchers

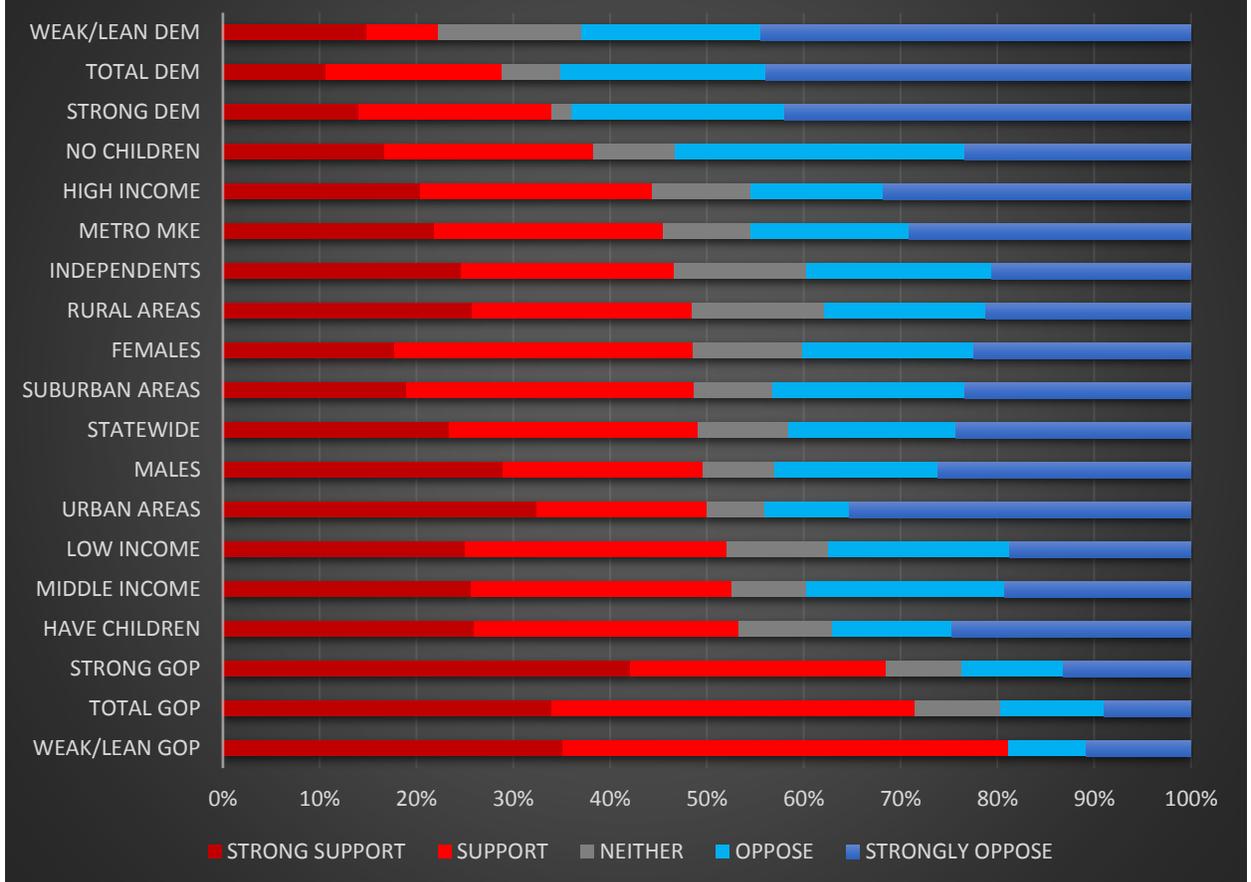


Figure 2. Support for Charters

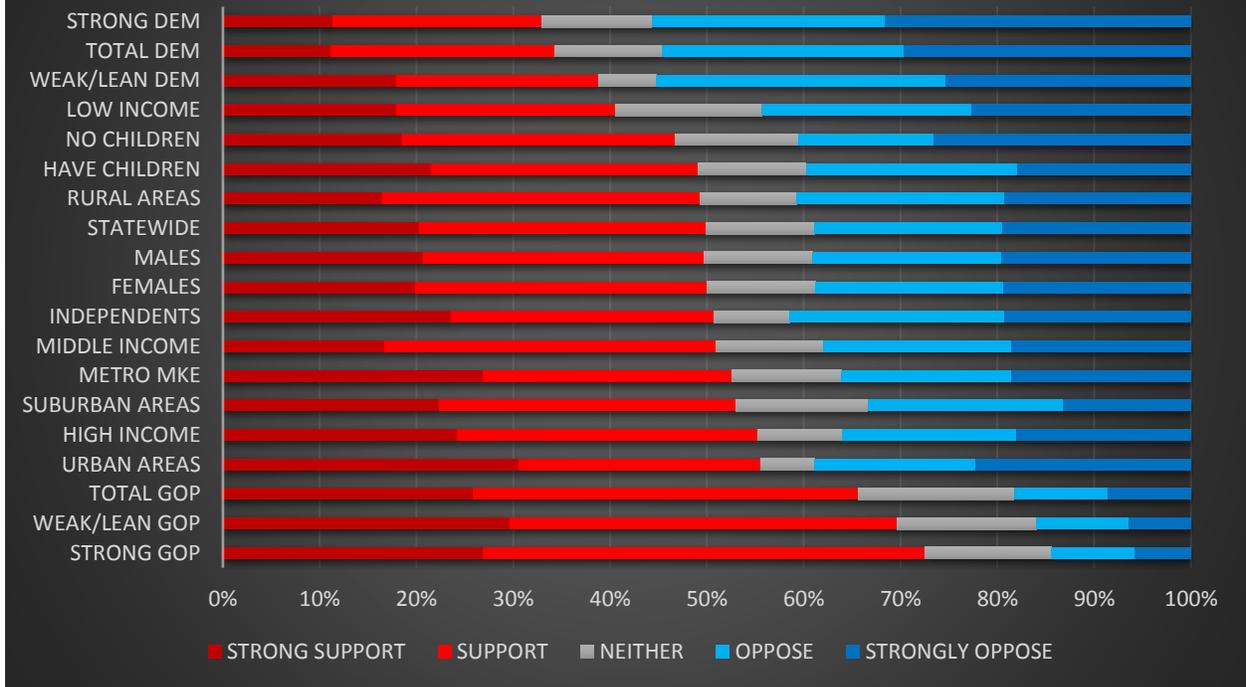
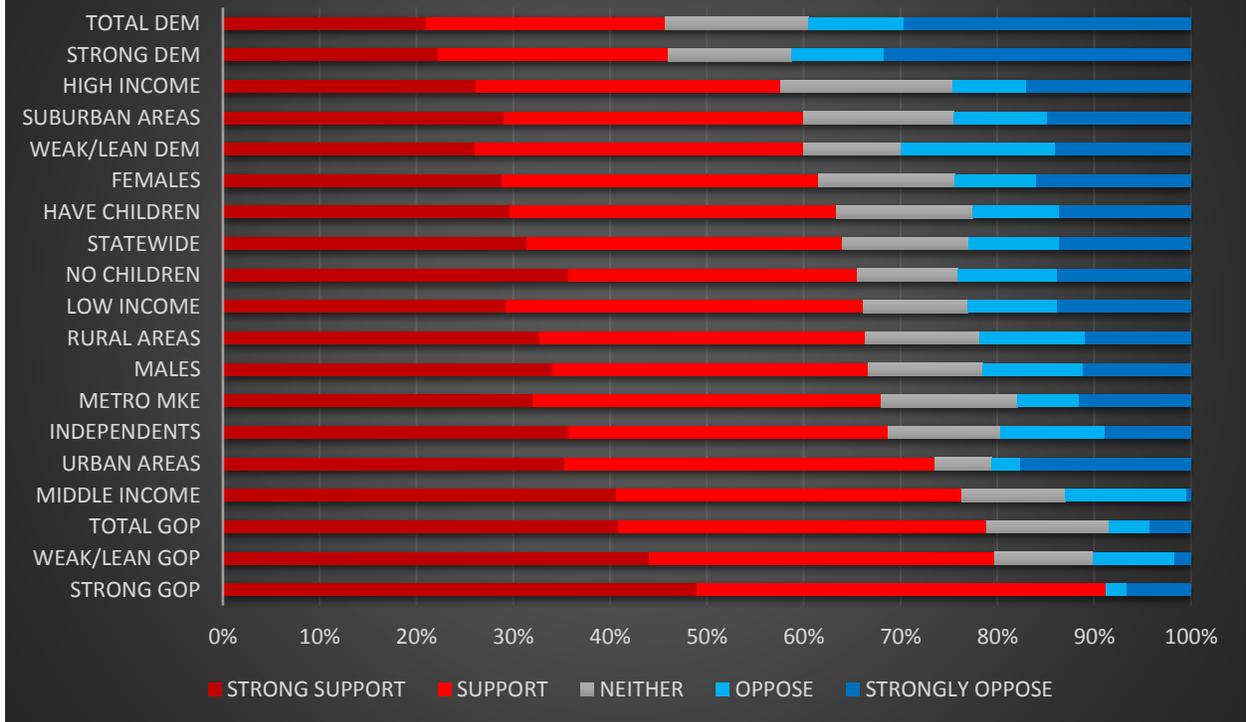


Figure 3. Support for ESAs



Private Voucher Programs

Our initial message testing is a variety of messages related to existing research on private school voucher programs. Wisconsin is home to the oldest private school voucher program in the nation, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, as well as newer programs in Racine and statewide. This means that respondents in the state may have a higher level of initial awareness of voucher programs than respondents in other contexts, and that attitudes on the issue may be more strongly formed. The various conditions are described in detail below.

In addition to the baseline condition, respondents were randomized into six additional conditions providing various information about private-school vouchers.

Baseline: School voucher programs provide a state-funded payment to families for their children to attend a private school.

Test Score Condition: School voucher programs increase the test scores and graduation rates of participating students.

Safety Condition: School voucher programs allow children to attend schools that are safer than their assigned district school.

Patriotism Condition: School voucher programs increase the civic virtue and patriotism of participating students by exposing them to moral values and America's founding principles.

Diversity Condition: School voucher programs increase school diversity by offering minority students an opportunity to attend schools that would otherwise be closed off to them.

Fairness Condition: School voucher programs level the playing field for low income children by providing opportunities to attend private schools that would otherwise be closed off to them.

Competition Condition: School voucher programs improve the quality of all schools by increasing competition.

Subgroup	Test Scores	Safety	Patriotism	Fairness	Diversity	Competition
FEMALES						
HAVE CHILDREN						
HIGH INCOME						
INDEPENDENTS		X				
LOW INCOME						
MALES						
METRO MKE	X	X	X	X		
MIDDLE INCOME						
NO CHILDREN		X				
RURAL AREAS						
STATEWIDE						
STRONG DEM						
STRONG GOP						
SUBURBAN AREAS						
TOTAL DEM					X	
TOTAL GOP			X			
URBAN AREAS						
WEAK/LEAN DEM				X	X	
WEAK/LEAN GOP						
NON-WHITE		X	X	X		X

Democrat Respondents

Relative to independents and Republicans, Democrats had the lowest level of baseline support for vouchers. 24% of Democrats in the baseline condition supported vouchers, while 64% opposed them. While slight movement toward support was seen in a number of categories, only the diversity message moved Democrats significantly in the direction of support ($p < .05$). In the diversity condition, a slim majority of Democrats (50.98%) expressed a supportive view of vouchers while 47.06% of Democrats opposed them.

