

Searching for Common Ground

Widespread Support for Public Schools but Substantial Partisan Divides About Teaching Contested Topics

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Executive Summary

Given the recent heated controversies about the topics educators teach, the books children have available and are assigned in schools, and parents’ degree of influence over both, our University of Southern California (USC) research team viewed a need to probe deeply into the public’s attitudes and opinions on these complex issues. This is the second assessment in what we hope will become an annual look at Americans’ views on the most pressing educational topics.

In September and October 2023, we fielded a survey—composed of questions addressing the premises and purposes of public education, potentially contentious issues in U.S. schools, and parental control over their children’s education—to the [Understanding America Study’s](#) (UAS) nationally representative, longitudinal panel of American households. With a response rate of 81%, our responding sample included 3,905 adults, 49% of whom resided with at least one K-12 child in the home. Forty percent of the sample identified as Democrat or lean Democrat (D), 34% as Republican or lean Republican (R), and 27% identified as independent or belonging to another political party, such as Green or Libertarian. (For purposes of this document, we label the third group as “Other.”)

Building on 2022 survey findings

Our 2022 report showed resistance to the inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/ Questioning (LGBTQ) topics in the curriculum, with bipartisan opposition to teaching them in elementary school, but partisan divergence in high school, with Democratic support and Republican disapproval. Adults support teaching about race-related topics in high school, though Republicans oppose teaching elementary students about racial inequality. Adults overall support sex education in high school, but not in elementary school.

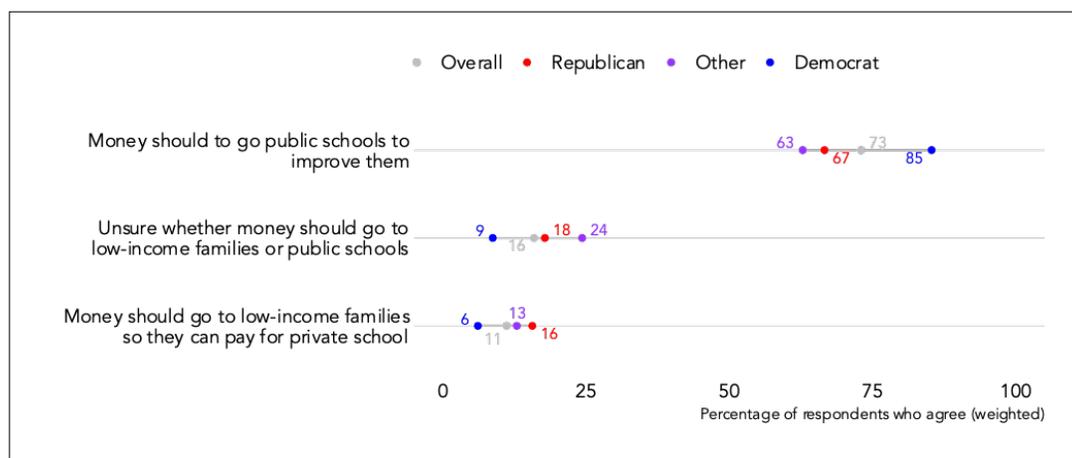
We designed our 2023 survey to deepen our understanding of the specific classroom scenarios related to LGBTQ gender and sexuality, race, and sex education that Americans support or don’t in public schools, and why or why not. We also wanted to better comprehend how adults think parents should respond when they disagree with a teacher’s lesson, and how educators should react to parents’ concerns. Given the connections of school-choice policies to curriculum and parents’ control over such, another objective was to improve understanding of perspectives about market forces and education. As a throughline connecting the topics addressed, we asked adults to rate the importance of various potential purposes of public education.

Here, we summarize high-level takeaways of our report. In the full report, we frame, elaborate upon, and discuss the implications of the results presented in this Executive Summary.

Clear bipartisan support for public schools and their purposes

When asked to choose between spending public education funds to improve the quality of public schools or giving these funds to low-income families so they can pay for their children to attend private school, we found overwhelming bipartisan support for spending to improve the quality of public schools (Figure ES1). Adults across the political spectrum feel improving public schools is a better use of public funds than providing families with vouchers or education savings accounts. Results also demonstrated strong support across the distribution of household income.

FIGURE ES1. ADULTS' PREFERRED USE OF FUNDS BETWEEN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND GIVING MONEY TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES TO PAY FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL, OVERALL AND BY POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION.



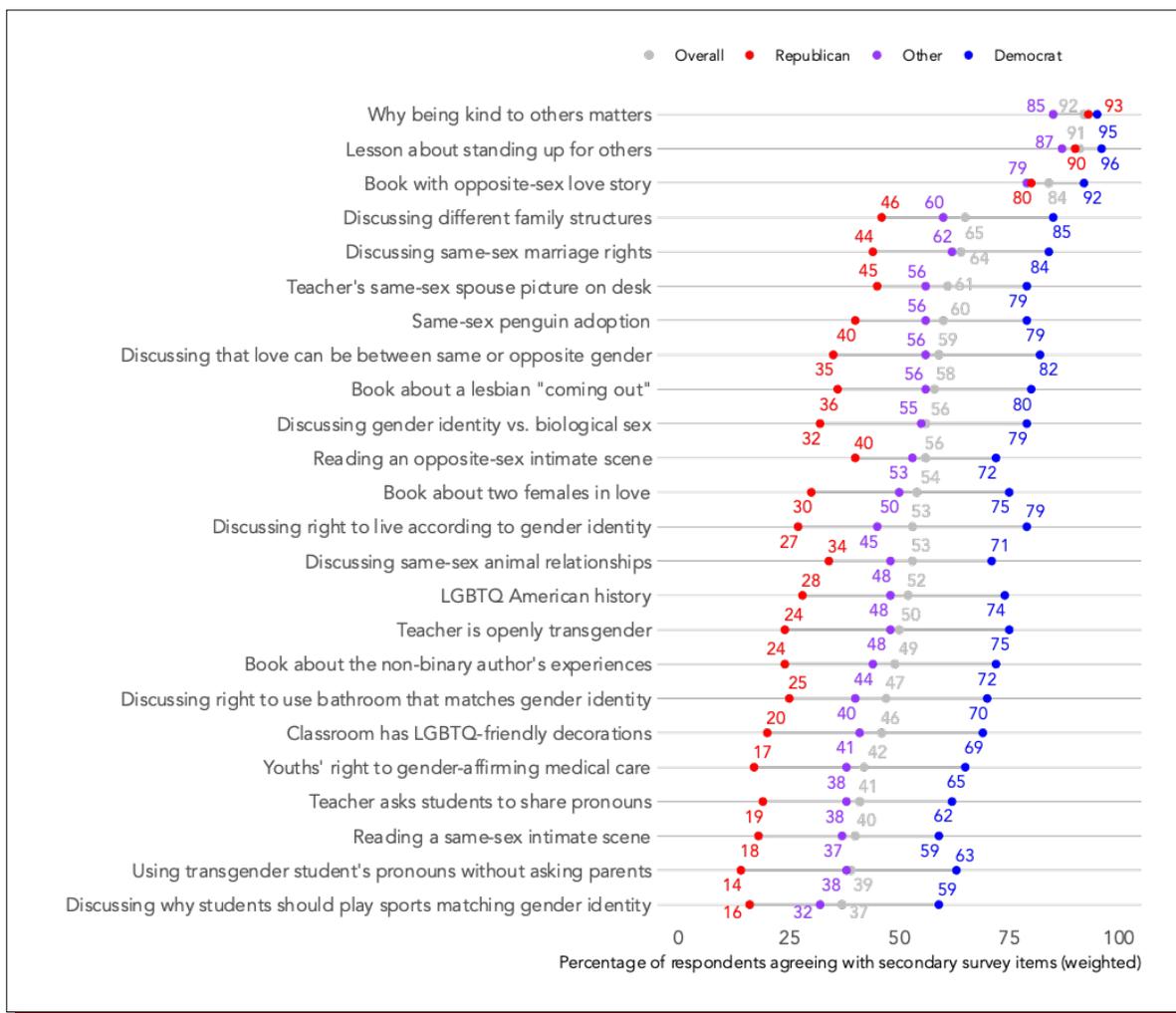
We also found strong bipartisan agreement about seven of 12 potential purposes of public schools, including teaching children to read, write, and do math, as well as about government and other civics topics, offering free education to every child, and positioning children to have a financially secure future.

The purpose with the greatest partisan difference in support was “Teaching children the importance of embracing differences,” with three-quarters of Democrats selecting this purpose as very important versus only one-third of Republicans. This difference in support for this purpose provides essential context for other results presented throughout the report.

Average levels of support for the inclusion of LGBTQ-related scenarios in schools mask large, meaningful differences by party affiliation

With bipartisan agreement, a majority of adults oppose most of the 24 LGBTQ scenarios we asked about in elementary schools. Although Democrats approve of 10 scenarios in elementary school and all 24 in high school, Republicans approve of none at any grade level. Those who identify as neither Democrats nor Republicans fall in between, approving of none in elementary school and of half the scenarios in high school (Figure ES2). None of the items related to trans issues receive overall majority approval for either elementary or high school.

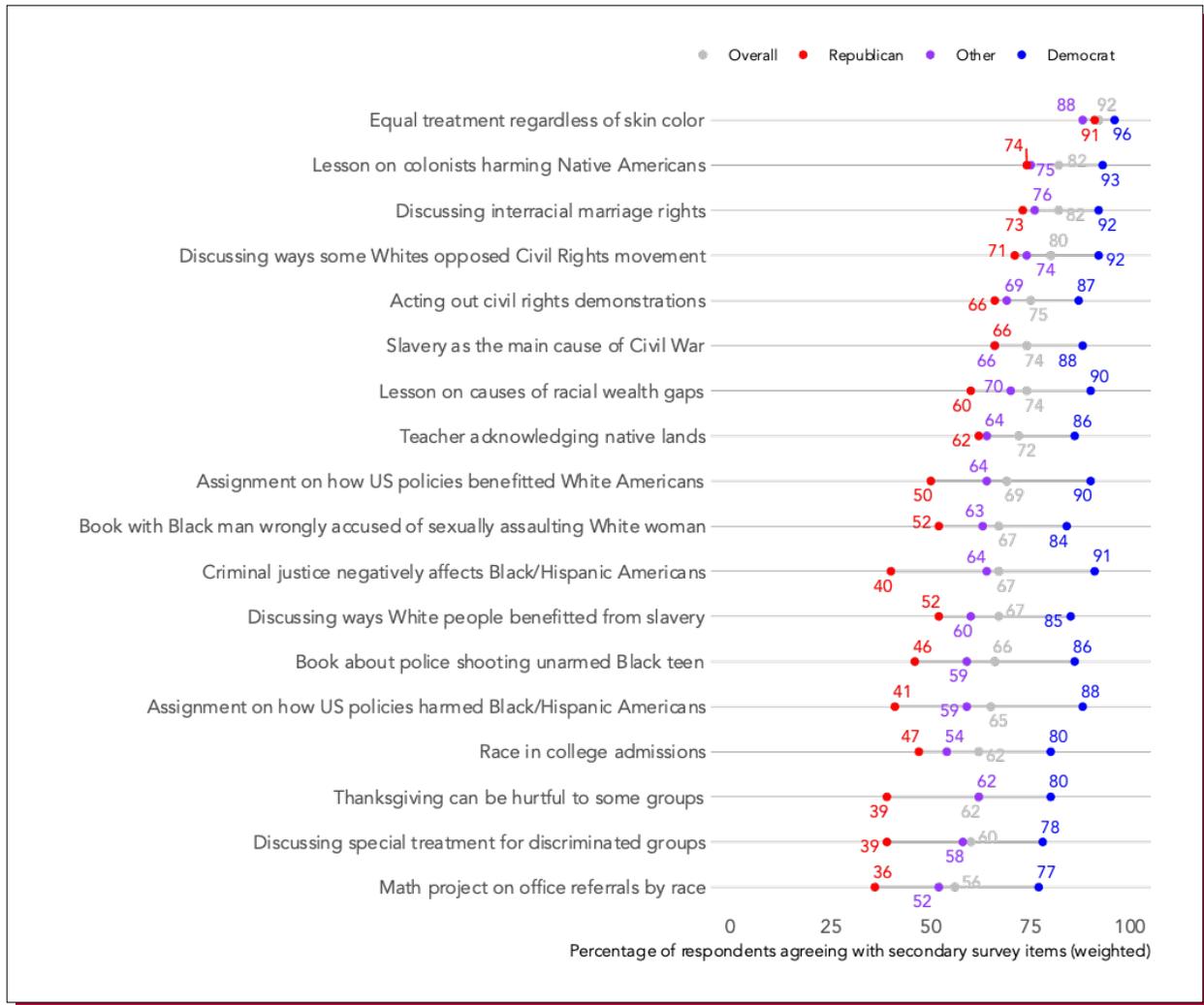
FIGURE ES2. PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION AGREEING LGBTQ CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ARE APPROPRIATE IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.



Overall support is low for teaching in elementary school about racial discrimination or slavery as the cause of the Civil War, with little Republican support for teaching at any level about current racial inequality

A majority of Democrats support elementary children learning about slavery, civil rights, and race-based inequality, while most Republicans do not. For students in high school, the majority of adults support addressing most race-related topics (Figure ES3). However, while majorities of Democrats and Other think high school students should be learning about current racial inequality, many Republicans do not.

FIGURE ES3. PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION AGREEING RACE-RELATED CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ARE APPROPRIATE IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.



We also observed enormous partisan differences about concern for making children feel guilty about racial injustices, with Republicans concerned and Democrats not (see Figure 14). The perception that current approaches to teaching about racial issues in schools may cause guilt could be a driving factor in the pushback against addressing these topics in schools.

As a potential way forward, we observed bipartisan support (greater than 60% across political groups) for children reading books by authors from racial minority groups because those books provide different experiences and perspectives (also see Figure 14).