Figure 4. Support or Strong Support for Vouchers by Message, Democrats

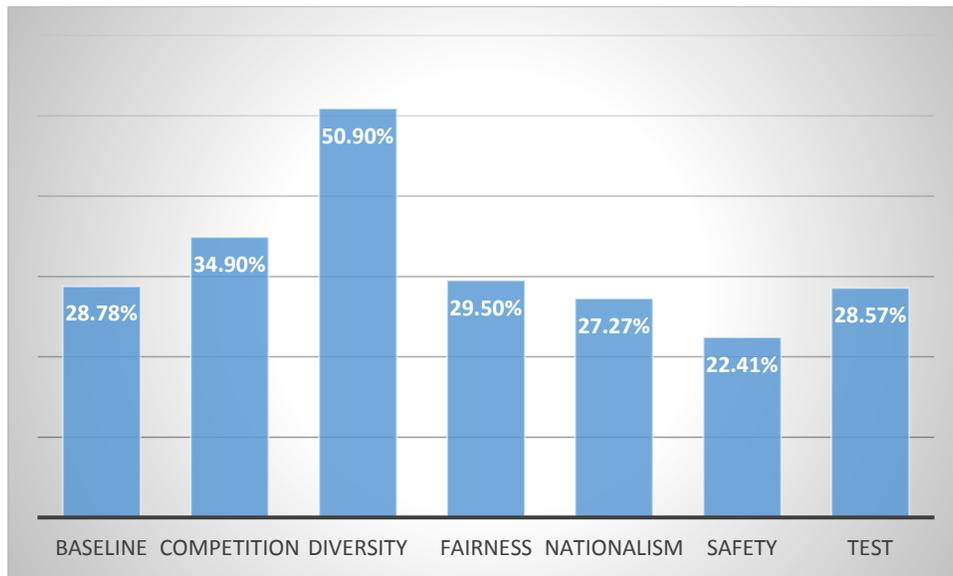
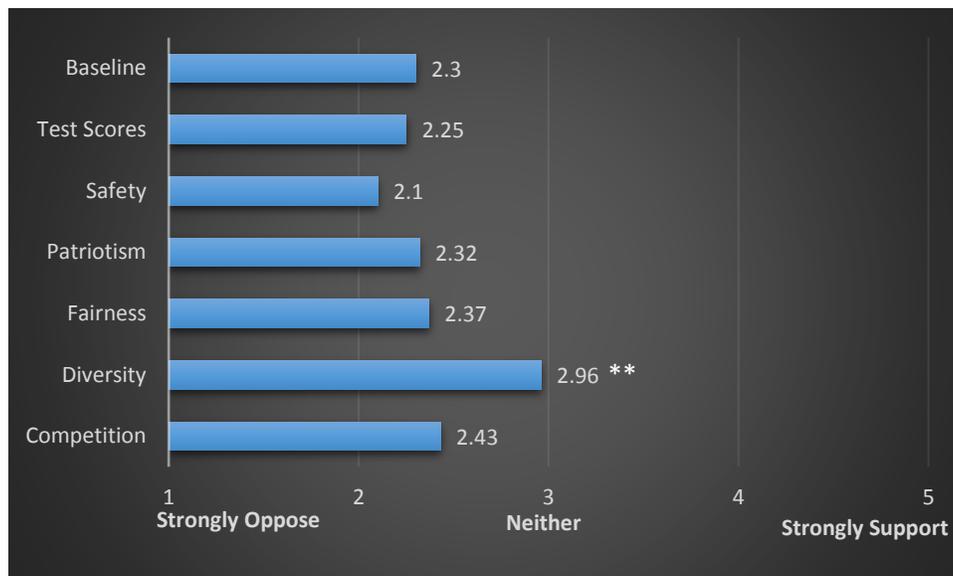


Figure 5. Voucher Message Average Response, Democrats



Independent Respondents

Independent respondents are in the middle in terms of baseline support for private school vouchers. 46.58% of independents expressed support or strong support in the baseline condition, while only 39.73% opposed. The most effective message for moving independent respondents toward support was the message on safety, where 60.9% of independents responded supportively ($p < .1$).

Figure 6. Support or Strong Support for Vouchers by Message, Independents

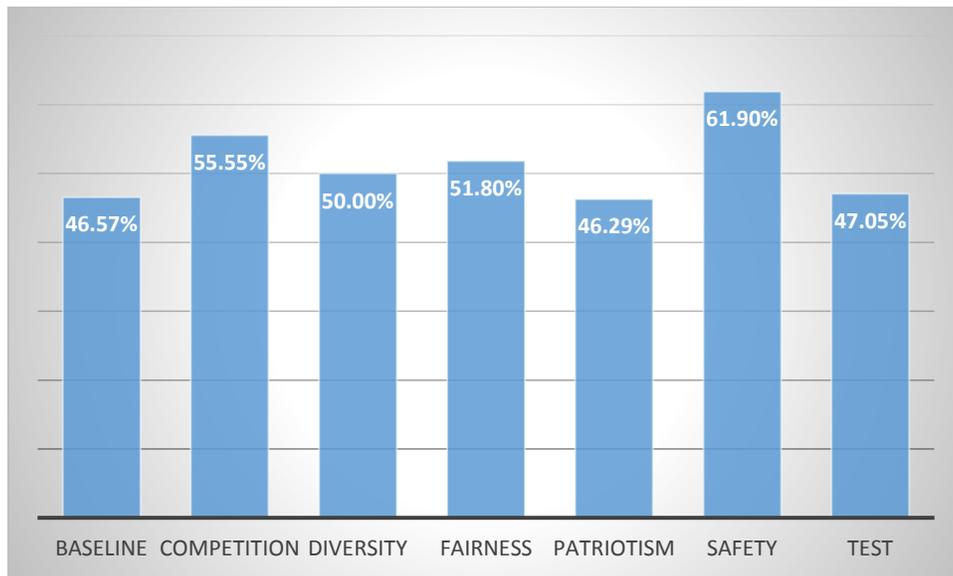
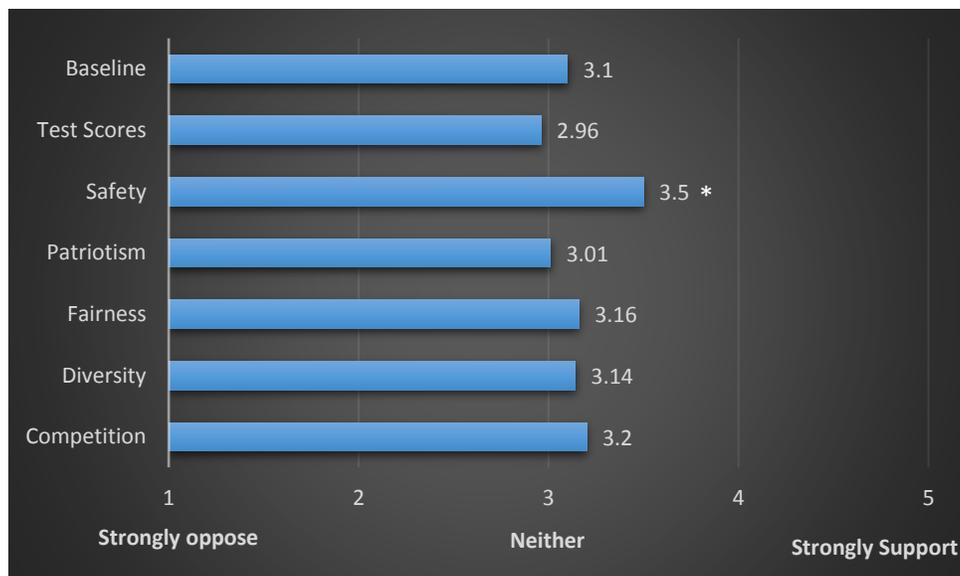


Figure 7. Voucher Message Average Support, Independents



Republican Respondents

Republican respondents have the highest baseline level of support of any subgroup. 71.4% of Republicans expressed support for vouchers in the baseline condition. Despite this high initial level of support, the patriotic message was still effective at further increasing support, though only to a marginal level of statistical significance ($p < .1$). In that condition, 81.36% of Republican respondents supported private school vouchers.

Figure 8. Support or Strong Support for Vouchers by Message, Republicans

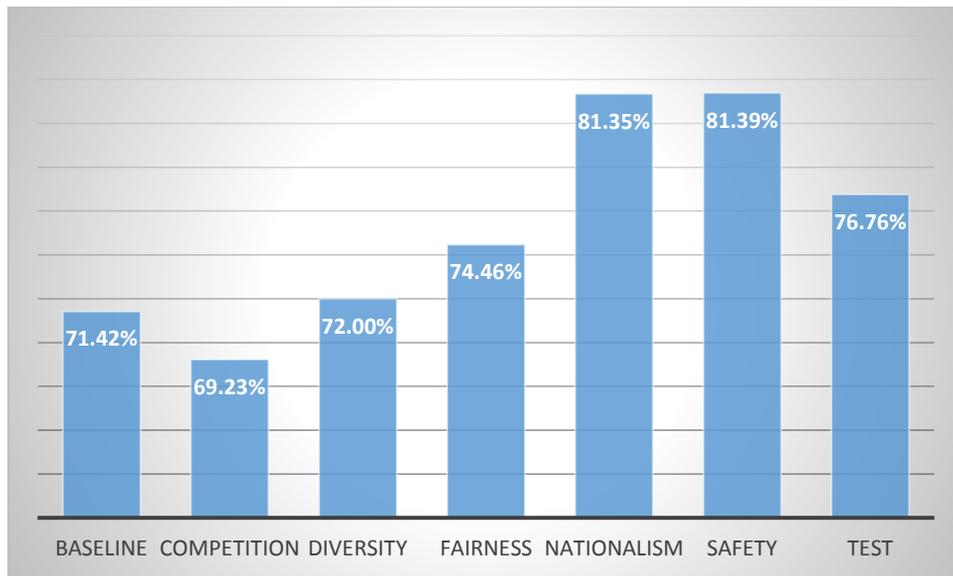
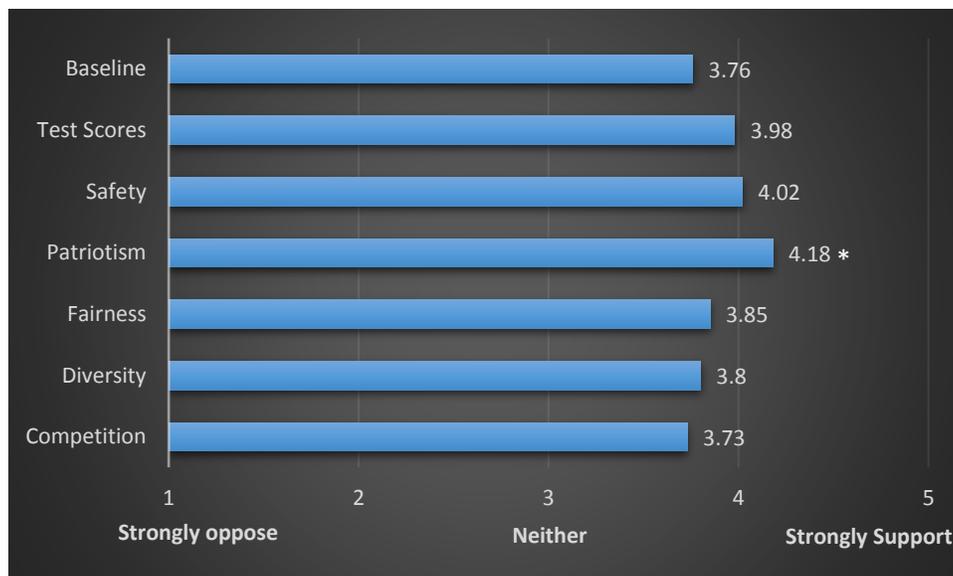


Figure 9. Voucher Message Average Response, Republicans



Trump Supporting Respondents

We also polled respondents on support for President Donald Trump on a five point scale. Trump support is highly correlated with Republican Party identification (correlation=.56). That said, different messages appear to move this group. While Republicans become significantly more supportive of vouchers in the patriotism condition, Trump supporters become more supportive in the Safety condition.

Figure 10. Support or Strong Support for Vouchers by Message, Trump Supporters

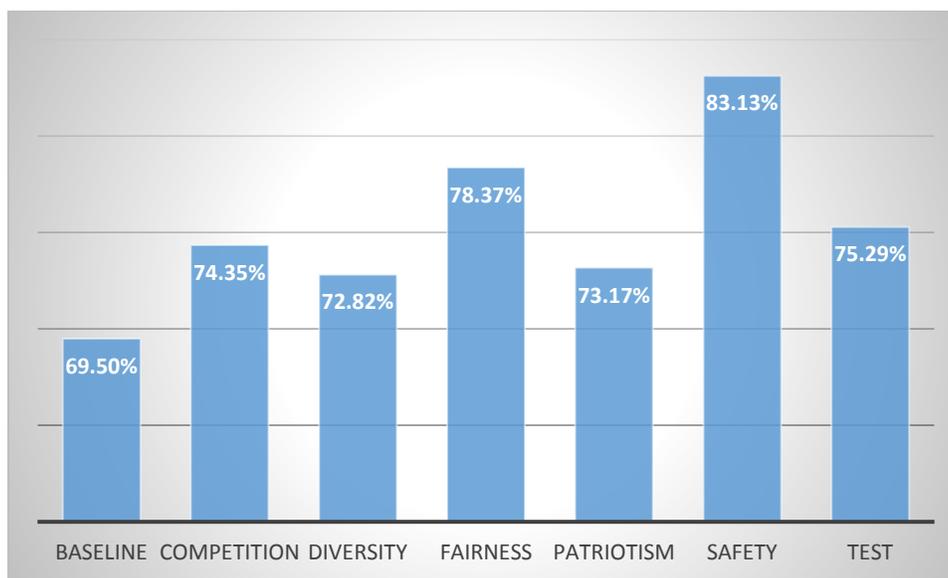
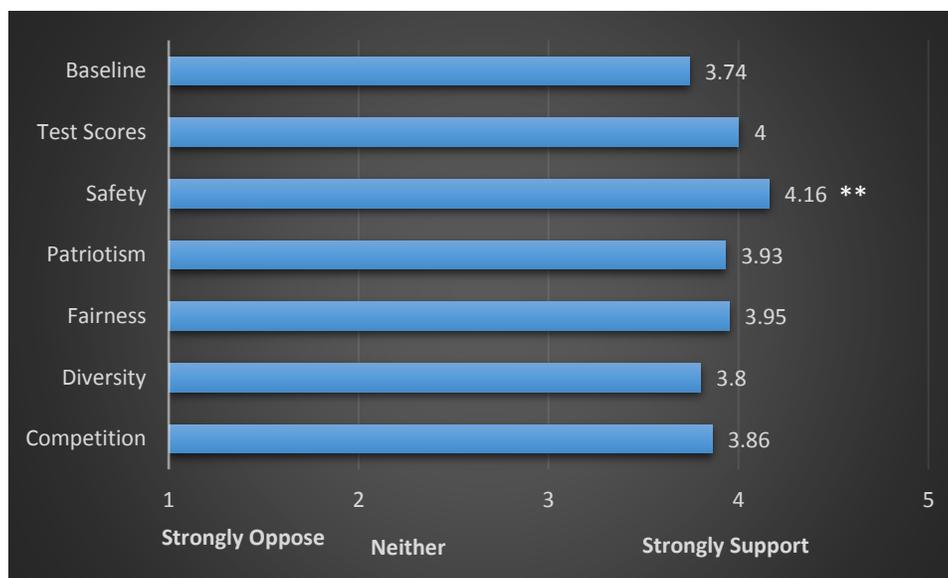