Bipartisan majorities support a range of activities parents can take when they disagree with content their child is learning in school ...

Lack of consensus around how to resolve disagreement about curriculum content

Bipartisan majorities support a range of activities parents can take when they disagree with content their child is learning in school, including sharing reasons for their disagreement with their child, teacher, and/or school board leadership, requesting the teacher allow the child to miss that content, and asking the teacher to change the lesson in the future.

However, there is a striking lack of agreement about how schools should adjudicate situations in which a parent voices disagreement with a lesson, and when parents also disagree with each other about what ought to be done. This disagreement is not partisan, meaning there isn't a clear way forward regarding how the public thinks schools should respond to parents' concerns about curriculum.

Language articulating the potential negative consequences of opting students out makes adults less supportive of asking the teacher for a different activity for a child

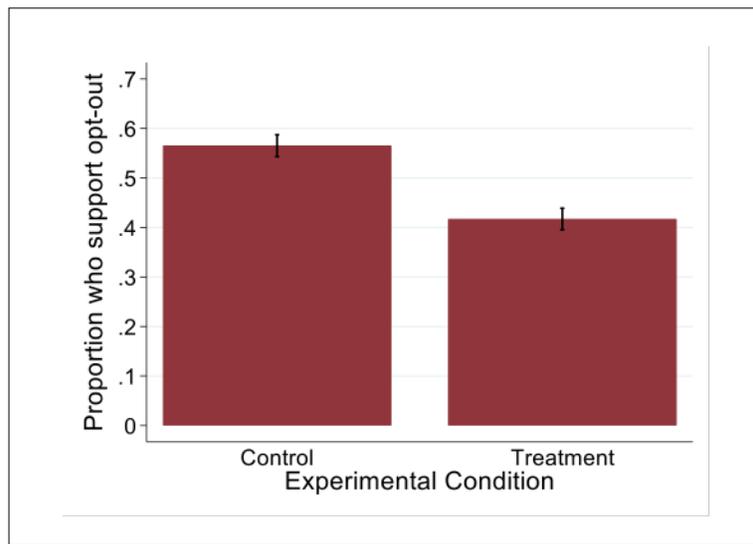
To learn about the potential malleability of adults' stated support for parents having the option of removing their child from a lesson they find objectionable, we shared with a random half of the

sample a statement mentioning logistical downsides of opt-outs as well as the upsides of children learning from diverse perspectives:

But the teacher believes that all students should participate, because learning about content they might not otherwise hear or learn about helps them. They may see a new perspective, learn to be a critical thinker, or simply learn an important new fact. And, it can be hard for a teacher to accommodate every parent's wishes for every lesson for every child.

The statement affected adults' beliefs about opting-out children from content with which the parent disagrees (Figure ES4). The 16-percentage point difference amounts to a nearly 30% reduction in the proportion of adults who support selective parental opt-out after reading just a few sentences. The statement is no more or less effective for Republicans, Democrats, or Other.

FIGURE ES4. THE IMPACT OF SHARING WITH ADULTS THE BENEFITS OF CHILDREN LEARNING ABOUT ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES AND DRAWBACKS OF OPTING OUT.



Introduction

Tensions over what children learn and who decides it have been prominent recently throughout the United States. Often focused on “[parents’ rights](#),” legislation introduced in 2023 promotes transparency into the topics their children are learning in school. In Republican-controlled states, these bills frequently feature the right for parents to opt their children out of classroom content with which they disagree, particularly related to topics of race and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) gender and/or sexuality. In Virginia, pundits attributed [GOP Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s 2021 victory](#) to his support for increased parental rights. However, in the state’s off-year mid-term elections in fall 2023, Republicans lost control of the House of Delegates while failing to flip the Senate, as Youngkin’s previous success didn’t carry over. Meanwhile, school board elections throughout America resulted in numerous defeats for conservative candidates running on the parents’ rights platform, suggesting a possible shift nationally regarding voters’ views of the appropriate level of parental control over curriculum addressing potentially contentious content.

Book restrictions also have become more prominent, now expanding beyond libraries and classrooms in schools to public libraries. Between January and August 2023, the [American Library Association](#) tracked attempted restrictions of nearly 2,000 individual titles in public libraries—the most since they began tracking around 20 years ago. [PEN America](#), another organization tracking book restrictions, reported nearly 3,500 cases of book removals from classrooms and/or school libraries across 1,500 unique titles. Florida and Texas lead the nation in book removals from schools, though current lawsuits combatting restrictions are taking place there, as well as in Arkansas. From both public libraries and schools, most of the restricted books are written about the experiences of, or by, LGBTQ people and/or people of color.

Reflecting, and in response to, the dramatic increases in attempted and actual restrictions, in early fall 2023, education publisher Scholastic Corporation separated out schoolbooks related to LGBTQ issues and non-white races into their new “Share Every Story, Celebrate Every Voice” category. Scholastic’s decision to allow schools to opt out of offering this new category received [a great deal of media attention](#), with considerable backlash from more liberal sources. Scholastic then reversed its decision on Oct. 24, announced through a [public apology letter from Scholastic’s president](#), abandoning separation of “diverse titles.”

Given the heated controversy over the past year about the topics educators teach, the books children have available in schools, and parents' control over both, our University of Southern California (USC) research team saw a need for a detailed understanding of the public's perspectives on these issues. This is the second in what we hope will become an annual look at Americans' views on some of the most pressing educational topics of our time. For a summary of last year's survey results, see the box below.

To dig deeper into these issues we first investigated and shared in our fall 2022 [report](#), we again harnessed the [Understanding America Study \(UAS\)](#) panel, a nationally representative, longitudinal survey panel of American households. For both the 2022 and 2023 surveys, from the overall UAS panel of 13,000+ households, we selected a subsample of households with K-12 children; these households have been responding to our other education-related surveys during the last several years. We also selected an additional random subsample of households without children living in the home.

For the current survey, we developed new questions informed by 2022 results and current education issues prominent over the past year. We collected responses from Sept. 19 to Oct. 29, 2023, inviting 4,896 households and achieving a response rate of 81% (n=3,905). Our final sample included 1,763 households

- In October 2022, our report shed light on what a nationally representative sample of more than 3,500 U.S. adults—those with and without K-12 children living in the household—think about schoolchildren being taught lessons related to, or inclusive of, race, civics, and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) topics.
- We found that a plurality of U.S. adults, sometimes a majority depending on the topic, don't know much about what's being taught in schools. They know very little about Critical Race Theory (CRT) despite the prominence of the term in recent political discourse.
- Adults want high school students to learn about many potentially contested topics, including different sides of the issues we asked about (e.g., pro-life and pro-choice, gun control and Second Amendment rights). This is true across the political spectrum on a broad range of 24 civics-related topics.

with at least one K-12 child living in the home, and 2,142 households without children currently in the home¹. By partisan affiliation—as asked at the end of the present survey—40% of the sample identified as Democrat or lean Democrat (D), 34% identified as Republican or lean Republican (R), and 27% identified as independent or belonging to another political party, such as Green or Libertarian. (For purposes of this document, the third group is labeled as “Other.”)

We specifically asked respondents about the following topics:

- **Purposes of education.** As context for understanding adults’ beliefs about U.S. public schools’ roles teaching potentially contested topics, we asked them to rate the importance of various potential purposes of public education.

- However, most adults do not want elementary school students to learn about topics related to income inequality, immigrant rights, voter rights, or sexual education.
- The largest partisan differences we found were related to whether adults think children at both elementary and high school levels should be learning about LGBTQ topics. For high school, support is low among Republicans (below 40% across four items) and high among Democrats (between 80-86%); at the elementary level, support is moderate among Democrats (40-50%) but minimal among Republicans (approximately 10%).
- Adults are more comfortable with book availability in the school library than books assigned to read in class or independently for homework, with big differences by grade span. Adults think nearly all types of books should be available to high schoolers.
- Results also demonstrated adults’ support for increased parent and teacher control of curriculum, and in favor of parents’ rights to opt out their children from curriculum content with which they disagree.

¹ Among households with a K-12 child, the overlap between the two responding samples from 2022 to 2023 is 70%. Among those without children in the home, the overlap between the two responding samples is 25%. The overall overlap between the two responding samples is 49%. The samples used in both surveys are representative of the U.S. national adult population. We share sample demographics in Appendix A.

- **Market forces and education.** Given the spread of school-choice policies and their connection to curriculum and issues of parental control, we sought to improve understanding of adults' perspectives about market forces in education. We asked adults their agreement with several statements related to beliefs foundational to school choice.
- **Potentially contested topics in the curriculum.** Our 2022 report showed resistance to inclusion of LGBTQ topics in the curriculum, with bipartisan opposition to teaching such in elementary schools yet partisan divergence in high school, with Democratic support and Republican disapproval. Adults across political parties were relatively more supportive about teaching most topics related to race. For our new study, we wanted a better grasp of specifically where on a range of classroom scenarios does support for a given topic turn into resistance. We developed three sets of items: one including a series of classroom scenarios related to LGBTQ topics, another related to race-related classroom scenarios, and a third addressing sex education and physical health. Building on prior survey results, we designed these questions to elicit a nuanced understanding of the spectrum of adult support for curriculum and instruction in these areas.
- **Parental control.** Last year, we learned that two-thirds of Americans believe parents should be able to opt-out their children from classroom content with which they disagree. Given those results, we wanted to better understand how adults think parents should respond when they disagree with a teacher's lesson, and how educators should react to parents' concerns.

In the following sections, we present the main takeaways of our data, highlighting results overall and by partisan affiliation. We invite interested readers to read our interpretations as well as examine for themselves the topline and crosstab data, full explanation of our methodology, results, and questionnaires ([available here](#)).

We invite interested readers to read our interpretations as well as examine for themselves the topline and crosstab data, full explanation of our methodology, results, and questionnaires.

Purpose of Education

We wanted all respondents to begin our survey by thinking about their core values related to education. Prior to posing any questions related to potentially contested topics, we simply asked, “When thinking about the purposes of public education in the U.S., how important are each of the following to you?” We provided response options ranging from not important to very important as well as “I don’t know what this purpose means.” We showed a list of 12 possible purposes and asked adults to rate the importance of each, then had them select the three purposes they find most important.

We wanted all respondents to begin our survey by thinking about their core values related to education.

Adults believe all potential purposes of education are important or very important

For each of the 12 potential purposes listed, over 80% of adults think each is important or very important. To provide a more nuanced understanding of the results, we focus on describing the percentages of those rating a given purpose as very important and in their top three.

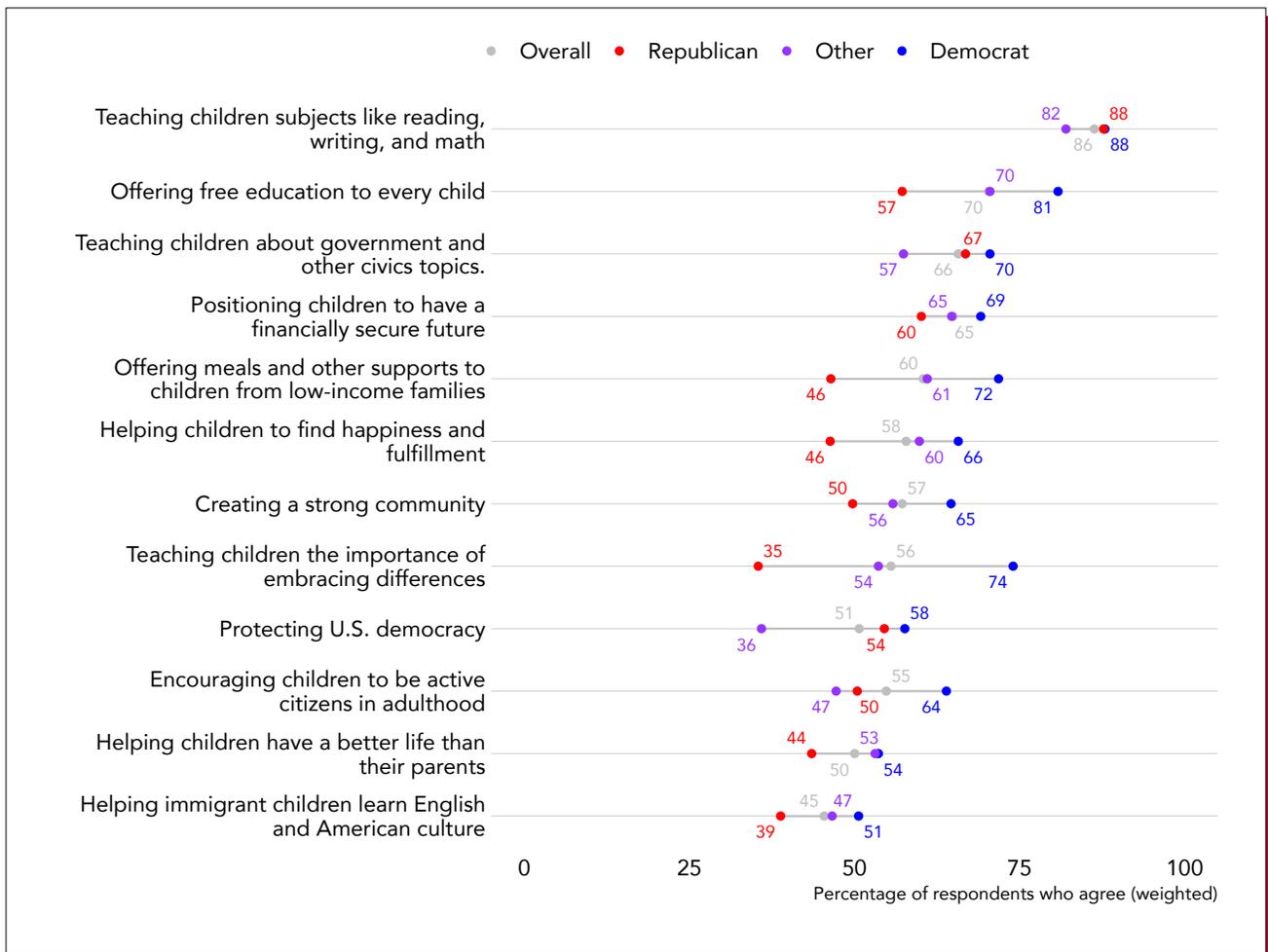
There is bipartisan agreement that the “very important” purposes of education include basic literacy and numeracy, civics knowledge, free education for every child, and secure financial futures

Nearly nine in ten Democrats and Republicans (88% for both groups) and 82% of those with other partisan affiliations believe that “Teaching children subjects like reading, writing, and math” is a very important purpose of education (Figure 1). We also found bipartisan majority agreement that the following are very important: offering free education to every child (81% Democrat, 57% Republican, 70% Other), teaching children about government and other civics topics (70% Democrat; 57% Republican, 57% Other), positioning children to have a financially secure future (69% Democrat, 60% Republican, 65% Other), creating a strong community (65% Democrat,

50% Republican, 56% Other), protecting U.S. democracy (58% Democrat, 54% Republican, but a minority of Other with 36%), and encouraging children to be active citizens in adulthood (64% Democrat, 50% Republican, though again a slight minority among Other at 47%).