Figure 11. Voucher Message Average Response, Trump Supporters



African American Respondents

In our final analysis of voucher messages, we looked at responses among African Americans. One should note that the number of African-American respondents to our survey was small (55) and support in the baseline condition was lower than even for Democratic respondents. With those caveats, all provided information significantly increased support among African Americans. In some common theories of belief change, dramatic movement in response to new information is indicative of a low level of initial knowledge (Sinay and Hsu 2014). In other words, it may be the case that there is room to increase support among African Americans for private school voucher programs simply by exposing them to information about them.

Figure 12. Support or Strong Support for Vouchers by Message, African Americans

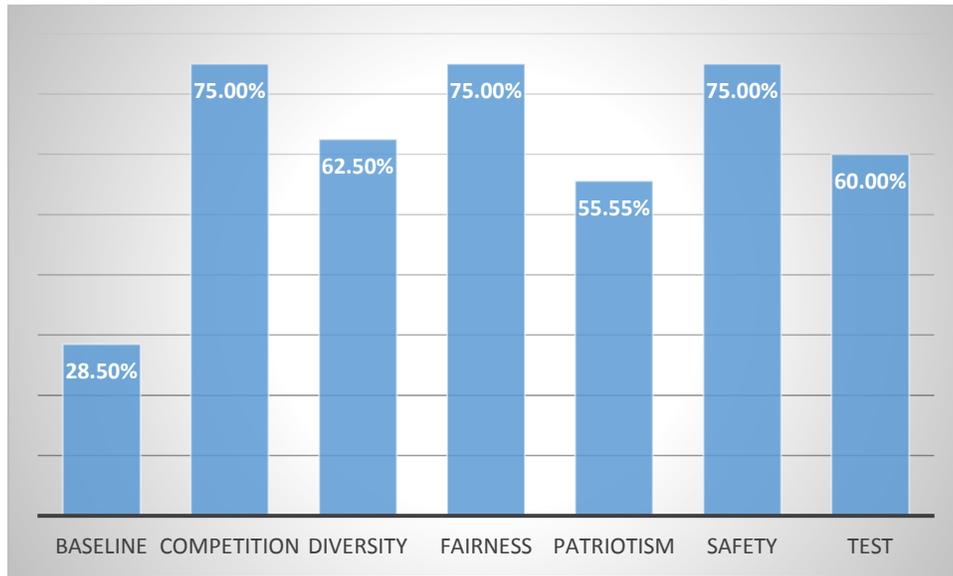
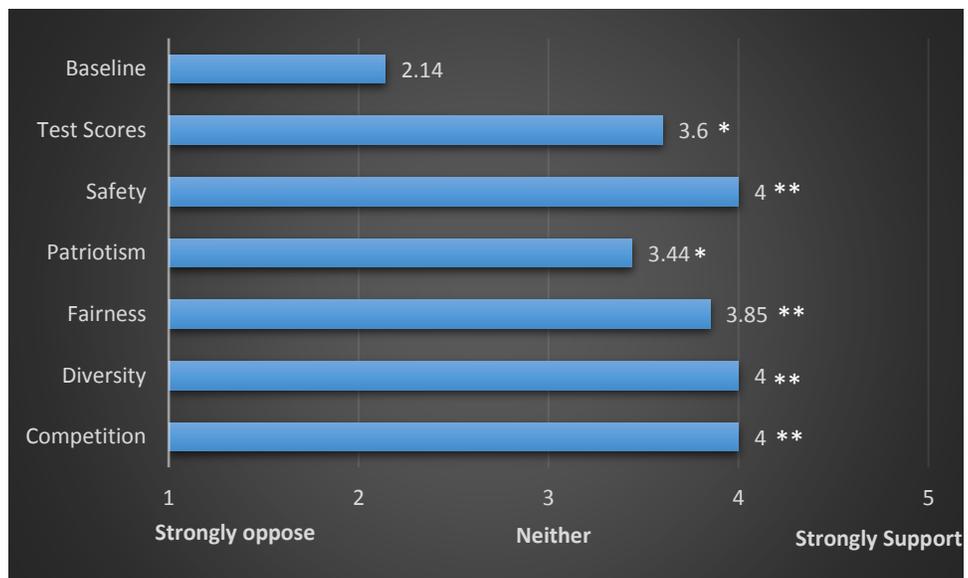


Figure 13. Voucher Message Average Response, African Americans



Charter Schools

We tested three conditions on charter school support in addition to the baseline:

Baseline: Charter schools are schools that have freedom from some school district rules.

Teacher's Union: They can hire teachers who are not members of the teachers union.

Public School: They are public schools that are open to all students.

Innovation: They are provided with the freedom to implement innovative educational techniques that may not be offered in public schools.

Overall Results

Subgroup	Union	Public Schools	Innovation
FEMALES		X	
HAVE CHILDREN		X	X
HIGH INCOME		X	
INDEPENDENTS		X	X
LOW INCOME	X	X	X
MALES		X	X
METRO MKE			
MIDDLE INCOME		X	
NO CHILDREN			
RURAL AREAS	X		X
STATEWIDE		X	X
STRONG DEM		X	
STRONG GOP			X
SUBURBAN AREAS		X	X
TOTAL DEM		X	
TOTAL GOP	X	X	X
URBAN AREAS			
WEAK/LEAN DEM			
WEAK/LEAN GOP			
NON-WHITE			

Among our three messaging randomizations, by far the most significant effect on overall support was the message informing respondents that charter schools were public schools ($p < .01$). As we will see subsequently, this is the rare message that moves support in a positive direction across lines of partisanship. The innovation condition also significantly increased support for charter schools ($p < .05$).

Figure 14. Support and Strong Support for Charters, All Respondents

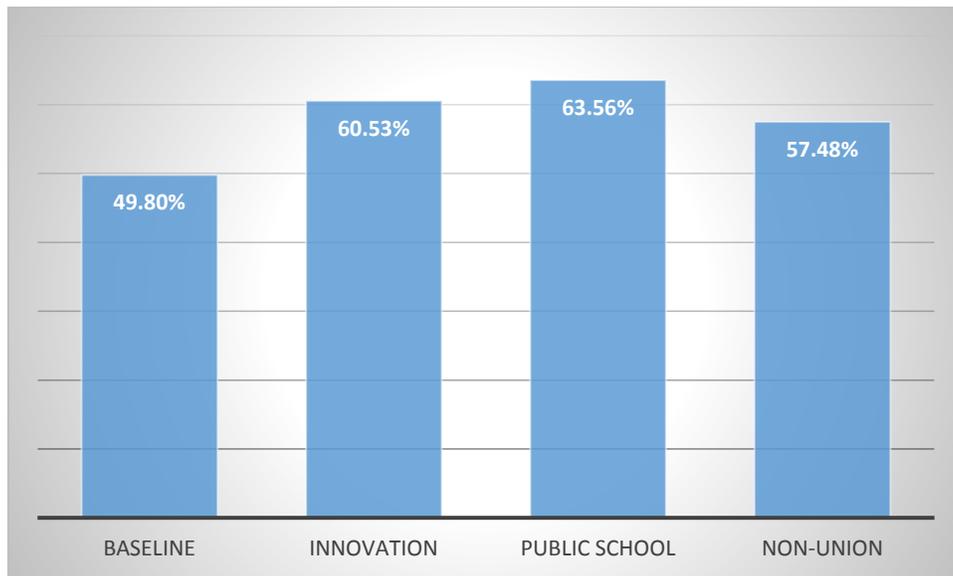
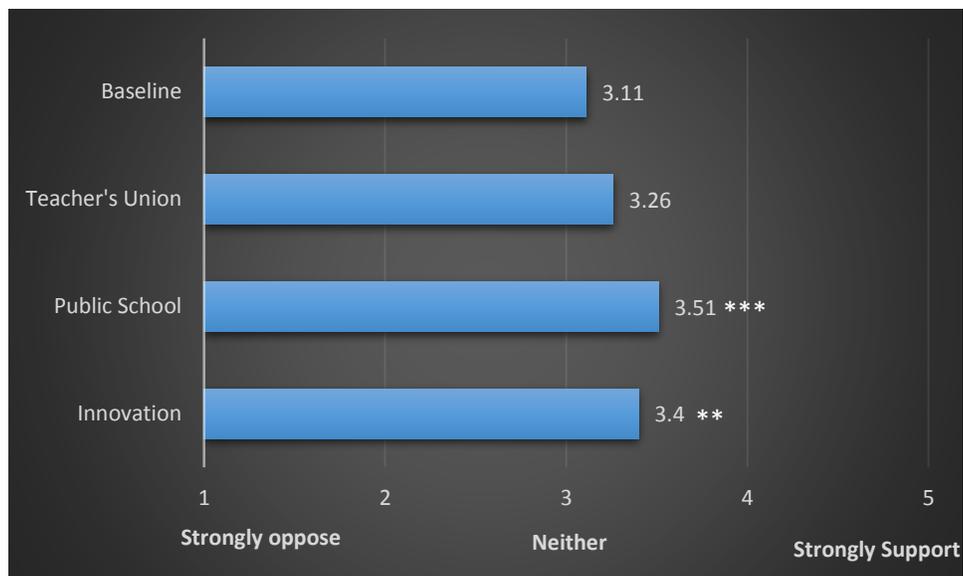


Figure 15. Charter School Messages, All Respondents



Democrats

Democrats are more supportive of charter schools only in the condition in which they were informed that charter schools are public schools ($p < .05$). Very little movement from the baseline level of support occurred in the other messages.