When asking respondents to choose their top three most important purposes, results remained substantively similar with bipartisan agreement. Regardless of political party, adults share two of the top three purposes: “Teaching children subjects like reading, writing, and math” and “Offering free education to every child.”

FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS, BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION, SELECTING VARIOUS POTENTIAL PURPOSES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AS VERY IMPORTANT.



While more than half of Democrats rank all purposes as very important, a minority of Republicans believe several purposes are very important: helping children find happiness and fulfillment (46%); offering meals and other supports to children from low-income families (46%); helping children have a better life than their parents (44%); helping immigrant children learn English and American culture (39%); and teaching children the importance of embracing differences (35%).

The purpose with greatest partisan difference is teaching children to embrace differences

The purpose with the greatest partisan difference in support is “Teaching children the importance of embracing differences,” with 74% of Democrats selecting this purpose as very important versus 35% of Republicans. Whereas 30% of Democrats say the importance of embracing differences is one of their top three purposes, only 11% of Republicans and 22% of Other respondents do. The partisan difference in support for this purpose provides essential framing for other results throughout the report.

Market Forces and Education

Resistance to teaching topics related to LGBTQ, race, and/or sex education has the potential to detract from adults' support for public schools and increase their support for private education. The trend towards privatization of education has [increased markedly](#) over the past few decades, with COVID-related school closures [intensifying this trend](#).

One way in which governments can support privatization is through [school vouchers](#), whereby families are provided with funds to pay for partial or full tuition at a private school instead of allocating those same per-pupil funds to public schools. [Education savings accounts](#) are another example of allocating public education funds directly to families into accounts they can use to pay for educational expenses, including tuition at private schools. Nearly [80% of school choice education legislation](#) posed in 2023, [primarily in Republican states](#) favors education savings accounts.

Privatization of education historically has been a highly politicized topic, with Republican support and Democratic opposition. Yet recent opinion polls demonstrate this concept of polarization [oversimplifies where voters stand](#).

The foundational premises underlying provision of private educational options among parents' choices for their children are that competition among schools increases efficiency and improves educational outcomes, and private schools can provide better education than the government. We wanted to understand more about adults' beliefs regarding these premises in the absence of partisan signaling language like school choice, school vouchers, privatization, etc.

Because there is a great deal of variation in individuals' knowledge about school funding and education policies around school choice, we sought a common understanding, to the extent possible, of the context for our questioning. We prefaced our questions related to education privatization using the following language, constructed based on cognitive testing which revealed many of those interviewed did not understand the concept of "competition" in an educational context. To explain competition as related to education in a non-partisan framing, we wrote:

The number of students attending a school has important consequences for school operations, especially since public school funding is based on student attendance.² When private or charter schools enter the community, they create competition because parents now have choices about where to enroll their child.

We followed this explanation with a series of statements, presented in random order, then asked adults to indicate their agreement, permitting responses of “I’m not sure.”

We acknowledge that if we had used different framing language, we may have prompted different results.

Public opinion is split on the nuances of market forces and education

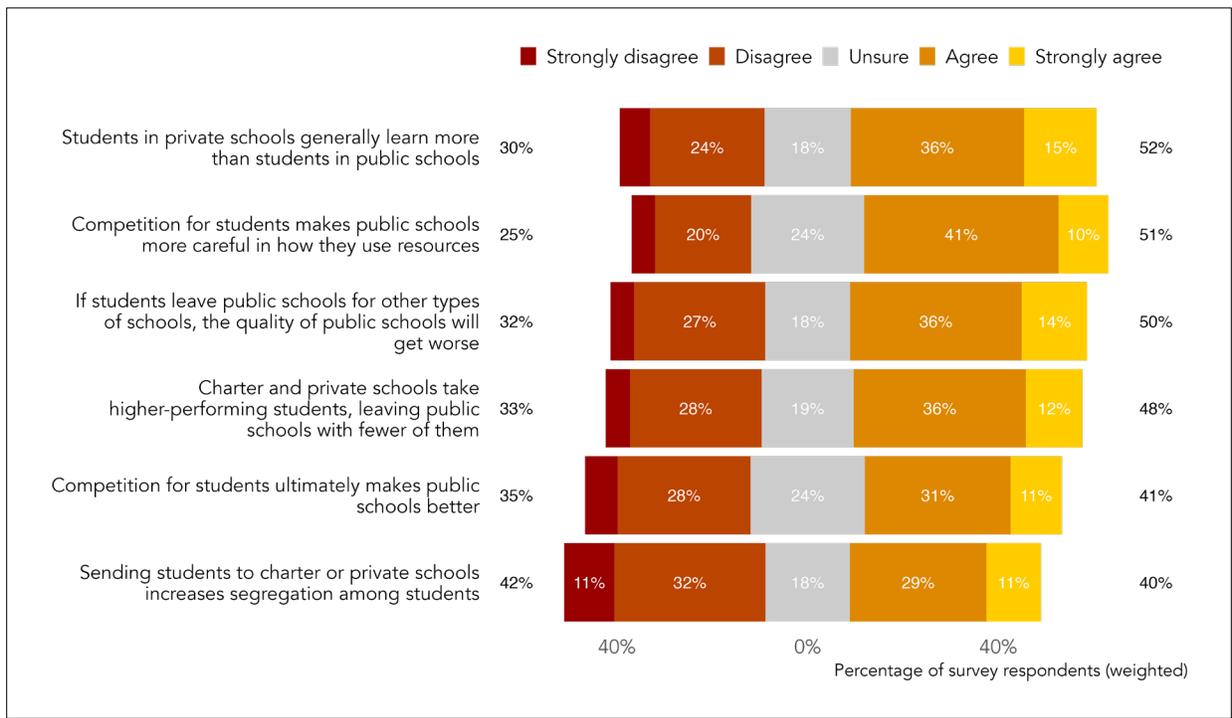
With three items worded in a way that suggests potential benefits of privatization, approximately half of all adults agree with two: students in private schools learn more than students in public schools (52% agree, 30% disagree, 18% not sure); and competition for students makes public schools more careful in how they use resources (51% agree, 25% disagree, 24% not sure). Better than four in ten (41%) agree with the third item, that competition for students will make public schools better (with 35% disagreeing and 24% not sure).

Approximately half of adults also agree with two statements that suggest potential downsides of privatization: if students leave public schools for other school types, the quality of public schools will get worse (50%); and charter and private schools tend to take higher-performing students, leaving public schools with fewer of them (48%). Again, four in ten agree with the third statement, that sending students to charter schools increases segregation among students.

Notably, meaningful proportions of respondents (18-24%, depending on the item) selected the “I don’t know” option across all six statements (Figure 2).

² Technically, funding in six states is based on attendance while enrollment is used in the other 44, though enrollment always is defined by some measure of attendance (e.g., single count date, multiple count dates, average daily attendance, average daily membership, etc.). However, state funding makes up a very different proportion of funding across states and may play a relatively small part in more well-off communities. Though local funding is not often based on enrollment, a minimum set-aside may be.

FIGURE 2. OVERALL AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS DESCRIBING THE PREMISES OF SCHOOL CHOICE

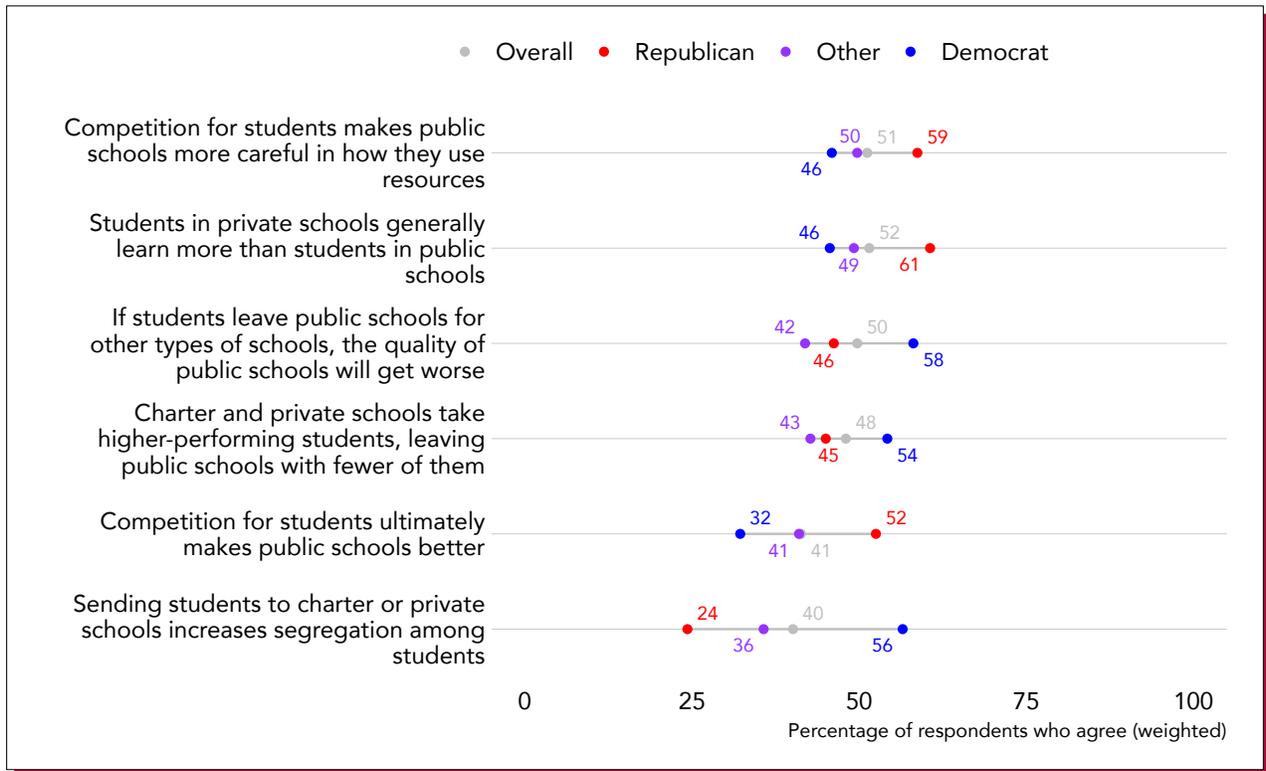


Smaller partisan differences than expected, and smaller when compared to other areas surveyed

The results by partisan affiliation show differences that we would predict by party alignment: Republicans generally are more supportive than Democrats of privatization, while Democrats are more supportive of public schools (Figure 3). However, the differences are notably much smaller than those related to classroom scenarios and parental control. The one exception with an especially large partisan split is for the item “Sending students to charter or private schools increases segregation among students,” with which 56% of Democrats agree compared to just 24% of Republicans. Those not affiliated with either of these parties are right in the middle, and often falling very close to the 50 percent mark—half agree, half don’t.³

³The proportions of Republicans and Democrats reporting “Unsure” was approximately 15-20%, depending on the statement. For those with other partisan affiliation, 25-30% reported they were unsure; slightly higher uncertainty among Other was consistent throughout the survey.

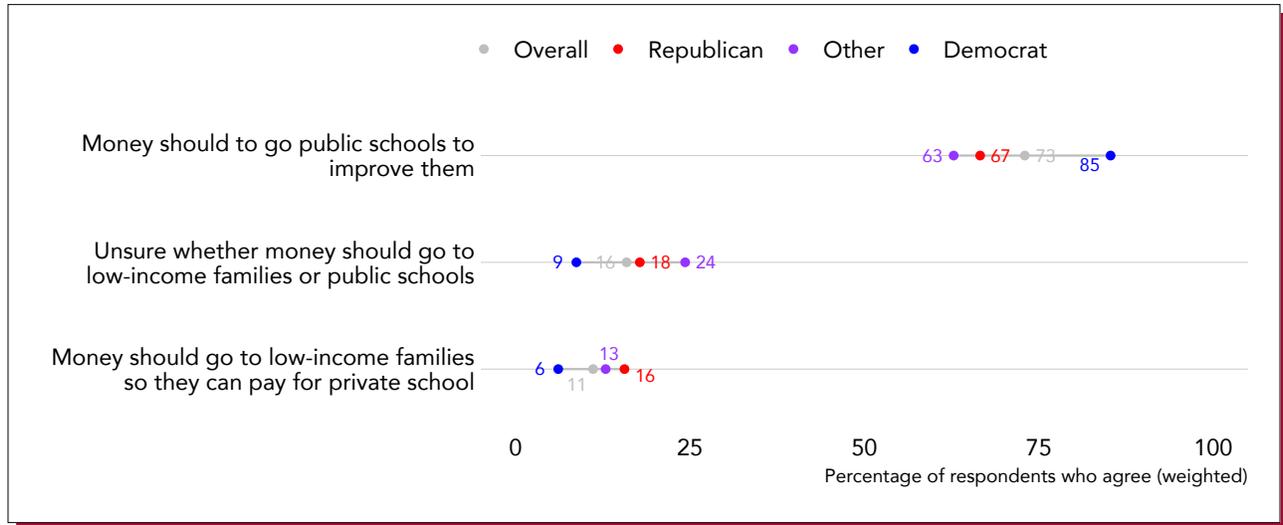
FIGURE 3. AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS DESCRIBING THE PREMISES OF SCHOOL CHOICE BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



Adults clearly support public schools versus vouchers for private schools

We also presented respondents with the following choice (permitting an “I don’t know” answer): “Considering limited federal funding for public school, which option do you think is best for using those education dollars: 1) Giving money to low-income families so they can pay for their children to go to private school, or 2) Giving money to public schools to improve their quality?” As we share in Figure 4, we found clear support for public schools (73%), with bipartisan agreement among Democrats (85%) and Republicans (67%), as well as Other (63%).