Figure 16. Support or Strong Support for Charters by Message, Democrats

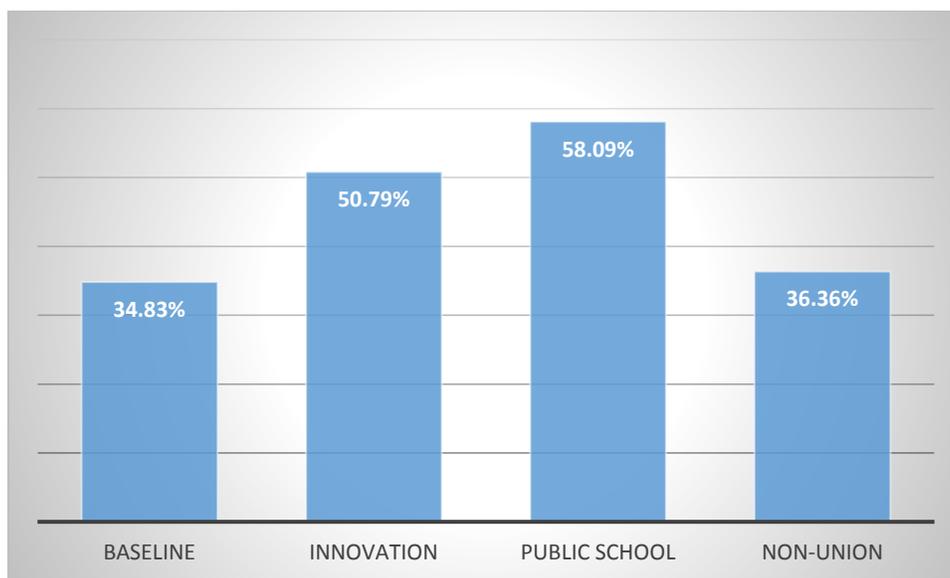
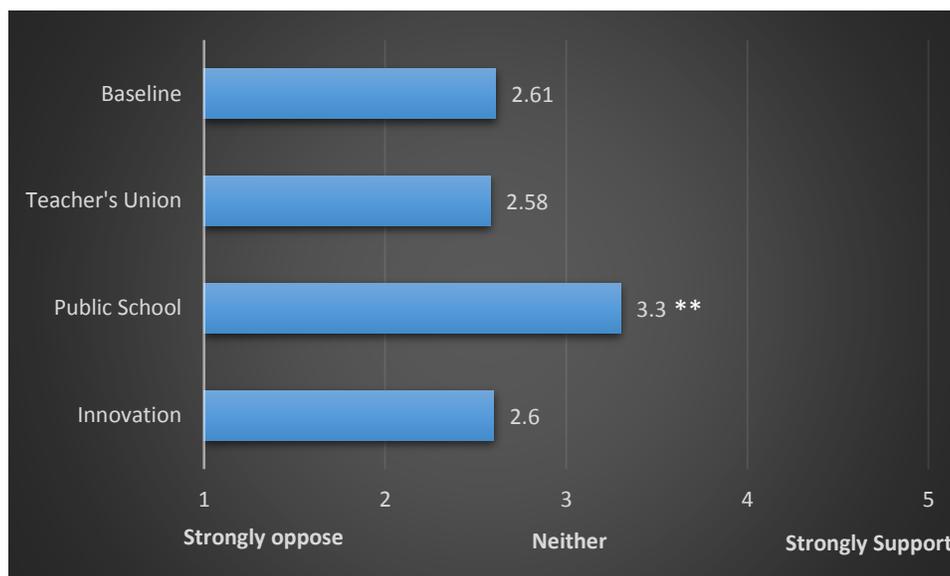


Figure 17. Charter School Message Average Response, Democratic Respondents



Republicans

Republicans exhibit a greater amount of movement in the charter school randomizations relative to the ESA and Private Voucher randomizations. Republicans were the only subgroup moved in a significantly positive direction by informing them that charter schools may hire teachers who are not members of the teachers union ($p < .05$). Perhaps surprisingly, Republicans also became more supportive of charters when informed that such schools were public schools, though only to a marginal extent ($p < .1$). Describing charters as venues for innovation also significantly increased support among Republican respondents ($p < .01$).

Figure 18. Support or Strong Support for Charters by Message, Republicans

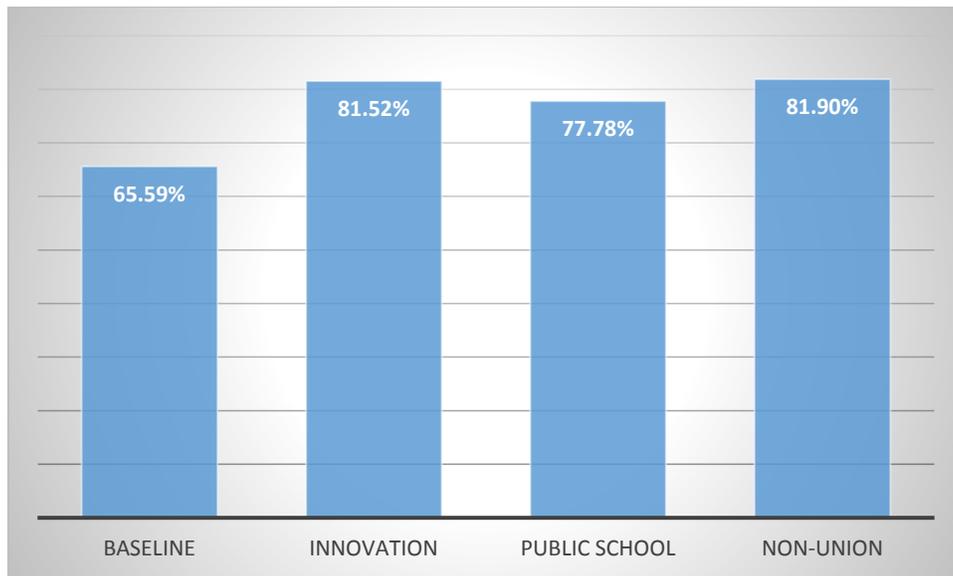
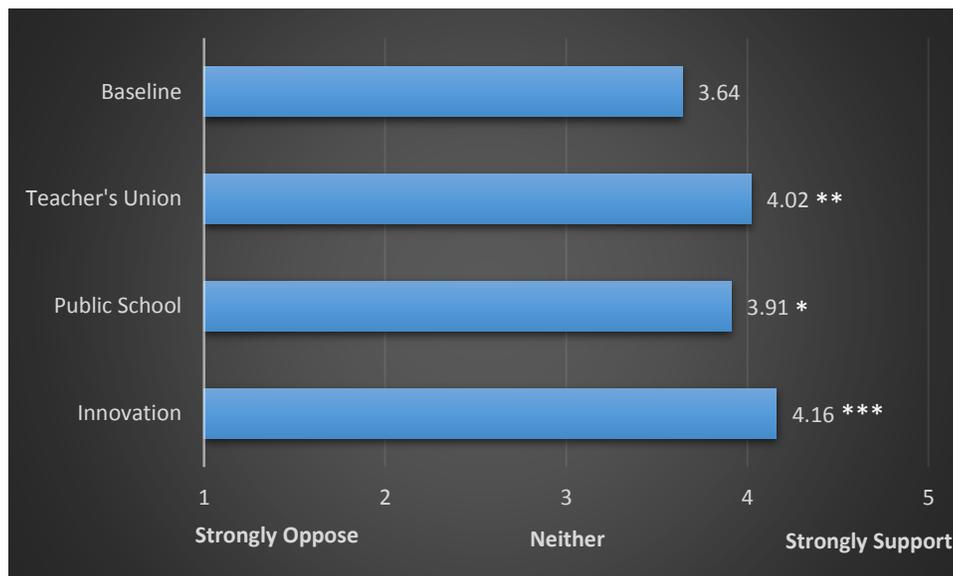


Figure 19. Charter School Messages Average Response, Republican Respondents



Independents

Independent respondents were significantly more supportive of charter schools in the public school condition ($p < .05$) as well as the innovation condition ($p < .1$).

Figure 21. Support or Strong Support for Charters by Message, Independents

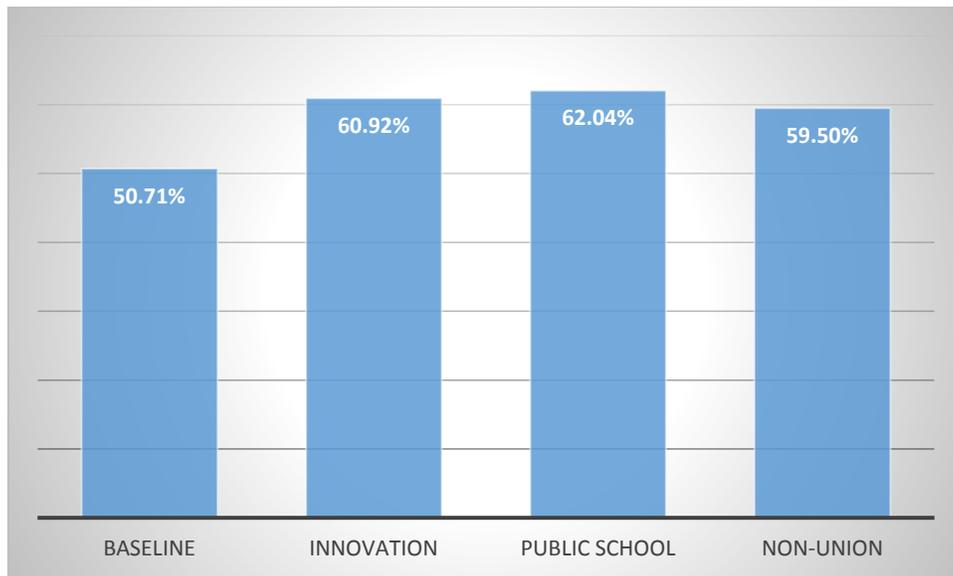
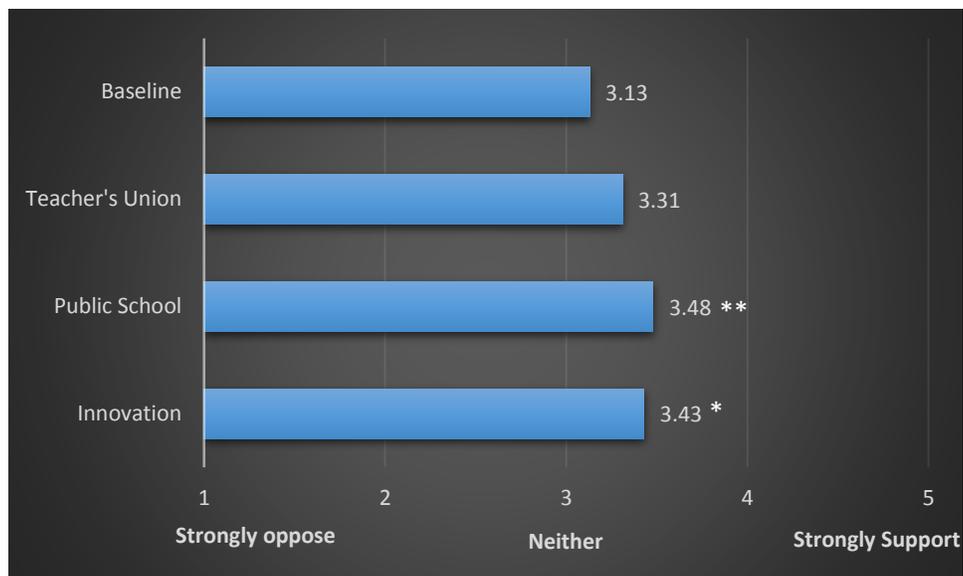
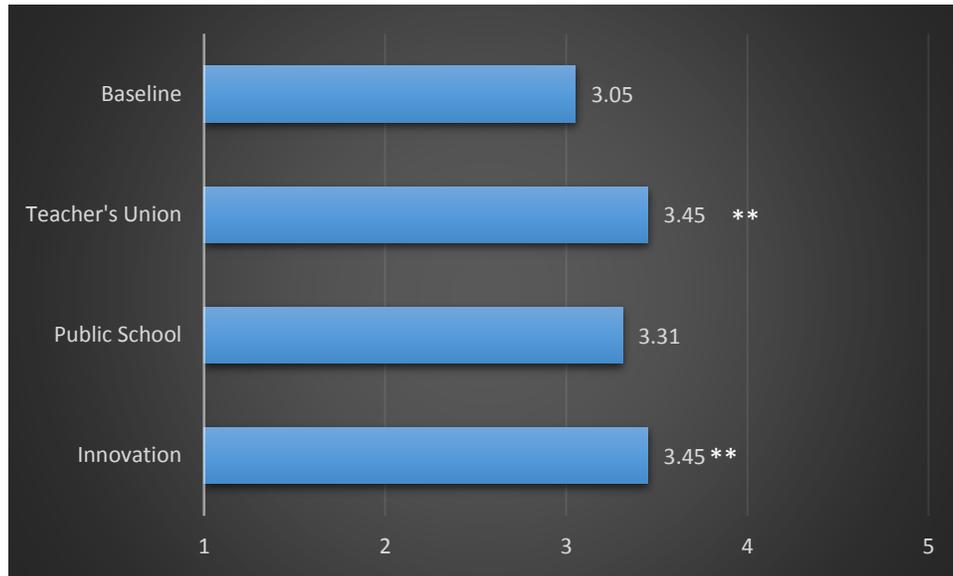
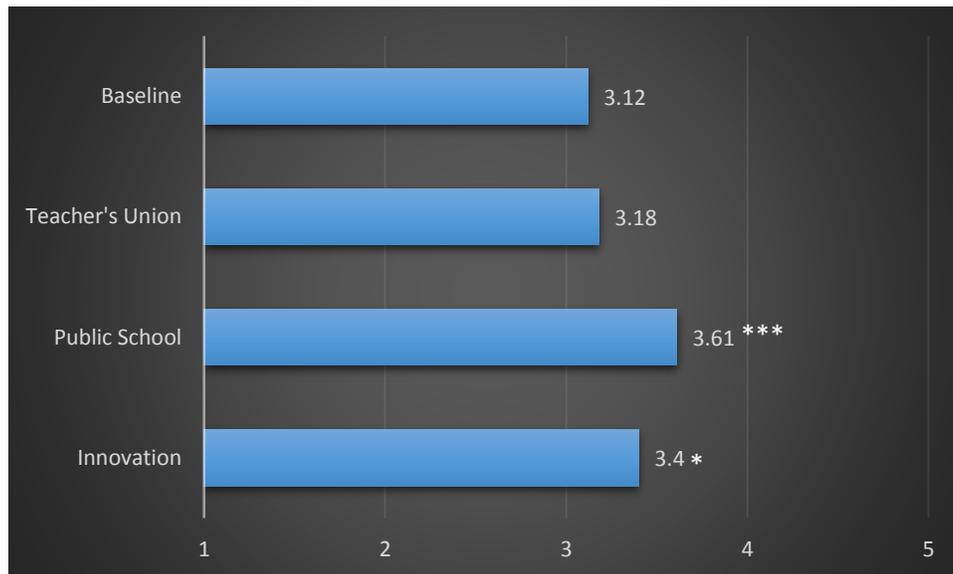