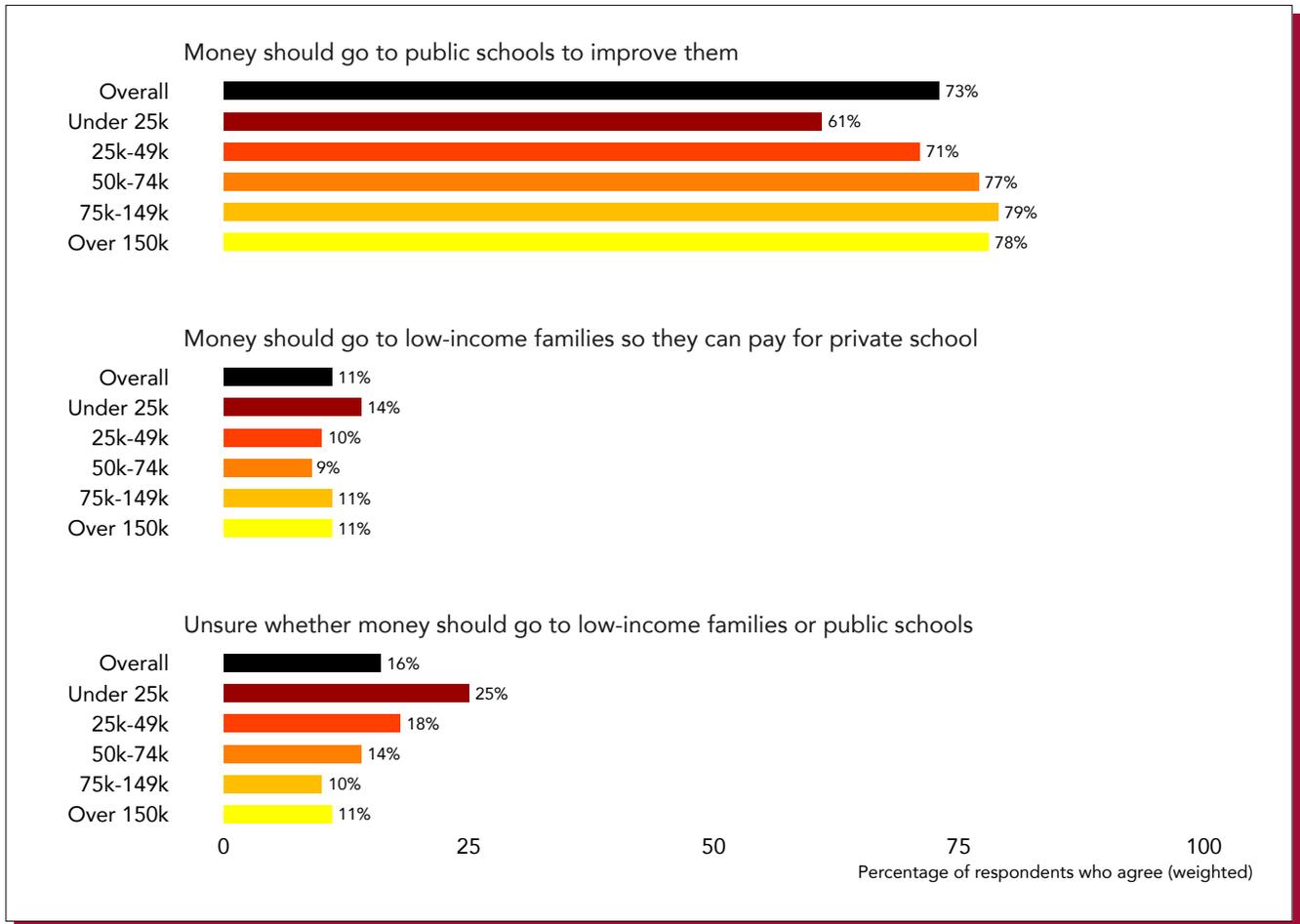
FIGURE 4. ADULTS' PREFERRED USE OF FUNDS BETWEEN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND GIVING MONEY TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES TO PAY FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL, BY POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION.



We explored whether adults' preferred choice depends on household income, as our question had specified funds for private schools would be for low-income families while the public-school option benefits all children. As we show in Figure 5, differences by family income are minimal: More than 70% of adults in all income brackets—except the lowest—support giving money to public schools as the best use of limited federal funding. Among the lowest-income households (less than \$25K), support for public school funding drops but remains high at 61%. When we disaggregated results by adults' education levels (high school or less, some college, college degree, or higher), there are similarly high levels of support across subgroups.

More than 70% of adults in all income brackets—except the lowest—support giving money to public schools as the best use of limited federal funding.

FIGURE 5. ADULTS’ PREFERRED USE OF FUNDS BETWEEN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND GIVING MONEY TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES TO PAY FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME.



Potentially Contentious Classroom Scenarios

In a year in which the Florida Department of Education banned the [College Board's African American Studies Advanced Placement](#) course from public schools, and [more than 500 anti-LGBTQ bills](#) are pending in the U.S., specificity about the content adults do and do not think children should learn about in school has critical policy relevance with implications for all U.S. school children.

We found broad bipartisan agreement in our fall 2022 results about the teaching of most potentially contentious topics as well as children's accessibility to contested books. Our questions were quite general. For example, we asked—separately for elementary and high school students—whether adults think children are learning in school about “Causes and effects of racial inequality in the United States,” and separately whether or not they should.

Approach to asking about potentially contentious topics

To refine understanding of adults' boundaries around their support for teaching about potentially contentious topics, this year we probed into beliefs about the appropriateness of a range of specific classroom scenarios. We asked adults to indicate the extent to which they agree (also providing an “I'm not sure” option) that each of various scenarios that could take place in classrooms are appropriate, for elementary and secondary children separately. We asked about 24 LGBTQ scenarios, 18 related to race, and 10 related to sex education. We purposefully wrote scenarios we anticipated would vary in the extent to which adults would find “difficult” to endorse the appropriateness of the scenario in a school or classroom setting. For instance, an item that might be easy for most to endorse is students reading a book about a boy and girl who fall in love, while a “difficult” item might be learning about medical interventions for trans students. We described each scenario using simple language intended to avoid confusion between whether a scenario was too complex for elementary school students versus whether it was inappropriate.⁴ Below, we describe these results using the shorthand terms “approval” and “support” to indicate “strongly agree” or “agree” the scenario is appropriate, and “oppose” to indicate “strongly disagree” or

⁴ To ensure our questions were clear, understandable, and as unbiased as possible, during survey development, we pilot-tested question wording with UAS panel members who did not subsequently take the final administered survey. External advisors also provided input into survey development.

“disagree” the scenario is appropriate. Throughout this report, we use shortened versions of the full items to facilitate graphic displays of results. We provide the full text of all items in tables preceding figures visualizing scenario results.

We made two other notable methodological choices in our questions about classroom scenarios. First, given the large number of items, we split the scenarios across two different survey forms (A and B). To reduce the burden on respondents, we randomly assigned each panel member to receive either form A or form B so each participant received only 12 LGBTQ scenarios, 9 related to race, and 5 on sex education (rather than 24, 18 and 10). Second, to create forms A and B, we paired items similar in both content and a priori difficulty (e.g., a lesson about standing up for others when you see them being harmed, talking about being kind to others and why it matters) then randomly assigned one of each pair to forms A and B. Before combining results across forms, we checked to be sure the demographic composition of each of the two groups (i.e., those receiving form A or form B) was statistically comparable. We show our balance table in Appendix B. Last, we randomly ordered scenarios for each participant, eliminating the risk of bias introduced by question-order effects.⁵

Appropriateness of LGBTQ scenarios

Issues related to LGBTQ rights, curriculum, and topics in schools have become highly politically salient as legislators in Republican-controlled states have increasingly attacked these issues over the last several years. However, results of elections in November 2023 suggested that [campaigning against LGBTQ-focused curriculum and books](#) may not be boosting election prospects as intended.

In fall 2022, we asked questions probing adults’ beliefs about the appropriateness of children learning in elementary and high school about four LGBTQ-related topics: gender identity, gay rights, trans rights, and sexual orientation. We found bipartisan opposition for elementary children learning about LGBTQ topics, though for high school there is majority Democrat support and majority Republican opposition. In fall 2023, we probed to better understand specific areas of support and resistance.

⁵We also investigated data quality associated with the “scenario” items, flagging any respondent who either “straight-lined” their answers (e.g., answered “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree” to all items), skipped most items (80% or more), or completed the items much faster than the survey average. We flagged 1-3% of the sample as respectively belonging in each of these categories. Results in this report include flagged respondents, but we confirmed that our results did not change if we excluded their responses.

Adults are broadly opposed to LGBTQ-related classroom scenarios in elementary school

Overall, we found broad opposition to teaching LGBTQ-related scenarios at the elementary level, supporting and deepening our results from 2022. In Table 1, we share the shortened labels used in Figures 6, 7, and 8, as well as full text of the scenarios as worded in the survey.

TABLE 1. LGBTQ SCENARIOS' FULL AND ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT.

ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT (FROM FIGURES)	FULL ITEM TEXT (FROM SURVEY)
Lesson about standing up for others	A lesson about standing up for others when you see them being harmed.
Teacher's same-sex spouse picture on desk	A teacher having a picture of their same-sex spouse on their desk.
Book with opposite-sex love story	An assignment with a book about a boy and girl who fall in love.
Same-sex penguin adoption	A book assigned in class about two male penguins adopting a baby penguin.
Discussing different family structures	Talking about different types of families, like same-sex couples.
Discussing gender identity vs. biological sex	Talking about how some people's gender identities may not match their biological sex.
Discussing same-sex marriage rights	Discussing how people in the U.S. can marry the person they love, no matter their gender identity or sexual orientation.
Teacher is openly transgender	Having a classroom teacher who openly identifies as transgender to students.
Book about a lesbian "coming out"	An assignment with a book by a lesbian author sharing her experiences "coming out of the closet" to her family.

ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT (FROM FIGURES)	FULL ITEM TEXT (FROM SURVEY)
Using transgender student’s pronouns without asking parents	A teacher using a transgender student’s preferred pronouns and chosen name at school without asking the student’s parents first.
Reading an opposite-sex intimate scene	A reading assignment that includes a short intimate scene between two consenting partners—one woman and one man.
Discussing why students should play sports matching gender identity	Talking about why transgender girls (i.e., people with “male” on their birth certificate who identify as girls) should be allowed to play on girls’ sports.
Why being kind to others matters	Talking about being kind to others and why it matters.
Classroom has LGBTQ-friendly decorations	Having LGBTQ-friendly decorations in the classroom, like rainbow flags or pride stickers.
LGBTQ American history	A history unit about important LGBTQ Americans.
Discussing that love can be between same or opposite gender	Talking about a book’s lesson that love can be between people of the opposite gender or the same gender.
Discussing same-sex animal relationships	Talking in science class about same-sex relationships in the animal kingdom.
Book about two females in love	A book on a classroom bookshelf featuring two female main characters who fall in love with each other.
Teacher asks students to share pronouns	A teacher asking all students to share their preferred pronouns.
Book about the non-binary author’s experiences	An assignment with a book by a non-binary author sharing their experiences growing up as a non-binary person (non-binary people do not identify as male or female).
Discussing right to live according to gender identity	Talking about why people should be allowed to fully live as the gender they identify with, even if it’s not their birth gender.
Discussing right to use bathroom that matches gender identity	Talking about why people should be allowed to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity.

ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT (FROM FIGURES)	FULL ITEM TEXT (FROM SURVEY)
Reading a same-sex intimate scene	A reading assignment that includes a short intimate scene between two consenting adult males.
Youths' right to gender-affirming medical care	Discussing why trans youth (youth who identify as a different gender than their sex, or who don't identify with either gender) should have access to medical care that helps them be the gender they identify with, not the one assigned at birth.

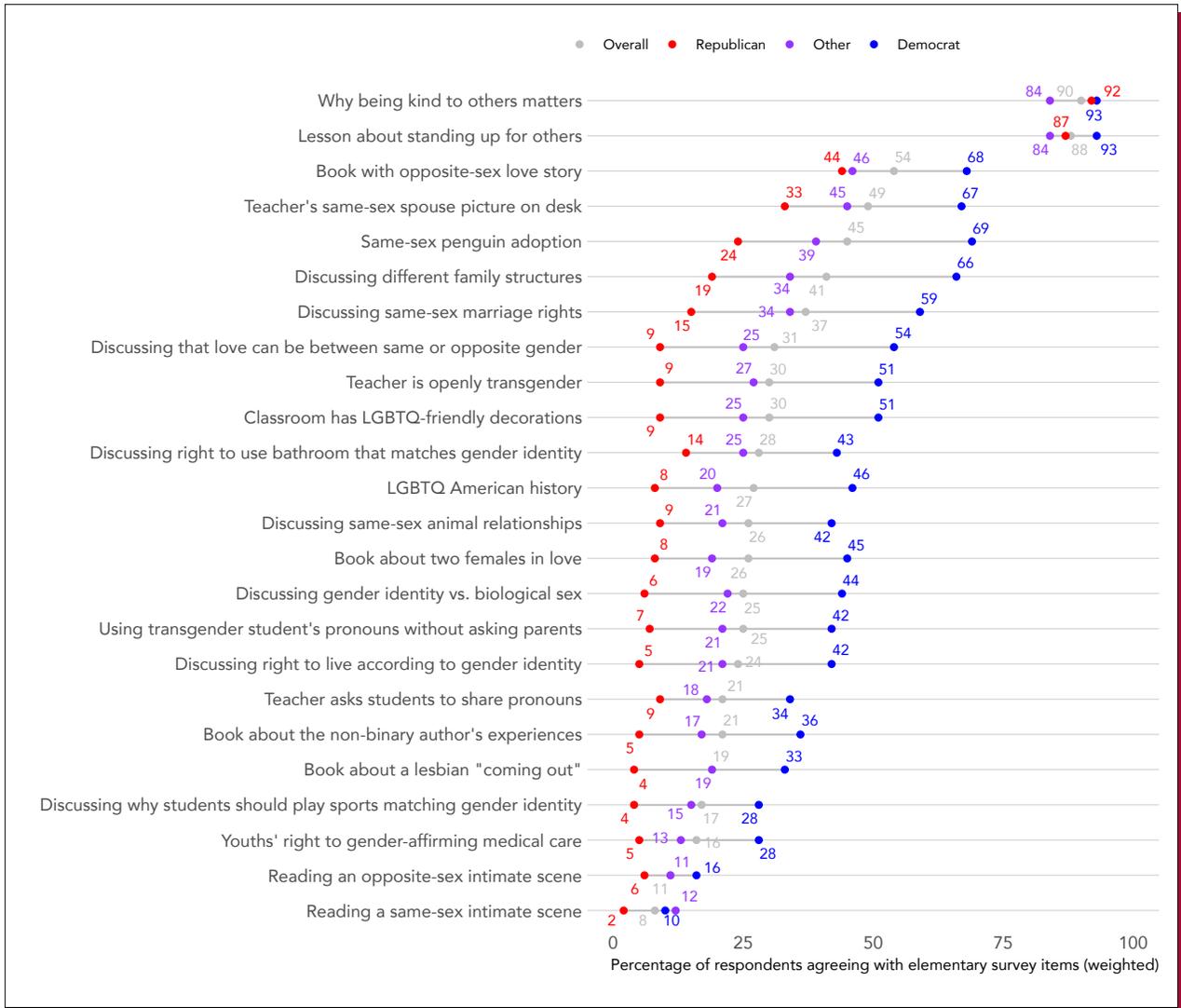
As shown in Figure 6, there are just three scenarios in elementary school for which most respondents indicate support, and none are specifically related to LGBTQ topics:

- Talking about being kind and why it matters **(90%)**
- Lesson about standing up for others **(88%)**
- An assignment including a book about a boy and girl who fall in love **(54%)**

[W]e considered [the first two items] “easy” to endorse on a scale where “difficult” items would relate to tolerance and inclusion for LGBTQ topics specifically.

While these first two items are not exclusively relevant to LGBTQ issues, we wrote them as items about tolerance and inclusion, which we considered “easy” to endorse on a scale where “difficult” items would relate to tolerance and inclusion for LGBTQ topics specifically. Even so, the first two do not receive 100% support while the third receives only a bare majority.

FIGURE 6: PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION AGREEING LGBTQ CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ARE APPROPRIATE IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.



At the elementary level, the only item including an LGBTQ reference with plurality support is, “A teacher having a picture of their same-sex spouse on their desk,” with 49% approval (39% disapproval). Other types of family-related items also see 40-50% approval, such as “A book assigned in class about two male penguins adopting a baby penguin”⁶ (45% approval, 45%

⁶ “A book about two male penguins adopting a baby penguin” describes the often-challenged book *And Tango Makes Three*, by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson (2005).

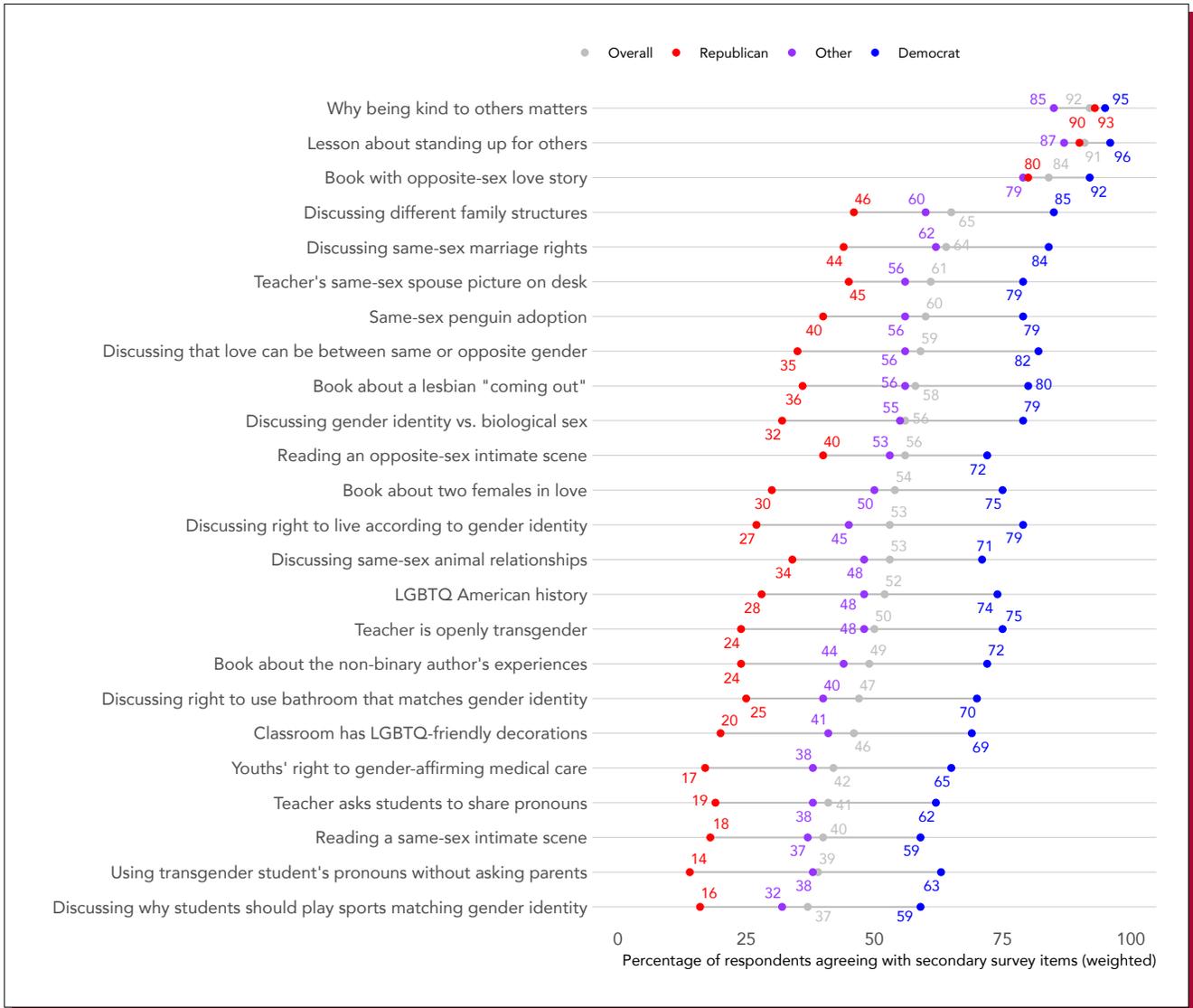
disapproval) as well as “Talking about different types of families, like same-sex couples” (41% approval, 51% disapproval). These family-related topics are the LGBTQ issues with which adults are most comfortable in the elementary grades.

Fewer than 40% of adults endorse as appropriate the other 18 scenarios. For instance, 26-27% of adults approve of science or history lessons relating to LGBTQ content, while 61-64% find these scenarios inappropriate. Just 21% of respondents approve of teachers asking all elementary students to share their pronouns (67% did not). Disapproval is particularly strong for items related to transgender issues and sexual intimacy. Fewer than 20% of respondents approve of discussion in elementary schools about why transgender girls (i.e., people with “male” on their birth certificate who identify as female) should be allowed to play on girls’ sports teams, or discussing their pursuit of medical care aligned with their gender identity (16-17% approval, 70-72% disapproval) or of class readings containing intimate scenes, be it same-sex or opposite-sex (8-11% approval, 80-83% disapproval).

Overall support for LGBTQ classroom scenarios is mixed for high school

Support for LGBTQ topics is somewhat higher at the high school level (Figure 7). Overall, adults find two-thirds of the 24 scenarios appropriate for high school classrooms, though still no more than 65% approve any of the LGBTQ-related scenarios. Scenarios with the most support, with greater than 60% of adults endorsing as appropriate, are those related to LGBTQ families: 65% approve of talking about different types of families, 64% approve discussing how Americans can marry the person they love regardless of gender, and 61% approve of a teacher having a picture of their same-sex spouse on their desk (28% did not find each of these three items appropriate). Modest majorities also approve of a range of other scenarios, including history or science lessons related to LGBTQ issues (52-53% approval) and an assignment about a book discussing the coming-out process (58% approval). We also note that there is majority approval for a reading assignment containing a short opposite-sex intimate scene (56% approval), but not if it contains a short same-sex intimate scene (40% approval).

FIGURE 7: PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION AGREEING LGBTQ CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ARE APPROPRIATE IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.



No scenarios related to trans issues have majority approval. For instance, only 37% find it appropriate to be talking about why transgender girls should be permitted to play on girls' sports teams (51% opposed), and 39% approve of a teacher using a trans student's preferred pronouns without their parents' consent (51% disapproval). However, some items not related to trans issues also do not have majority approval, including having LGBTQ-friendly decorations (45% approval, 45% disapproval) and a reading assignment with a short same-sex intimate scene (40% approval, 51% disapproval).

Adults are comfortable with children learning about opposite-sex relationships in high school, not elementary

Looking at support for the same scenarios in elementary compared to high school classrooms, the biggest differences between the grade levels are in support for teaching about opposite-sex relationships. An assignment with a book about a boy and girl that fall in love has 54% approval for elementary students and 84% approval for high school, a 30-percentage point difference. A reading assignment with a short opposite-sex intimate scene received 11% approval for elementary and 56% approval for high school, a difference of 45 points. In contrast, items related to teacher identity and classroom inclusiveness show smaller differences by school level—a teacher having a picture of their same-sex spouse, the display of LGBTQ-friendly decorations, or openly identifying as trans all see less than 20-point differences from elementary to high school.

There are very large partisan splits on nearly all LGBTQ-related classroom scenarios

The overall results reported above mask substantial variation based on adults' party identification, as shown in Figures 6 and 7. For every item, at both elementary and secondary levels, greater percentages of Democrats relative to Republicans approve of these scenarios in schools—with Other almost always in the middle.

Majority of Democrats approve of some LGBTQ topics in elementary school and all in high school; majority of Republicans approve of none at either grade level

One way to compare results by party affiliation is to look for items where many Democrats express support, but few Republicans do. At the elementary grades, there were eight such scenarios addressing a range of LGBTQ topics, but mostly emphasizing family issues and an inclusive classroom climate (Figure 6). For some of these items with majority support among Democrats, support among Republicans is minimal (less than 10%): books with lessons that love can be between opposite-gender or same-gender people, LGBTQ-friendly decorations in the classroom, and an openly transgender teacher. Those who identify as Other do not express majority approval of any of these eight scenarios, and for all eight the proportion approving is closer to Republicans than to Democrats.

For the high school grades, the results are even more stark (Figure 7). Excluding the three non-LGBTQ-specific scenarios with broad support, well more than half of Democrats approve of all the other 21 scenarios while less than 50% of Republicans approve of each, and just half the scenarios are supported by those who don't identify with either party. For two scenarios, approval among Democrats is below 60%: talking about why transgender girls should be allowed to play on girls' sports teams, and a reading assignment that includes a short intimate scene between two consenting adult males.

In contrast, few Republicans support the inclusion of LGBTQ-related classroom scenarios in high school. For five scenarios, the approval among Republicans is at or above 40%, though still not reaching a majority: discussing equal marriage rights, same-sex penguin adoption, different family types including same-sex parents, a picture of a teacher's same-sex spouse, and a book depicting opposite-sex intimacy. These scenarios with the greatest Republican support emphasize family issues.

The items with the largest partisan gaps in approval differ by grade: family-related issues for elementary grades, transgender-related issues for secondary grades

We also can understand differences in partisan approval by simply taking the difference in the number of percentage points between Democrats and Republicans. Across the 24 elementary items, Democrats express greater approval by an average difference of 30 percentage points; for high school, the average D-minus-R difference is 39 percentage points. At the elementary grades, the items with the largest disparities are the family-related items that Democrats approve and Republicans largely do not. For instance, two-thirds of Democrats approve of talking about different family types to elementary schoolers versus just 19% of Republicans. Beyond family-related items, there are especially large gaps on LGBTQ-friendly classroom décor (51% of Democrats, 9% of Republicans) and out trans teachers (51% of Democrats, 9% of Republicans). The smallest differences at the elementary grades are for the non-LGBTQ related items and the sex-related items where support is either universally high or universally low.