Figure 22. Charter School Message Average Response, Independent Respondents



Urbanicity

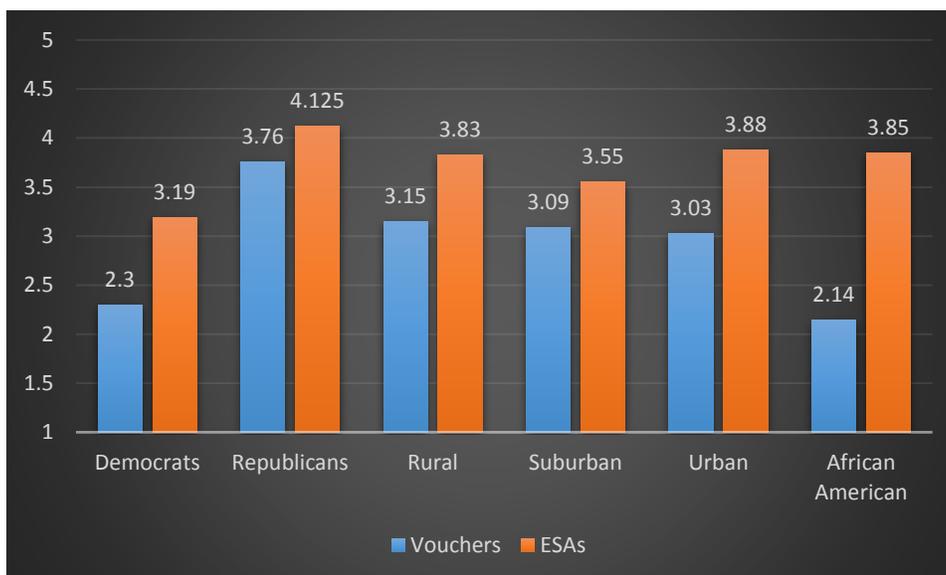
Among rural and suburban respondents, differences in support were found between conditions. Rural respondents became more supportive of charter schools when exposed to the teacher's union ($p < .05$) and innovation message ($p < .05$), while suburban voters were moved by the public school ($p < .01$) and innovation messages ($p < .1$).

Figure 23. Charter School Messages, Rural Respondents**Figure 24. Charter School Messages, Suburban**

ESA Programs

Among all subgroups under study, support for Education Savings Accounts (ESA) was higher than for traditional school voucher programs and charter schools. The figure below compares support for ESAs and vouchers among a number of subgroups of interest in the baseline, definitional condition.

Figure 25. Level of Support for ESAs and Vouchers by Subgroup



Of particular interest is the high level of baseline support among Democrats. What this suggests is that the issue of ESAs has not reached the level of partisan polarization that private school vouchers and charter schools have, and the opportunity for moving public debate on this topic through proper messaging.

We tested four messages on ESAs in addition to the baseline condition:

Baseline: Education savings accounts allow parents to receive a portion of the money that would have been spent on their children in a public school. The money can be used to fund tuition at a private school.

Tutoring: It can also be used for tutoring in a subject where a student needs extra help.

Therapy: It can also be used for therapy for a student struggling with special needs.

College: It can also be used to enroll a child in classes at a local college or university.

Online: It can also to pay for an online course not offered in the area.

Synopsis of Message Findings, ESAs

Subgroup	Tutoring	Therapy	College	Online
FEMALES			X	
HAVE CHILDREN			X	
HIGH INCOME				
INDEPENDENTS				
LOW INCOME				
MALES				
METRO MKE				
MIDDLE INCOME				
NO CHILDREN				
RURAL AREAS				
STATEWIDE			X	
STRONG DEM				
STRONG GOP				
SUBURBAN AREAS			X	
TOTAL DEM			X	
TOTAL GOP				
URBAN AREAS				
WEAK/LEAN DEM				
WEAK/LEAN GOP				
NON-WHITE				

Overall Results

Unlike in our voucher condition in which no messages significantly increased support in the aggregate, we do find that the “College” condition significantly increased support for ESAs overall, as depicted in the figure below.

Figure 26. Support and Strong Support for ESAs, All Respondents

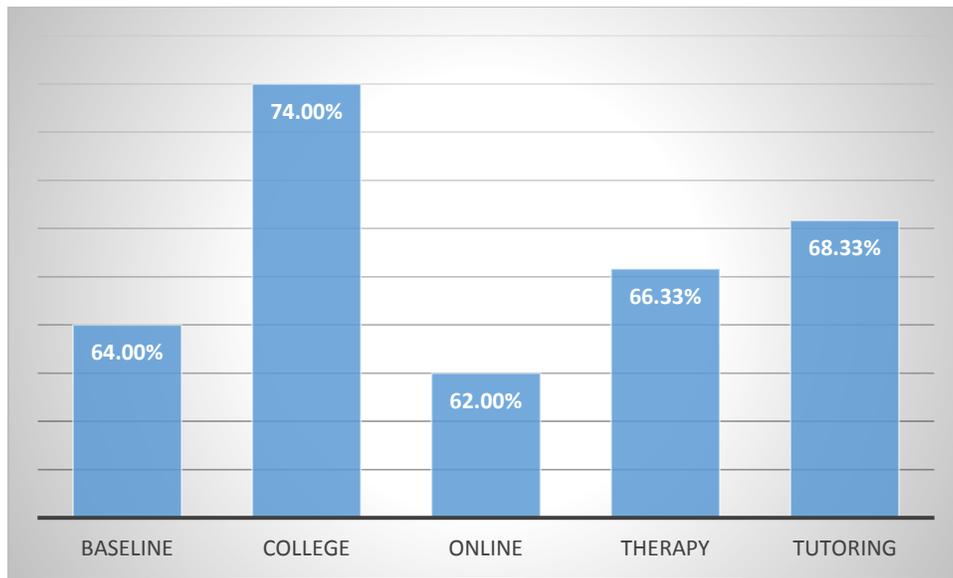
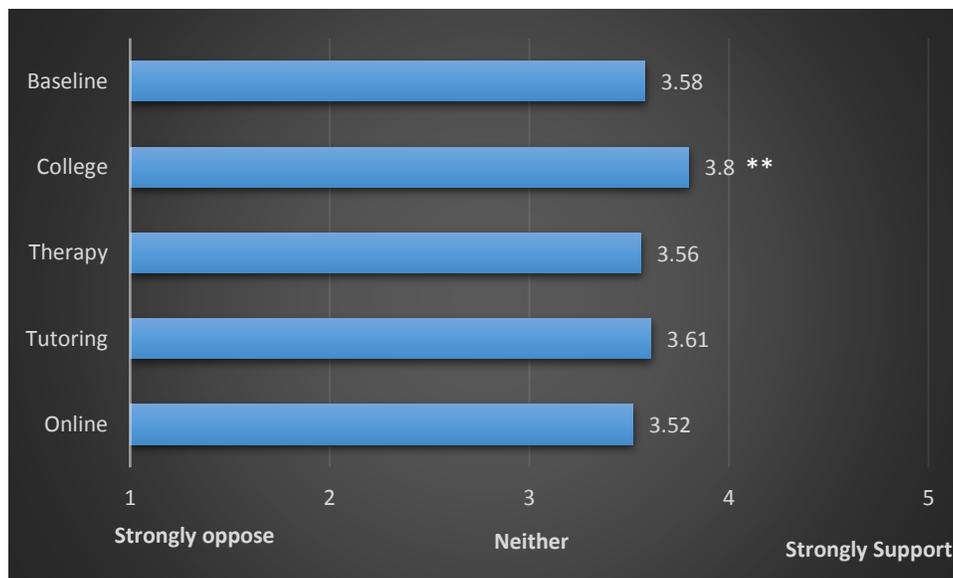


Figure 27. ESA Messages, Overall



Democrats

Democrats are the driver of the high performance of the college message. Democratic respondents in that condition moved .53 on the 5-point scale of support. This difference was statistically and substantively significant ($p < .05$).

Figure 28. Support or Strong Support for ESAs by Messages, Democrats

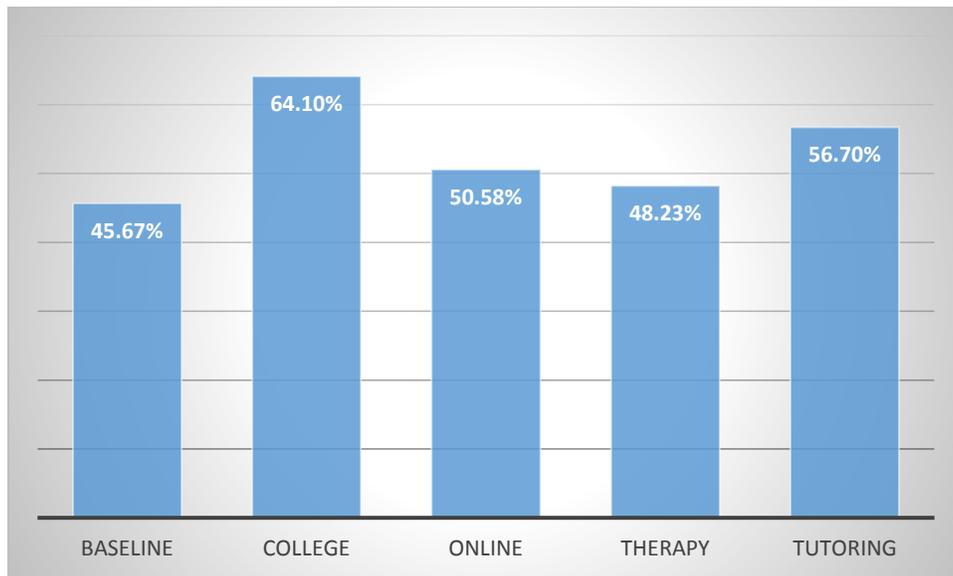
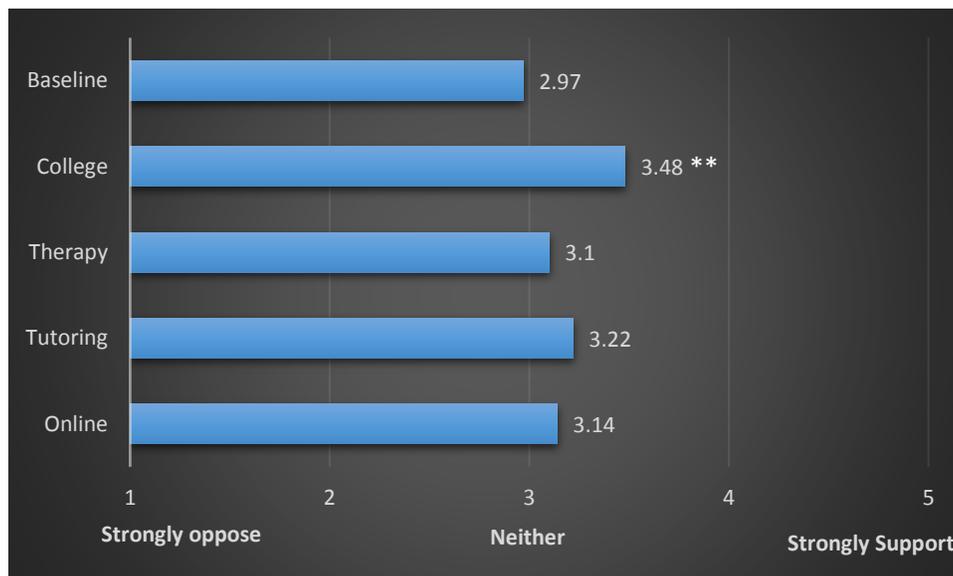


Figure 29. ESA Message Average Response, Democratic Respondents

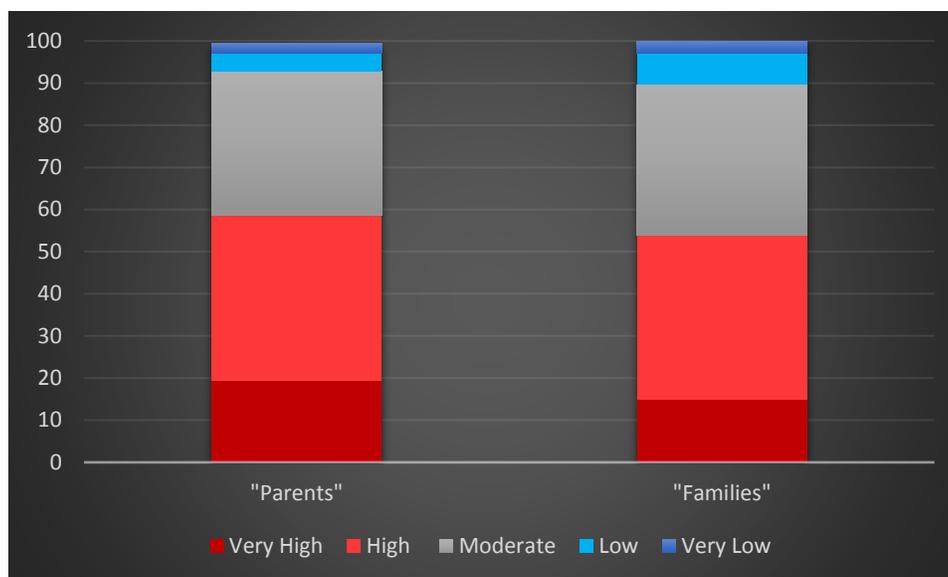


Parents vs Families in Messaging

There has been discussion in recent years regarding whether it is preferable to message school choice using the language of “parents” or “families.” We tested this experimentally. Half of respondents were chosen at random to be asked about their level of trust in families, while half of respondents were asked about their trust in parents. The percentage differences in terms of trust are relatively small – approximately 53.95% of respondents either “very high level of trust” or a

“high level of trust” in the “families” condition compared with 58.66% in the “parents” condition. Nonetheless, this difference is statistically significant ($p < .01$).