At the high school level, the scenarios eliciting the biggest approval gaps are different—they are primarily related to trans issues or gender identity. The largest disparities are for talking about why students should be allowed to live as their gender identity (79% approval for Democrats, 27% for Republicans) and having an out trans teacher (75% approval for Democrats, 24% for Republicans). Of the top seven items in high school with the largest partisan splits, all but one is related to gender identity. The only items at the high school level with small gaps don't mention LGBTQ identities at all.

Overall, partisan groups express extremely divergent views on LGBTQ scenarios

While these results focus on the differences in approval between Republicans and Democrats, another way to look at our results is to leverage the psychometric properties of the scale items ranging in “difficulty.” This approach highlights the substantive distinctions between groups in the number and type of items endorsed (or not endorsed).

We used a method called item response theory (IRT) to rank-order our classroom scenario survey items based on how likely adults were to agree with each item⁷. Imagine a math test with a variety of easy and difficult questions. In contrast to a “percent correct” score, an individual's IRT scale score represents the point on the range of difficulty where a respondent generally stops answering questions correctly and starts getting them wrong. Average scores then can be calculated for groups of respondents and compared.

Researchers also use IRT to measure individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and traits, and in public opinion research, to identify the public's support or opposition to a variety of salient policy issues, including climate change, immigration, and gun control. When using IRT to measure survey participants' underlying beliefs regarding specific issues, there is not a right or wrong answer; nonetheless, depending on how the survey scale is constructed, there are items that almost all people will answer in the affirmative, as well as items that only a handful will endorse.

⁷ IRT also is commonly used in construction of survey scales, as it defines the measurement point representing an individuals' placement based on their responses and, accordingly, the likelihood that they would agree with a given question.

This method allows researchers to place individual survey items and survey respondents on the same measurement scale. IRT has several benefits, but most relevant for this report, it allows the research team to identify areas of agreement—and dissent—about different pedagogical choices and classroom activities that are increasingly scrutinized and contested by citizens. Notably, the item-difficulty measures are derived from a statistical model, and not our research team’s subjective judgements or expectations about difficulty.

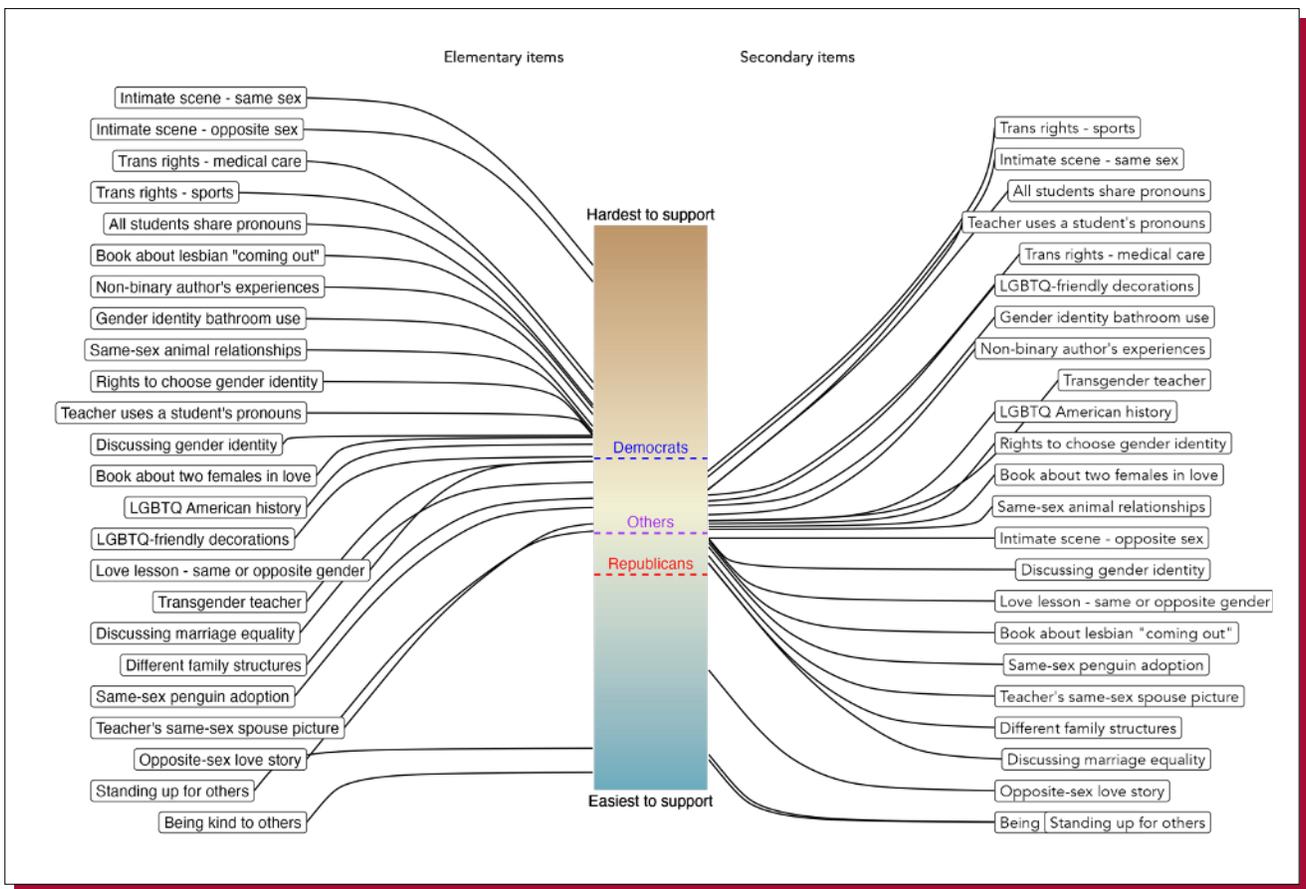
The difference in scale scores, in relation to the items/skills/beliefs located on those scale points, provides insight into one’s position on an underlying belief system. A key IRT assumption is that items are representative of an underlying concept of measurement. We harness this assumption in our approach to describe the range of adults’ support/approval for teaching about potentially contentious topics in schools. Each respondent’s scale score represents the location on the scale of support for teaching about potentially contested topics in which overall support transitions to overall resistance. Comparing scale scores for different groups (e.g., by partisanship) can illustrate differences in the underlying concept of support. Examining the items falling between the two groups’ thresholds also reveals substantive information about groups’ belief systems. We provide technical details about our IRT methodology in Appendix D.

Figure 8 displays the items in order, with the most difficult to endorse at the top and the easiest to endorse at the bottom. Items for elementary grades are on the left side of the visual with items for high school grades are on the right. Figure 8 illustrates that at both elementary and secondary levels, the average approval/support threshold for Democrats is considerably higher than it is for Republicans and those who don’t identify with either party. Consequently, Democrats support six more of these scenarios in elementary schools (the number of items on the left in between the “Democrats” line and the “Republicans” line) and 21 more of these scenarios

Figure 8 illustrates that at both elementary and secondary levels, the average approval/support threshold for Democrats is considerably higher than it is for Republicans and those who don’t identify with either party.

in high schools. In fact, at the high school grades, Democrats' support exceeds all the scenarios we asked about, while Republicans' support exceeds only three (an opposite-sex love story, standing up for others, and being kind to others). At the elementary grades, Democrats support fewer scenarios than they do at secondary, but still six more scenarios than Republicans. These scenarios generally address family in some way, including a teacher having a picture of their same-sex spouse in the classroom, the book about same-sex penguin adoption, and gay-marriage rights.

FIGURE 8. DIFFICULTY OF LGBTQ CLASSROOM SCENARIOS TO APPROVE OF IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



Among purposes of education, the strongest predictor of support for LGBTQ-related scenarios is belief in the importance of teaching children to embrace differences

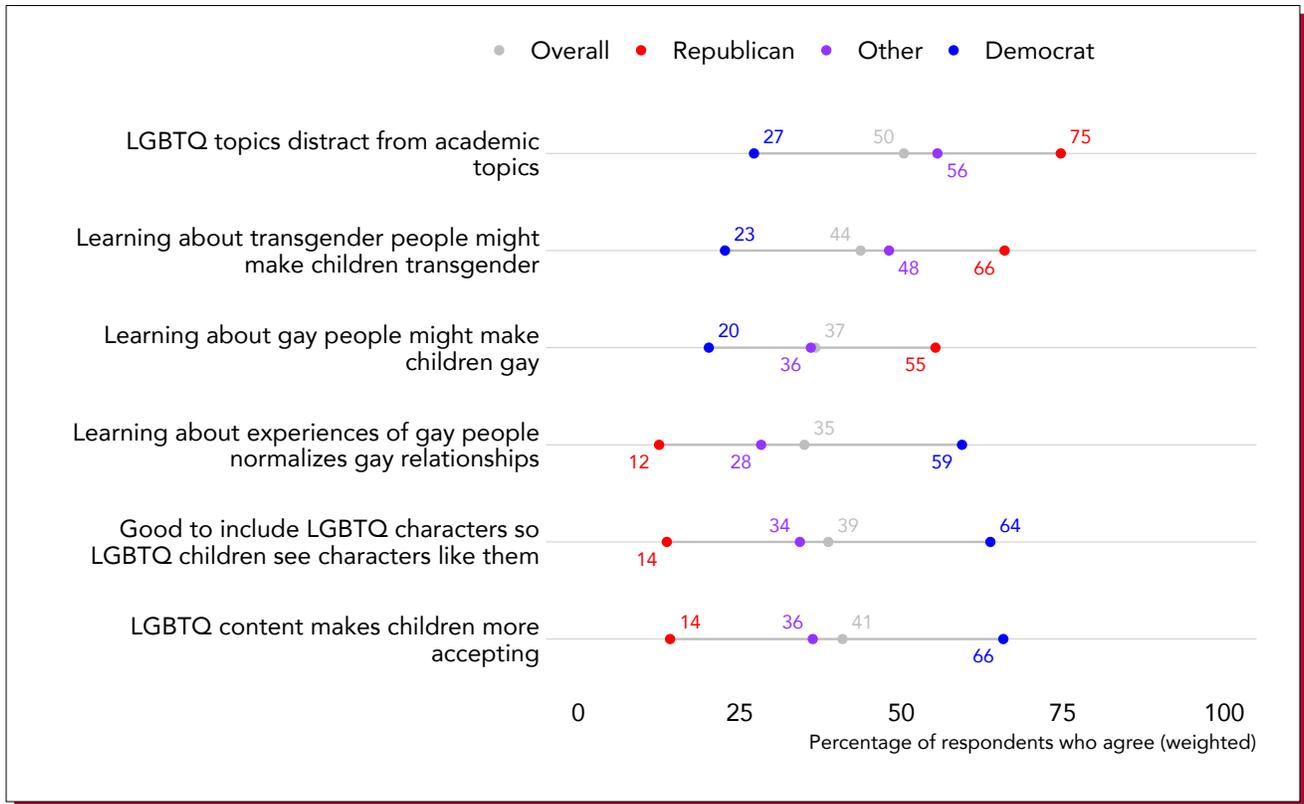
We correlated each purpose of education (see “Purpose of education” section) with adults’ overall support for LGBTQ-related topics in curriculum (i.e., their IRT theta scores). We found that the strongest predictor is agreement with the belief that teaching children to embrace differences is a very important purpose of education (correlation of 0.34). People who agree that teaching children about embracing differences is an important purpose of education are much more supportive of LGBTQ classroom scenarios than those who don’t agree this is important.

Reasons for limiting (or not) access to LGBTQ-related classroom scenarios

Our prior work suggested there would be a good deal of resistance to teaching many of the scenarios posed. To advance our understanding of the complex ideological difference between partisan groups, we posed some questions to help us understand the underlying reasons behind why respondents might not support these types of scenarios in schools, and whether the reasons differ by party in meaningful ways.

Presenting respondents with a list of items and asking to what extent they agreed with each, we learned that two-thirds to three-quarters of Republicans believe that including LGBTQ topics in school takes too much time away from academics (75%), and that reading and learning about transgender (66%) or gay people (55%) might make children think about whether they are or want to be trans or gay (Figure 9). Democrats largely do not share these concerns (20-27% agreement for these three items). In direct contrast, most Democrats believe it is important to include these types of topics and expose children to LGBTQ authors or characters in books because it can make children more accepting of different sexual and gender identities (66%), and so that LGBTQ children see main characters who are like them (64%). Republicans largely do not share these sentiments (14% agreed with each of these items). Notably, across all these items, agreement among Other is always almost right between Democrats and Republicans.

FIGURE 9. REASONS FOR SUPPORTING OR NOT SUPPORTING LGBTQ CLASSROOM SCENARIOS BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



Appropriateness of race scenarios

Researchers at the University of California Los Angeles surveyed a [nationally representative sample of school principals](#) in 2022. Half reported parent and community members were attempting to limit or challenge instruction about race and racism at their school, while 48% indicated the same was true for instruction pertaining to LGBTQ issues. These principals described “mass hysteria” from parents and community members about teaching issues related to race as specifically focused on Critical Race Theory (CRT)—a concept rarely taught in K-12 schools, nor understood by virtually anyone outside of academia. Thus, we thought it would be informative to understand details about the specific types of race-related learning scenarios and readings adults think are appropriate and not for children to be engaging with in school.

In fall 2022, we asked four questions related directly or indirectly to the appropriateness of teaching children about race: the causes and effects of racial inequality in the U.S., the history and consequences of slavery in the U.S., the historical contributions of women and people of color, and the need for criminal justice reform. Related, we asked about CRT, determining adults know very little about it despite the prominence of the term in recent political discourse. We found majority bipartisan support for teaching the four race-related topics in high school, though less than half of Republicans feel elementary children should be learning about racial inequality or the need for criminal justice reform.

In 2023, to learn where general support for teaching about race turns into general resistance, we asked respondents about 18 specific classroom scenarios. We list the scenarios as described in the survey, and their abbreviated forms, in Table 2.