Figure 30. Share of Respondents in Each Category, Parents vs. Family Trust



A number of subgroup analyses were run to determine if there was variation in this expressed level of trust along racial, economic, or gender lines. However, each of these analyses yielded the same or null findings.³ While this does not preclude the possibility that the use of the “families” language may be more effective in some regions, it suggests that the more traditional parent language should not be abandoned.

Public Schools as the Center of the Community

We asked respondents “How important is your local public school to your community’s identity?” A striking share of respondents – 89.7% – said that the local school was either “important” or “very important” to that identity. Belief in schools as central to community identity is an important predictor of support for school choice, even independent of party identity. The Table below regresses this community identity variable on support for school choice across all three of our randomizations.⁴

Table 2. Effect of School Identity on Support for School Choice

VARIABLES	(1) Voucher Support	(2) ESA Support	(3) Charter Support
School Identity	-0.172***	-0.0536	-0.138***

³ Among female respondents, the difference in the level of trust was statically 0, meaning that male respondents drive the identified differences. All other subgroups analyzed showed the same higher level of trust for parents.

⁴ Because this table is using control variables rather than experimental data, the survey weights for this study are included. The results do not vary substantively based on the use of the weights.

	(0.0530)	(0.0439)	(0.0508)
Republican	0.807***	0.461***	0.646***
	(0.0951)	(0.0832)	(0.0907)
Democrat	-0.683***	-0.455***	-0.420***
	(0.107)	(0.101)	(0.106)
African American	0.516*	0.690***	0.546*
	(0.299)	(0.222)	(0.280)
Urbanicity	-0.150**	-0.127**	-0.0480
	(0.0640)	(0.0594)	(0.0612)
Income	-0.107***	0.00860	0.00284
	(0.0230)	(0.0210)	(0.0220)
Constant	4.803***	4.113***	3.973***
	(0.307)	(0.262)	(0.298)
Observations	1,234	1,234	1,234
R-squared	0.154	0.070	0.085

Standard errors in parentheses

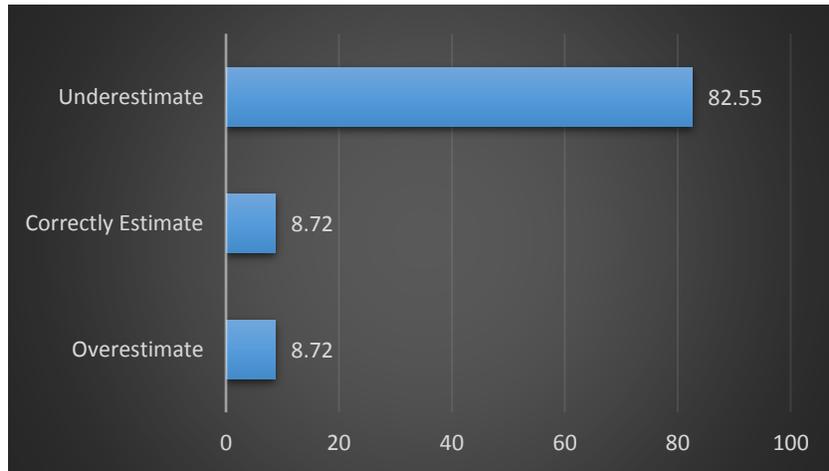
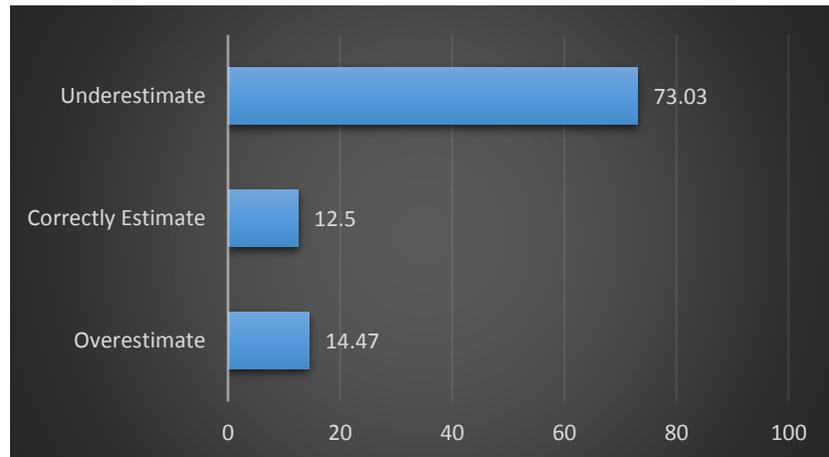
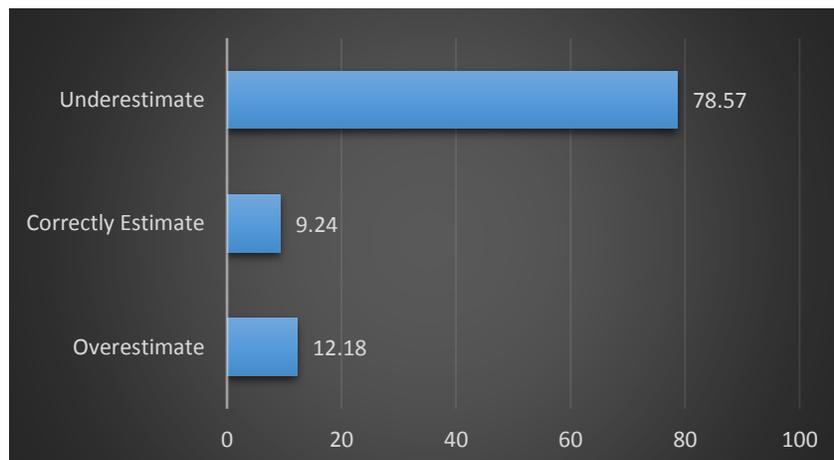
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

For both vouchers and Charter schools, belief in the centrality of the public school is negatively predictive of support for choice ($p<.01$). But it is interesting to note the exception to this finding – ESAs. Among this set of respondents, support for ESAs does not necessarily conflict with identification with local public schools. Once again, this reinforces the there is still room to build support around the concept of ESAs that may not exist in the more ideologically-hardened charter and voucher sectors.

K-12 School Spending

Respondents were asked to estimate the amount of money that was spent on the average public school student from state and local sources. For the 2016-17 school year, the average spending per student in Wisconsin from these sources was \$10,439. We give a wide range for a “correct” estimate of school funding. Respondents who were between \$10,000 and \$12,000 were deemed to have provided a correct answer. Those who responded with amounts less than \$10,000 were said to have underestimated funding, and those who said more than \$12,000 were said to have overestimated. There were significant differences along partisan lines in the share of respondents who underestimated, overestimated, or correctly estimated the level of spending. That said, across the board the vast majority of respondents underestimated school spending.

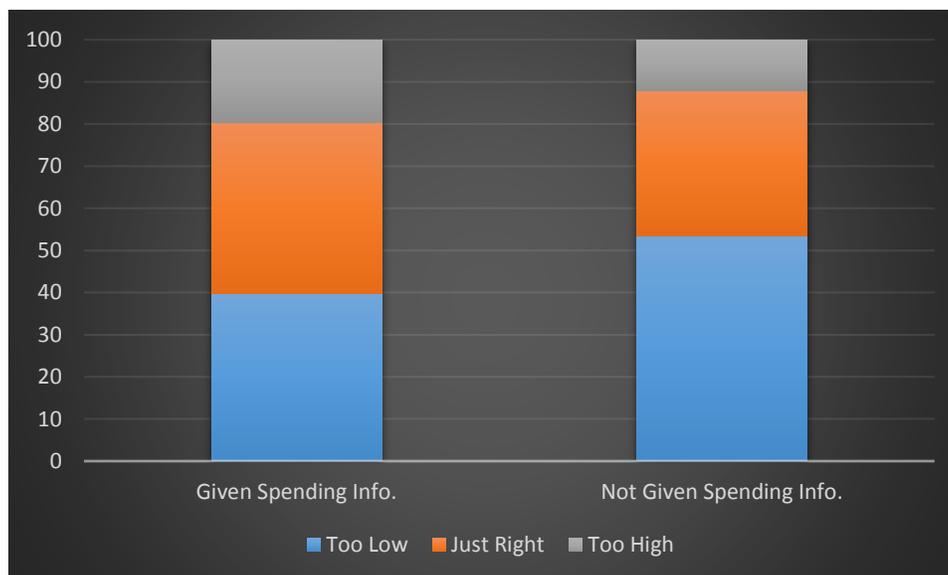
Among Democrats, approximately 82.55% of respondents underestimated the amount of spending per student, while only 8.72% fell into the correct range. Republicans were significantly less likely to underestimate spending, but underestimation was still the case for more than 73% of Republican respondents. 12.5% of Republicans responded in the correct range, a statistically significantly higher portion than Democratic or Independent respondents ($p<.05$). Independent respondents fell somewhat in the middle – more likely to underestimate spending than Republicans, but less likely to underestimate than Democrats.

Figure 31. Knowledge of Per Student Spending, Democrats**Figure 32. Knowledge of Per Students Spending, Republicans****Figure 33. Knowledge of Per Student Spending, Independents**

While differences along partisan lines may be interesting from the perspective of political science, what these results show, in general, is that very few people have an understanding of how much we are already spending on public schools. So what happens if we provide people with that information?

Our next experiment involved randomly assigning respondents to receive information about the average spending per pupil in the state or no information. We followed random assignment of this information by asking all respondents whether they thought public school spending was “too high,” “too low,” or just right. Across all partisan subgroups, providing the true amount of school funding decreased the share of respondents who believed spending was too high to a statistically significant extent ($p < .01$).

Figure 34. Funding Level Opinion With and Without Funding Information



Perhaps strikingly, this finding holds across partisan subgroups. Democrats, Republicans, and Independents all move in the direction of saying that school funding levels are “just right” or “too high” when information is provided. This is further evidence that people do not have a good understanding of the level of spending that currently exists in the state, and the need for those who think that current spending levels are sufficient to do a better job of providing people with information on the topic.

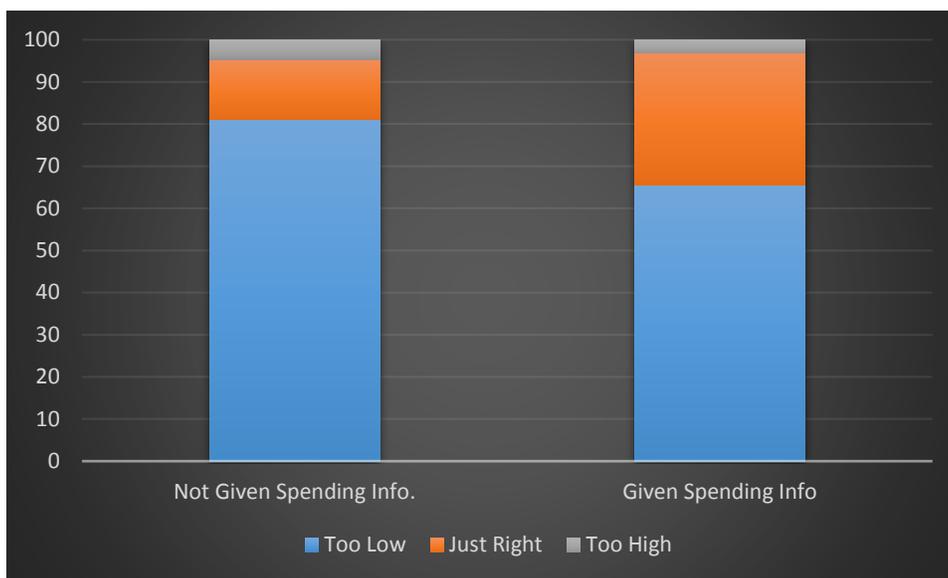
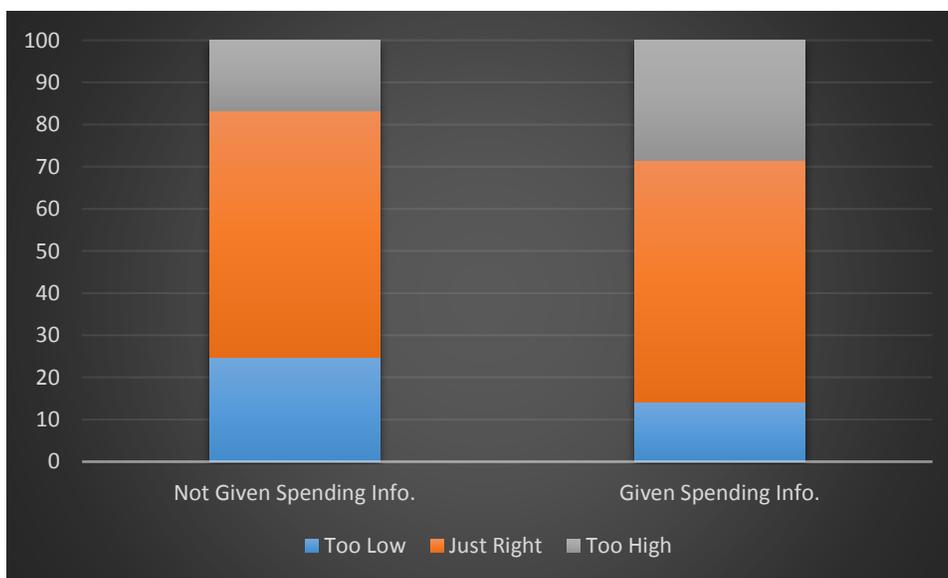
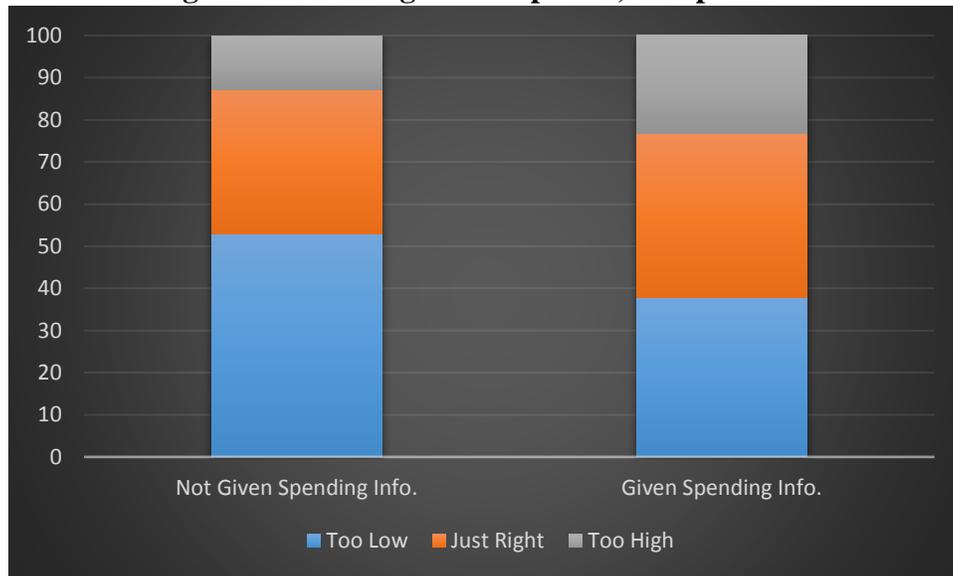
Figure 35. Funding Level Opinion, Democrats**Figure 36. Funding Level Opinion, Republicans**

Figure 37. Funding Level Opinion, Independents

This also holds in rural and suburban areas, but movement toward saying spending is “sufficient” or “too high” does not occur in urban areas.

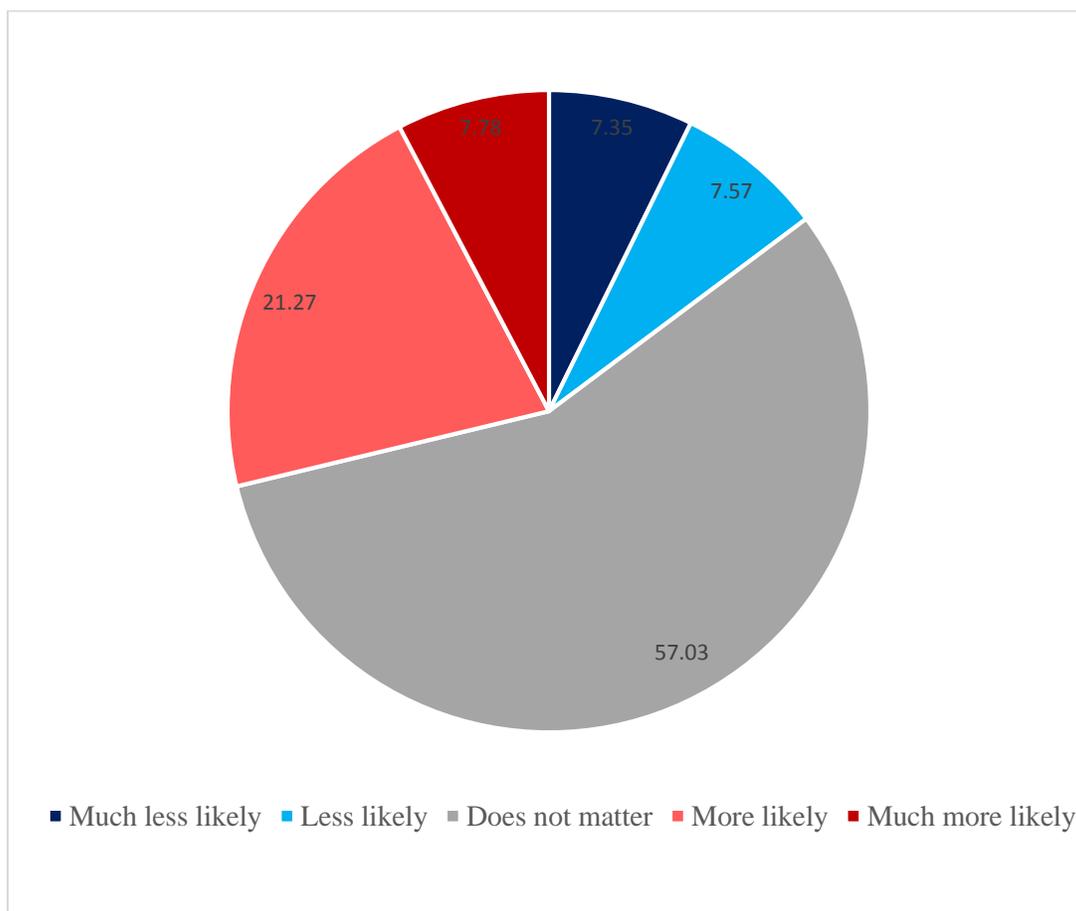
Walker Approval & School Funding

Under the budget passed in 2017, school funding will be at the highest levels ever in the state of Wisconsin in the 2018-19 school year, even accounting for inflation. Does the Governor benefit from this heightened funding? To answer this question, we informed respondents about the record level of funding in the state:

Last year, Governor Walker proposed and signed a budget that provides record high education spending for students in Wisconsin.

Respondents were then asked if this fact made them more likely, less likely, or made no difference in their likelihood of supporting Governor Walker. The pie chart below depicts responses to that prompt. Note that this is a non-experimental finding, as no randomization occurred.

Figure 38. Effect of Record Spending Fact on Walker Approval



29% of respondents said they were more likely or much more likely to support Governor Walker in light of this fact. While 14.13% said they were less likely to support him. Among independents, 26.48% said they would be more likely to support him while 14.63% said less likely. Only among Democrats were the percentages reversed – 20.49% of Democrats reported

they would be less likely to support Walker while only 15.86% said they would be more likely. This is suggestive of motivated reasoning on the part of some respondents, where contrary information is difficult to accept, and suggests the need for further highlighting of this fact for Walker supporters.

The share of voters in rural and suburban areas who say that knowledge of spending increases makes them more likely to support Walker is statistically indistinguishable at about 25%. However, this share is significantly higher than the share made more likely to support Walker in urban areas – about 18%.

Figure 39. Effect of Record School Spending on Walker Approval, Rural Areas

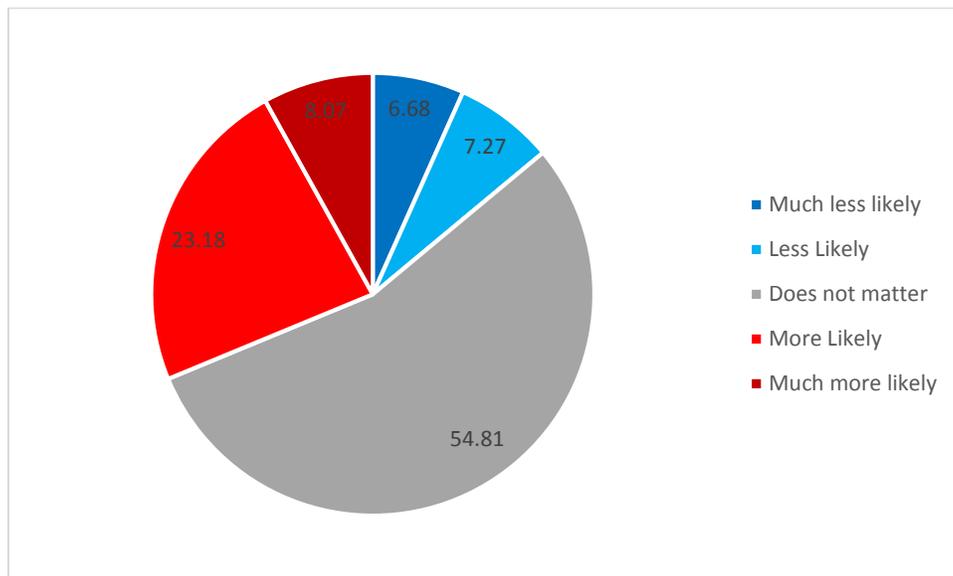


Figure 40. Effect of Record School Spending on Walker Approval, Suburban Areas

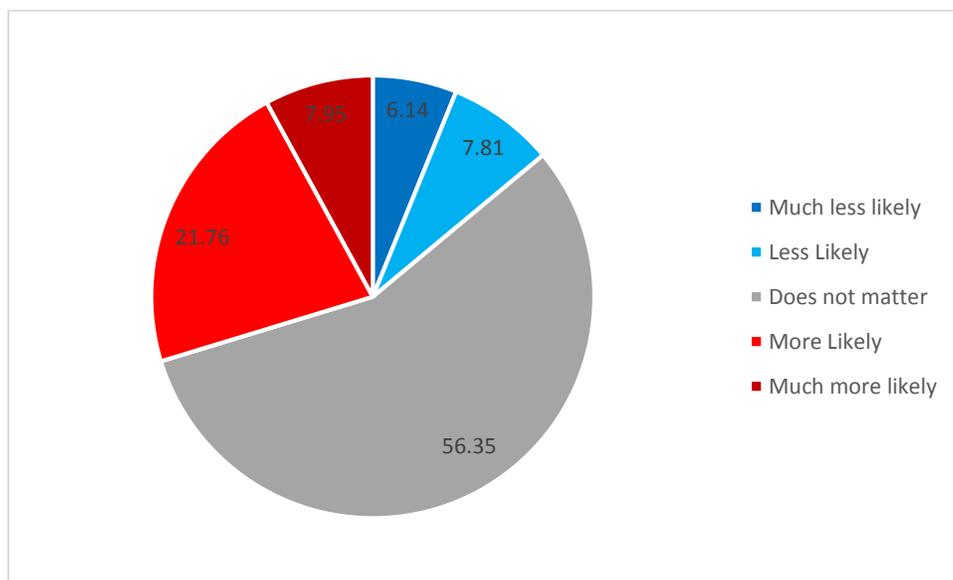
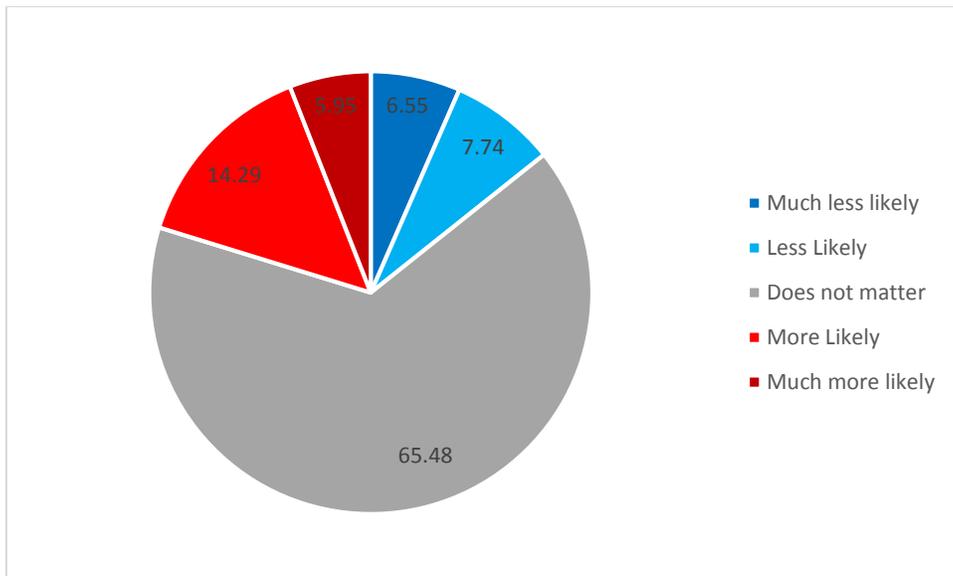