TABLE 2. RACE-RELATED SCENARIOS, FULL AND ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT.

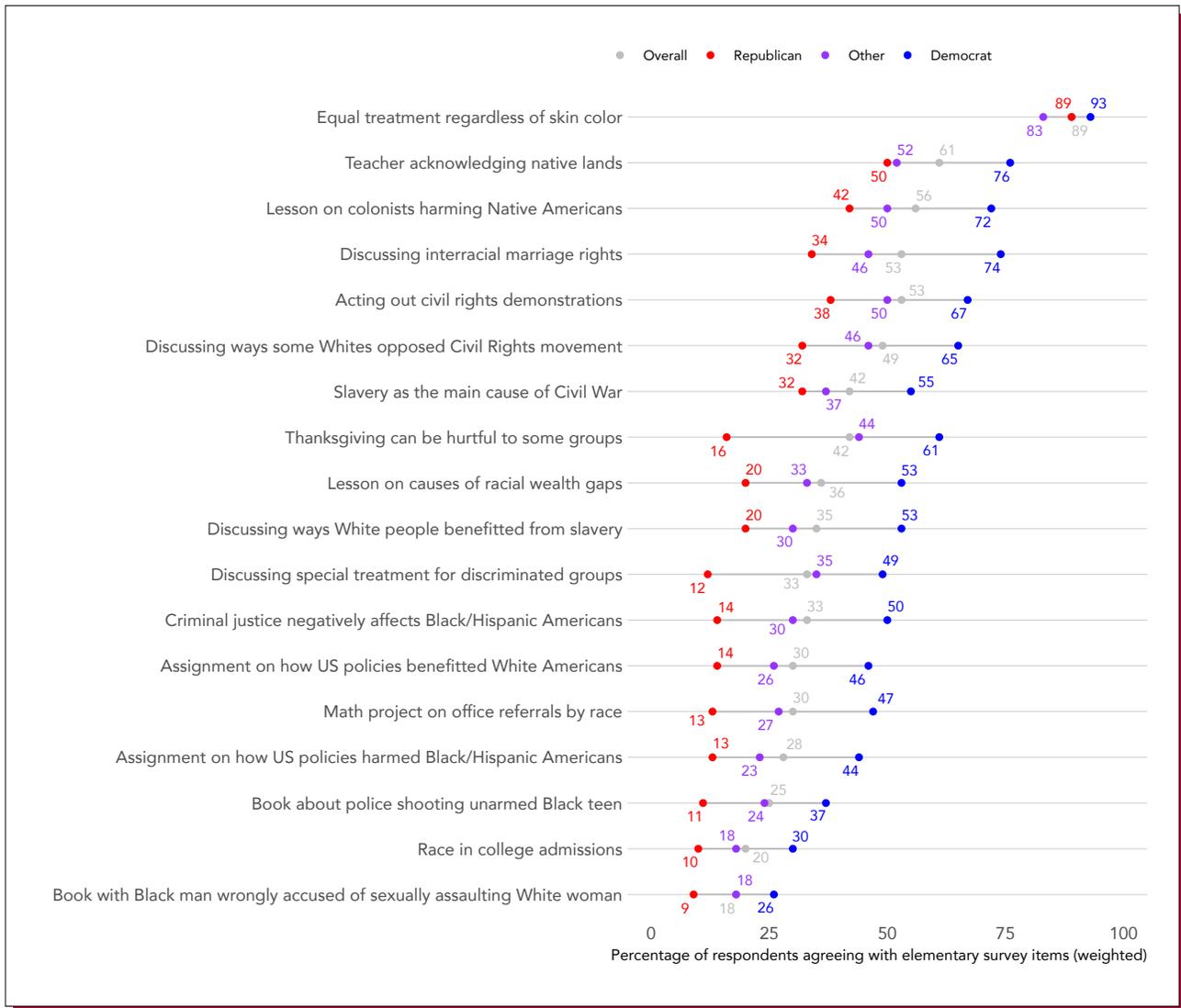
ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT (FROM FIGURES)	FULL ITEM TEXT (FROM SURVEY)
Slavery as the main cause of Civil War	A history lesson explaining the main cause of the Civil War was slavery.
Equal treatment regardless of skin color	A discussion about whether people should be treated the same regardless of their skin color.
Race in college admissions	A discussion about whether race should be considered in college admissions.
Teacher acknowledging native lands	A teacher beginning the school year by acknowledging that the classroom sits on land once belonging to Native American tribes.
Math project on office referrals by race	A math project where students study national data on how often students of different races get sent to the principal's office.
Discussing ways White people benefitted from slavery	Discussion of the ways White people benefited from slavery.

ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT (FROM FIGURES)	FULL ITEM TEXT (FROM SURVEY)
Book with Black man wrongly accused of sexually assaulting White woman	Assigning students to read a story about a Black man who was wrongly accused of sexually assaulting a White woman.
Lesson on causes of racial wealth gaps	A lesson where students learn about some of the reasons why there are wealth gaps between people from different racial groups.
Assignment on how U.S. policies benefitted White Americans	An assignment asking students to reflect on how discriminatory U.S. policies, like unfair housing practices and unequal access to healthcare, have benefitted White Americans.
Discussing interracial marriage rights	Talking about legal marriage in the U.S. including that people are allowed to marry the person they love regardless of their race.
Lesson on colonists harming Native Americans	A lesson on the harmful impacts of American colonists on Native Americans.
Discussing special treatment for discriminated groups	A discussion about whether groups that have been treated unfairly in history should receive special treatment.
Acting out civil rights demonstrations	A classroom activity where students act out important moments of the Civil Rights movement, like restaurant sit-ins and Rosa Parks' bus refusal.
Book about police shooting unarmed Black teen	Including a book in the classroom about an unarmed Black teenager who was shot and killed by the police.
Discussing ways some Whites opposed Civil Rights movement	Discussion of the ways some White people were against the civil rights movement.
Criminal justice negatively affects Black/Hispanic Americans	Discussion of how current criminal justice policies affect Black and Hispanic Americans more negatively than White Americans.
Thanksgiving can be hurtful to some groups	Discussing why celebrating traditional U.S. Thanksgiving can be hurtful to some groups of people.
Assignment on how U.S. policies harmed Black/Hispanic Americans	An assignment asking students to reflect on how discriminatory U.S. policies, like unfair housing practices and unequal access to healthcare, have negatively impacted Black and Hispanic Americans.

Adults overall do not support most race-related classroom scenarios in elementary school

Of the 18 scenarios listed, most adults endorse only five as appropriate to teach in elementary school (Figure 10). Two of the five are about Native American history, one is about the Civil Rights movement (also historical), one is about colorblindness (which, in 2022, we found most adults of both parties support), and one is about interracial marriage.

FIGURE 10. PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION AGREEING RACE-RELATED CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ARE APPROPRIATE IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.



Three of these five scenarios achieve majority support from all Americans, driven overwhelmingly by Democrats (greater than two-thirds support, with less than half of Republicans feeling the same). In contrast, most Republicans support only two scenarios: colorblindness (89%) and acknowledging Native American land (50%). Overall, the majority of adults do not support elementary children learning about a range of race-related issues, particularly those related to current racial inequality. Two of the three least-supported items have a violent component, including “Assigning students to read a story about a Black man who was wrongly accused of sexually assaulting a White woman” (i.e., a description of Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960); 18%) and “Including a book in the classroom about an unarmed Black teenager who was shot and killed by the police” (i.e., a description of *The Hate U Give*, a novel by Angie Thomas (2017); 25%).

Democrats support elementary school children learning about slavery, civil rights, and race-based inequality; Republicans do not

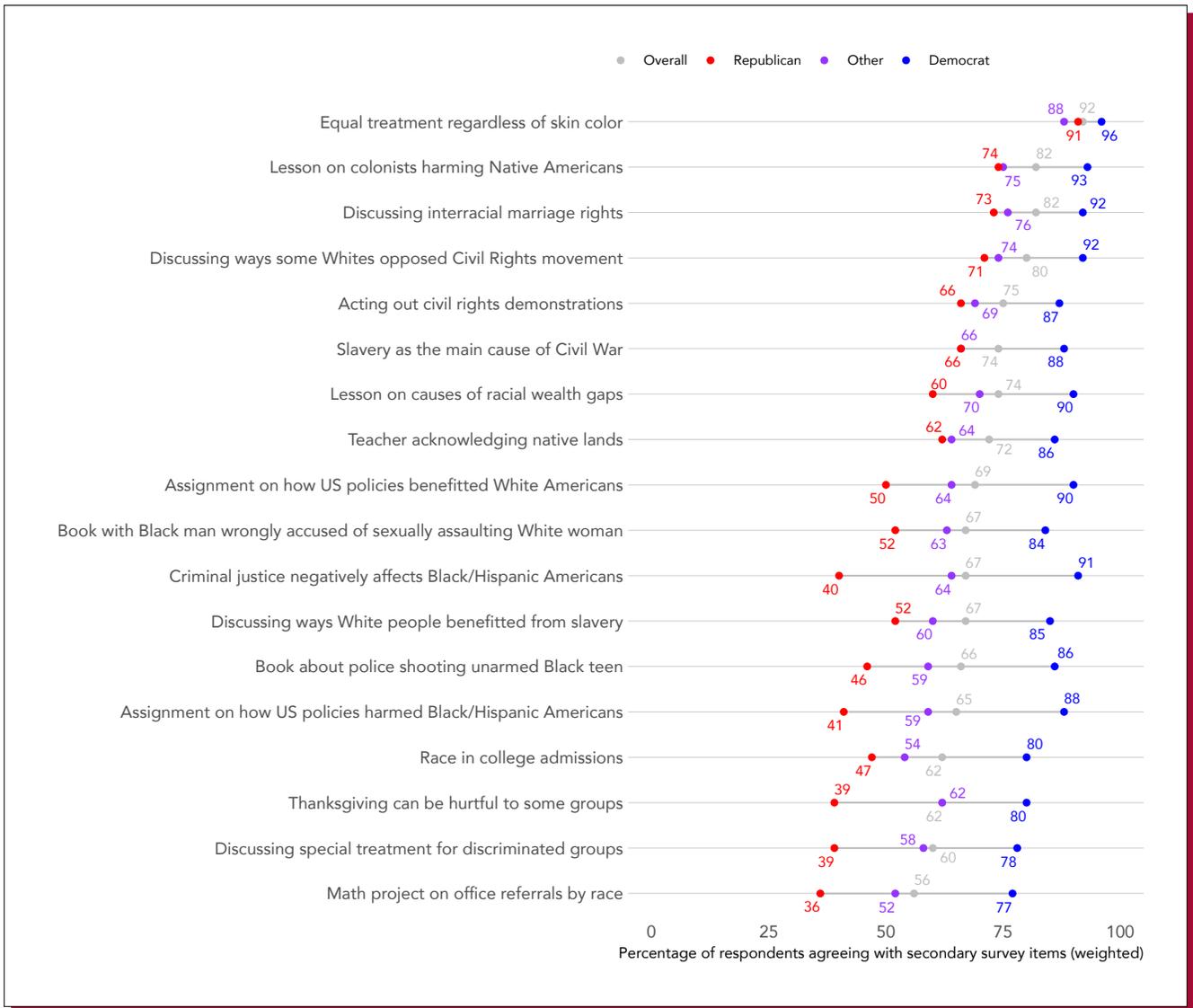
Scenarios with majority Democrat support at the elementary level include those related to civil rights such as, “Talking about legal marriage in the U.S. including that people are allowed to marry the person they love regardless of their race” (74%) and slavery such as, “A history lesson explaining the main cause of the Civil War was slavery” (55%). Just a third of Republicans support these same scenarios: 34% and 32%, respectively. Also, a slight majority of Democrats support elementary students learning about current inequality through “A lesson where students learn about some of the reasons why there are wealth gaps between people from different racial groups” (53% compared to 20% of Republicans).

The majority of adults feel all 18 race-related classroom scenarios are appropriate in high school

At least 56% of adults overall believe every one of the 18 race-related classroom scenarios is appropriate in high school, echoing our finding from the 2022 survey that Americans are broadly supportive of teaching about a range of potentially contentious topics at that level (Figure 11). Like for elementary children, the classroom scenario with the highest level of approval is, “Discussion about whether people should be treated the same regardless of their skin color” (i.e.,

colorblindness; 92% approval). The scenario with the least support, though still with majority overall approval, is, “A math project where students study national data on how often students of different races get sent to the principal’s office” (56%). Generally, the scenarios with the least overall support are the most related to racially minoritized students’ current realities.

FIGURE 11. PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION AGREEING RACE-RELATED CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ARE APPROPRIATE IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.