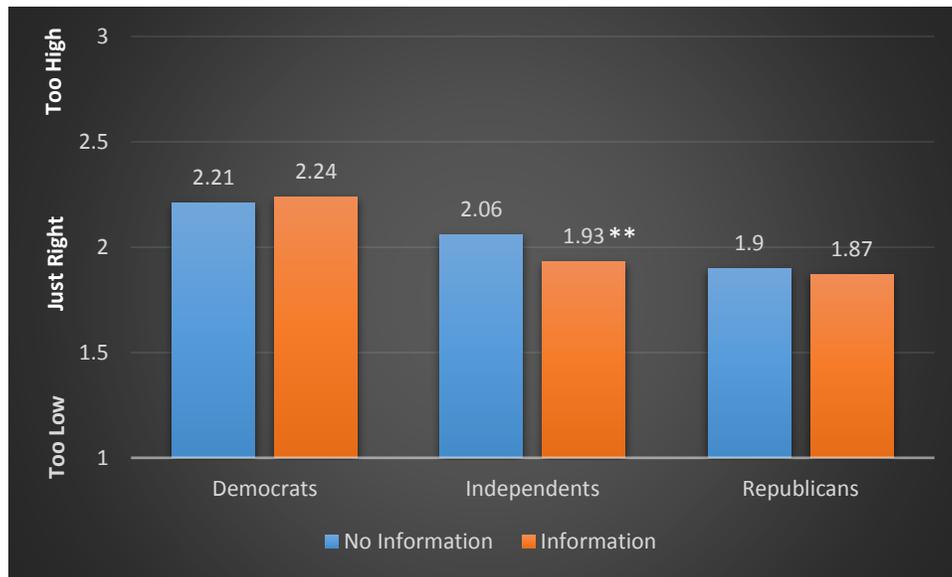
Figure 41. Effect of More School Spending on Walker Approval, Urban Areas



Public School Funding & School Choice Funding

Following our randomization into information regarding public school funding, *all* respondents were provided with the amount of the private school voucher during the 2016-17 school year: \$7,323 for K-8 Schools and \$7,969 for grades 9-12. While providing information about true public school spending is effective across partisan subgroups at moving perceptions of spending, it is less so for choice spending. That said, we still observed a significant increase in the number of independent voters saying that choice spending was “too low” or “just right” following exposure to information on public school spending.

Figure 42. Opinion on Voucher Funding and Information on Public School Funding



Act 10

In one of the final sets of questions on our survey, we asked respondents about their beliefs regarding the impact of Act 10 – Wisconsin’s collective bargaining reform. Because this portion of the survey did not involve randomization into various messages, the results are reported with a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$. We asked two questions about the legislation’s impact on two groups: students and teachers. On both questions, Wisconsinites are still firmly divided along partisan lines. Republicans are more likely to say that Act 10 has had a positive impact on students than other partisan groups ($p < .01$). Independents fall in the middle, but still are less likely to say that the impact of Act 10 was positive to a statistically significant degree ($p < .01$).

Figure 43. Act 10 Effect on Students by Party ID

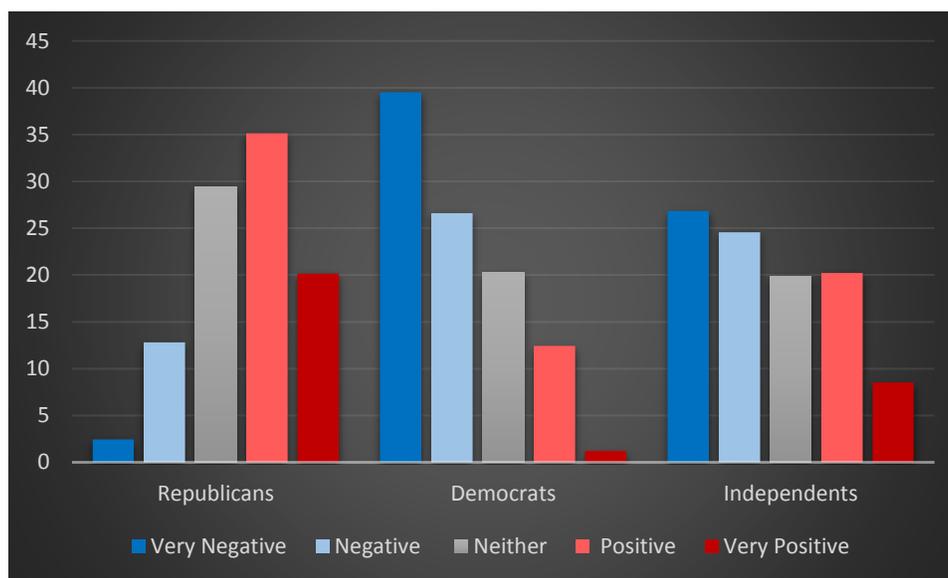


Figure 44. Act 10 Effect on Teachers by Party ID

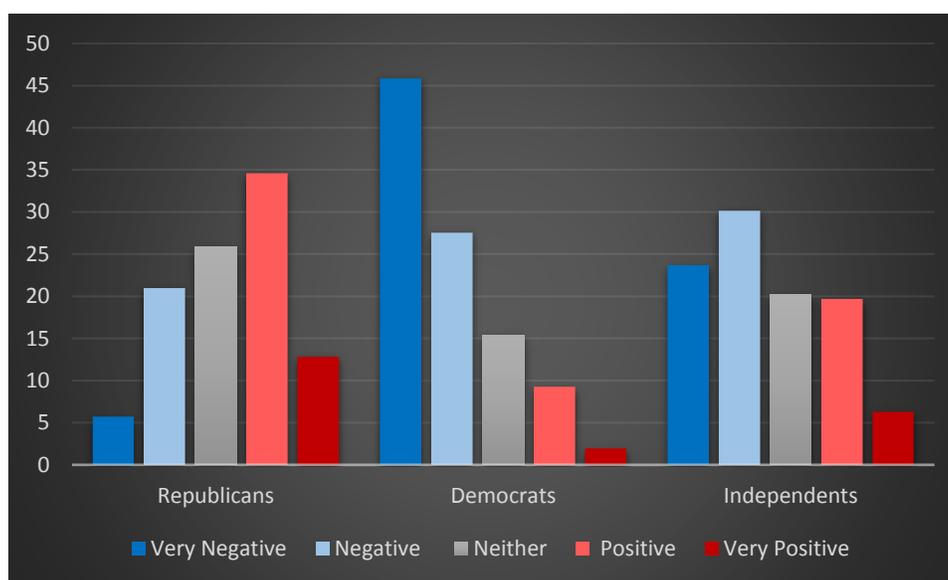
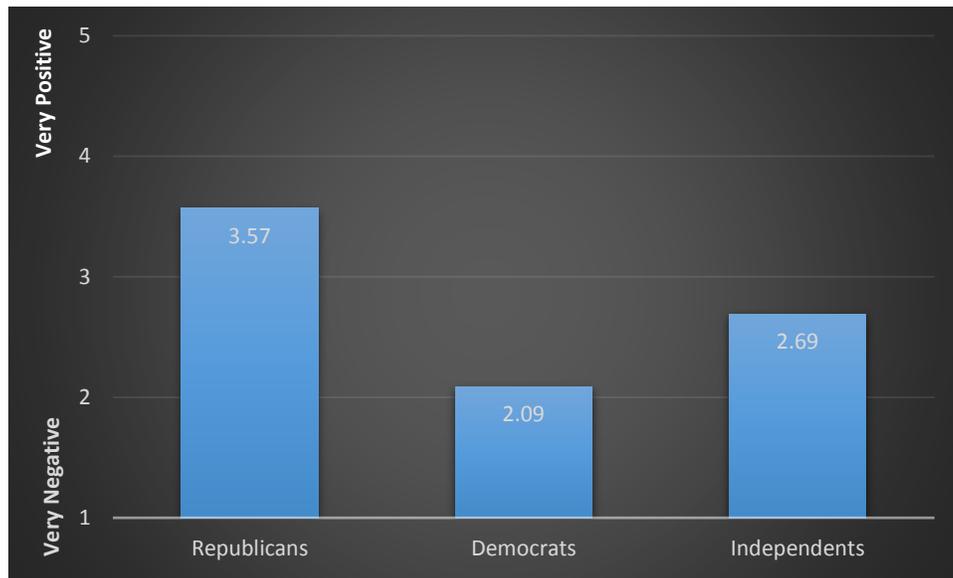
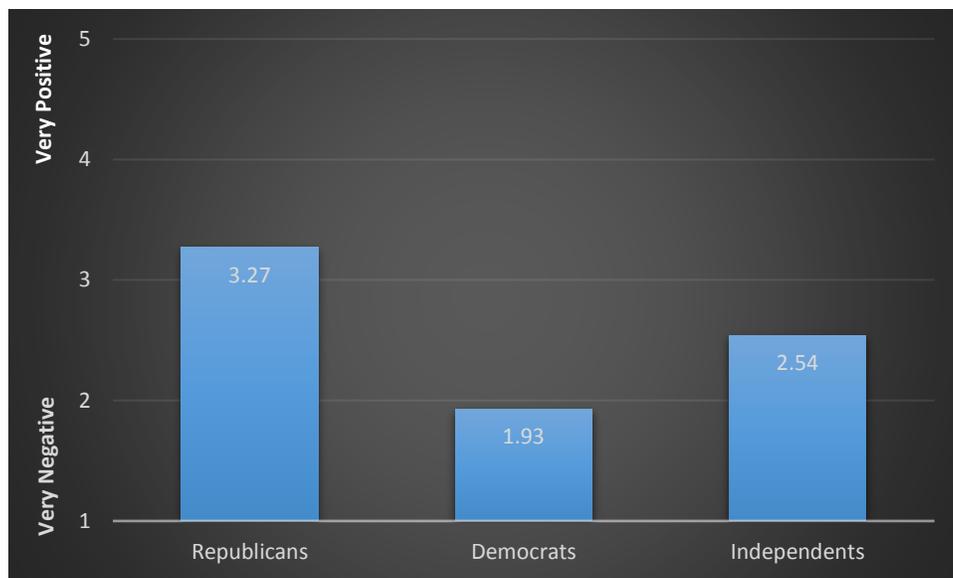


Figure 45. Impact of Act 10 on Students Average Response, by Party ID



The results for the impact of Act 10 on teachers are similar, though slightly more negative in every case. Republicans are the only group for which the average respondent is above the “neither positive or negative effect” position.

Figure 46. Impact of Act 10 on Teachers Average Response, by Party ID



The share of respondents who say that Act 10 has had a particular effect on students and teachers does not vary significantly along lines of urbanicity.

Conclusions

This survey experiment has further illuminated a number of key points about messaging school choice in Wisconsin and around the country. Most issues of school choice in this state are divided firmly along partisan lines, with Republicans supportive of reform and Democrats hesitant to move away from traditional public education. That said, ESAs represent a new version of school choice about which opinions are far less crystallized. The opportunity may still exist to shape the debate on this topic, and influence traditional opponents of reform towards support.