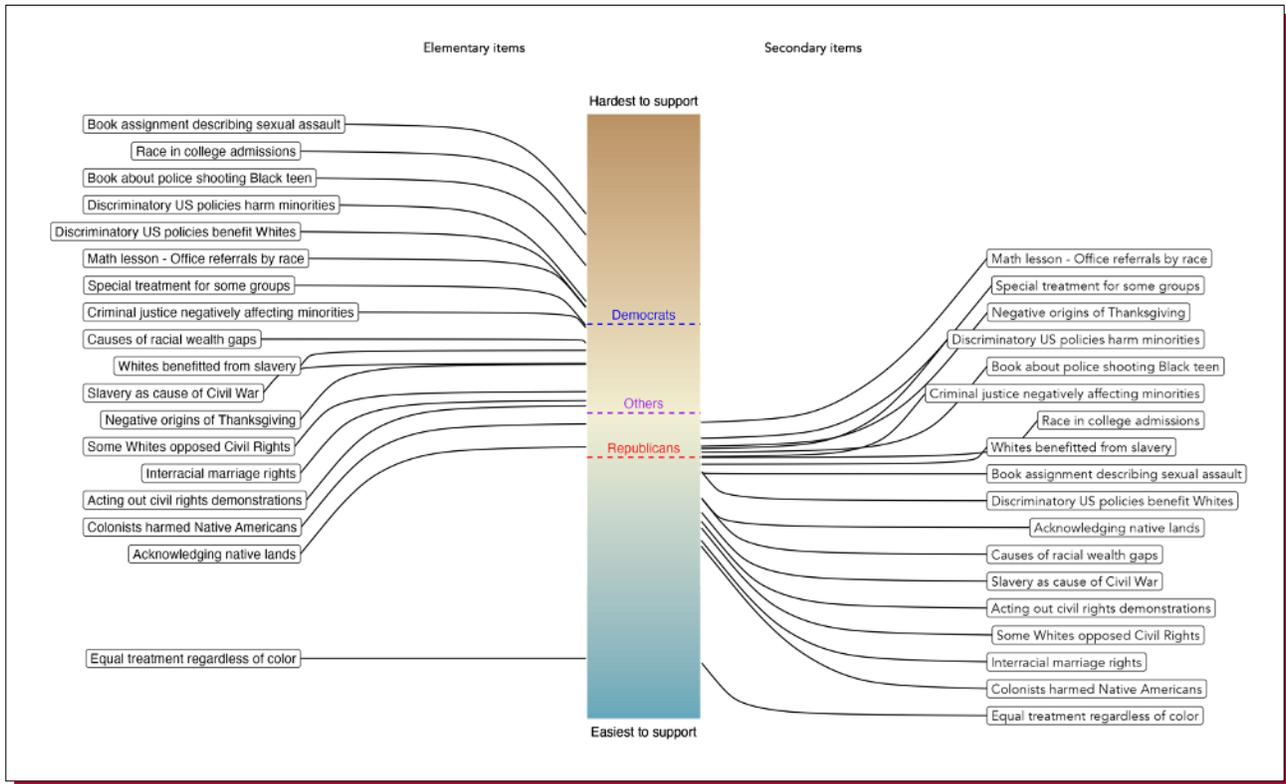
Republicans do not support students in elementary or high school learning about current racial inequality

Supporting all 18 listed classroom scenarios related to race at the high school level are three-quarters or more of Democrats and about half (52%) of Other. Among Republicans, a majority supports 10 of 18 scenarios. Exceptions in high school among Republicans generally focus on current inequality. While a narrow majority of Republicans (52%) support students reading a book about a Black man wrongly accused of sexually assault (i.e., *To Kill a Mockingbird*), there is less support (46%) for them reading a book about an unarmed Black teenager shot and killed by police (i.e., *The Hate U Give*). Fewer than half of Republicans approve of high school students learning about current race-related issues, such as the use of race in college admissions (47%), how discriminatory policies like unfair housing and unequal access to health care have harmed minorities (41%), and how criminal justice policies affect people of color relative to White Americans (40%). The scenario with the least support from Republicans (36%) is the one most directly related to high school students: “A math project where students study national data on how often students of different races get sent to the principal’s office.”

At the high school level, all but two of the partisan gaps are at least 20 percentage points, excepting discussion of colorblindness (5 points) and a lesson on the harmful impacts of American colonists on Native Americans (19 points). Differences of 40 percentage points or more are all related to current racial inequality. Those with 20-30 percentage point differences are more so related to race-related historical topics.

Using the IRT approach described above, Figure 12 illustrates these differences. Again, we see a spread, with Democrats’ support higher than Republicans’ and those who do not identify with either party. Democrats’ support again exceeds all scenarios at the secondary level, while Republicans’ support leaves five scenarios unsupported at the secondary level. At the elementary level, Republican support is very limited for race-related topics, while Democrats support more than half the scenarios.

FIGURE 12. DIFFICULTY OF RACE-RELATED CLASSROOM SCENARIOS TO APPROVE OF IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



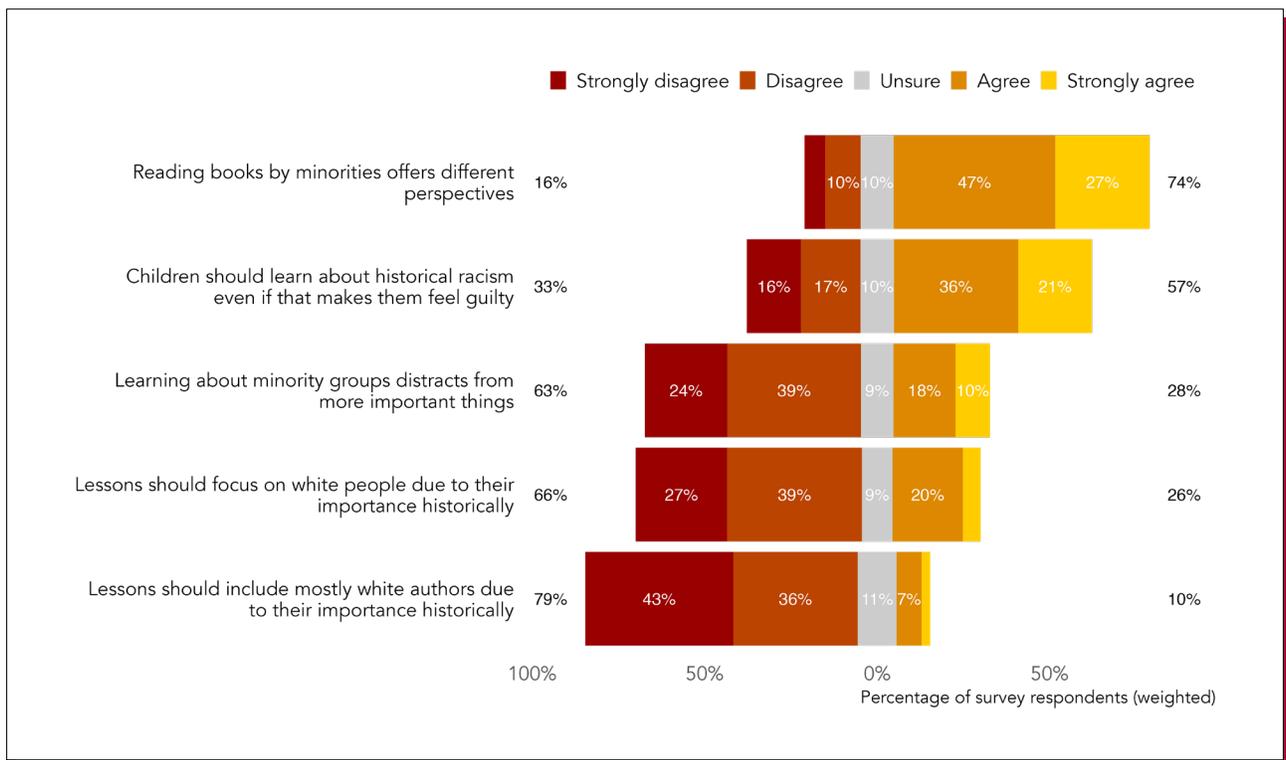
Like support for LGBTQ scenarios, among purposes of education, the strongest predictor is belief in the importance of teaching children to embrace differences

Like for LGBTQ scenarios, we also correlated each purpose of education with adults' overall support for race-related topics in curriculum (i.e., their IRT theta scores). Again, we found that the strongest predictor is agreement with the belief that teaching children to embrace differences is a very important purpose of education (correlation of 0.33).

Reasons for allowing or restricting race-related classroom scenarios

To learn more about why adults might feel race-oriented classroom scenarios are appropriate or not, we asked their agreement with a series of statements providing possible explanations. Overall, we found a strong consensus that schools should not limit students' exposure to books written by White people, and that the pervasiveness of White leaders does not justify exclusive focus on White history. More than 70% of adults agree that children should read books from racial minority groups because those books provide different experiences and perspectives (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13. REASONS FOR ALLOWING OR RESTRICTING RACE-RELATED CLASSROOM SCENARIOS, OVERALL.

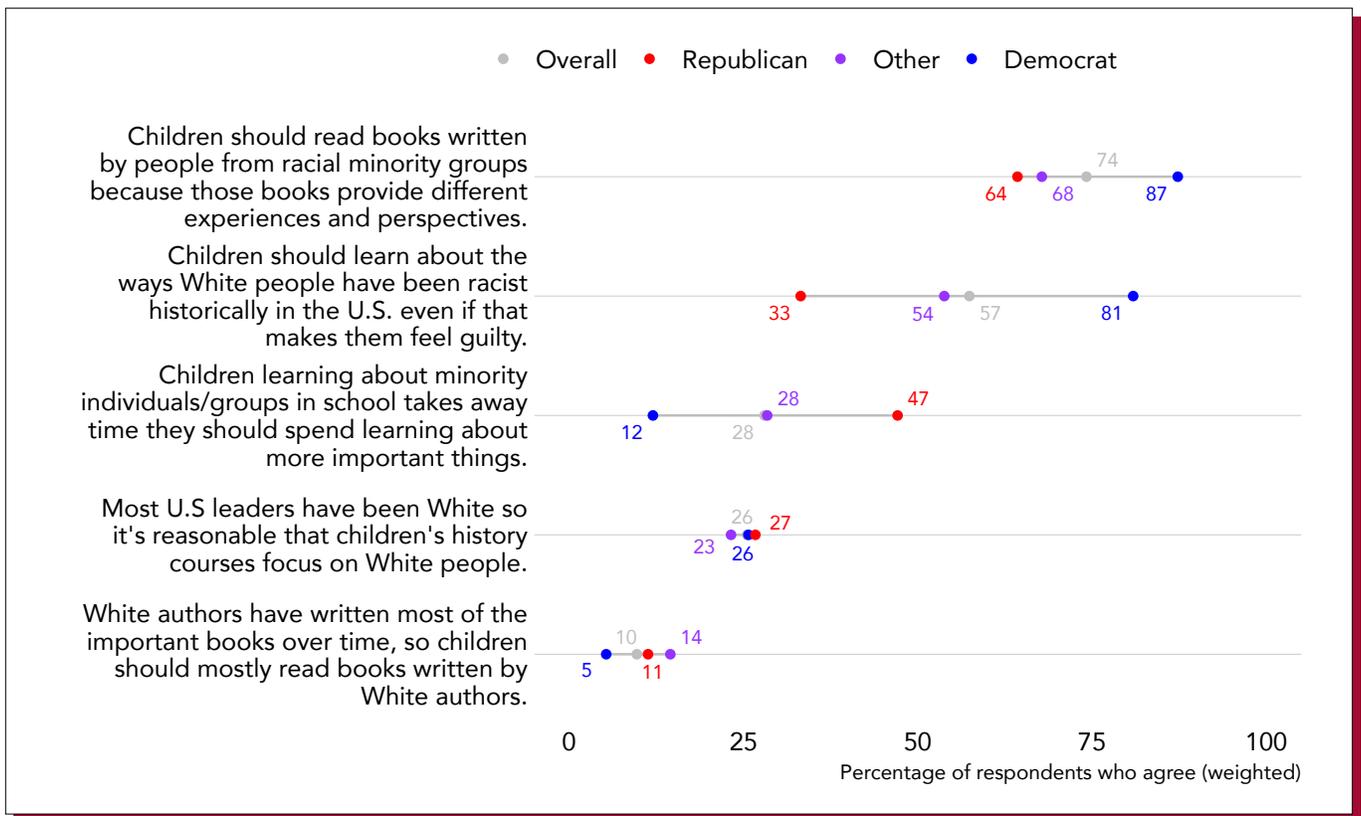


However, while overall nearly 60% agree children should learn how White people have been racist historically, even if that makes them feel guilty, there is a tremendous partisan divide: 81% agreement from Democrats, 33% Republican agreement, and Other in the middle with a slight majority at

54% (Figure 14). This result sheds light on the stark partisanship regarding views on the appropriateness of race-related classroom scenarios. Republicans want to protect children from feeling guilty about historical racism, while Democrats and the majority of those with other partisan affiliations do not share this concern.

Though without Republican majority support (47%), we also found a large inter-party gap concerning “Time spent learning about minority groups/individuals taking away time learning about more important things” (12% of Democrats agree). However, the magnitude of the difference, 35 percentage points, is less than the 48-point partisan split in agreement to a similar statement: “Including LGBTQ topics in school takes too much time away from academic topics like math and science” (75% Republican, 56% Other, 27% Democrat).

FIGURE 14. REASONS FOR ALLOWING OR RESTRICTING RACE-RELATED CLASSROOM SCENARIOS, BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



Appropriateness of sexual education scenarios

In fall 2022, we asked about the appropriateness of children learning about sex education topics including consent, safe-sex practices, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Virtually all adults (94%) thought high school students should have sex education as part of their curriculum, with a partisan breakdown of 98% of Democrats and 90% of Republicans. At the elementary level, 34% agreed that sex education belongs in the curriculum.

This time, wanting to better understand resistance to children learning these topics at the elementary level, we probed deeper. Greater insight is necessary given that puberty typically begins between the ages of 8 and 13 for girls, and between 9-14 for boys; thus, some students start going through puberty in elementary school. In fall 2023, we asked adults their perspectives on the appropriateness of 10 sex education classroom scenarios, separately for elementary and high school students, to gain finer-grained understanding. We share those scenarios and their abbreviations in Table 3.

TABLE 3. SEX EDUCATION SCENARIOS, FULL AND ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT.

ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT (FROM FIGURES)	FULL ITEM TEXT (FROM SURVEY)
Consent and rights over own body	A discussion about the importance of consent and rights over your own body.
Safe sex education and birth control	Teaching students about safe sex, including birth control choices.
Egg and sperm create life	A class discussion about the fact that both egg and sperm are required to create human life.
Age-appropriate anatomy images in textbooks	Books on a classroom bookshelf with pictures of male and female anatomy that are age-appropriate (e.g., cartoons for younger students; medical drawings for older students).
Sex ed lesson with hands-on materials	A sex education lesson with hands-on materials like condoms, IUDs, and anatomically accurate models of male and female reproductive systems.

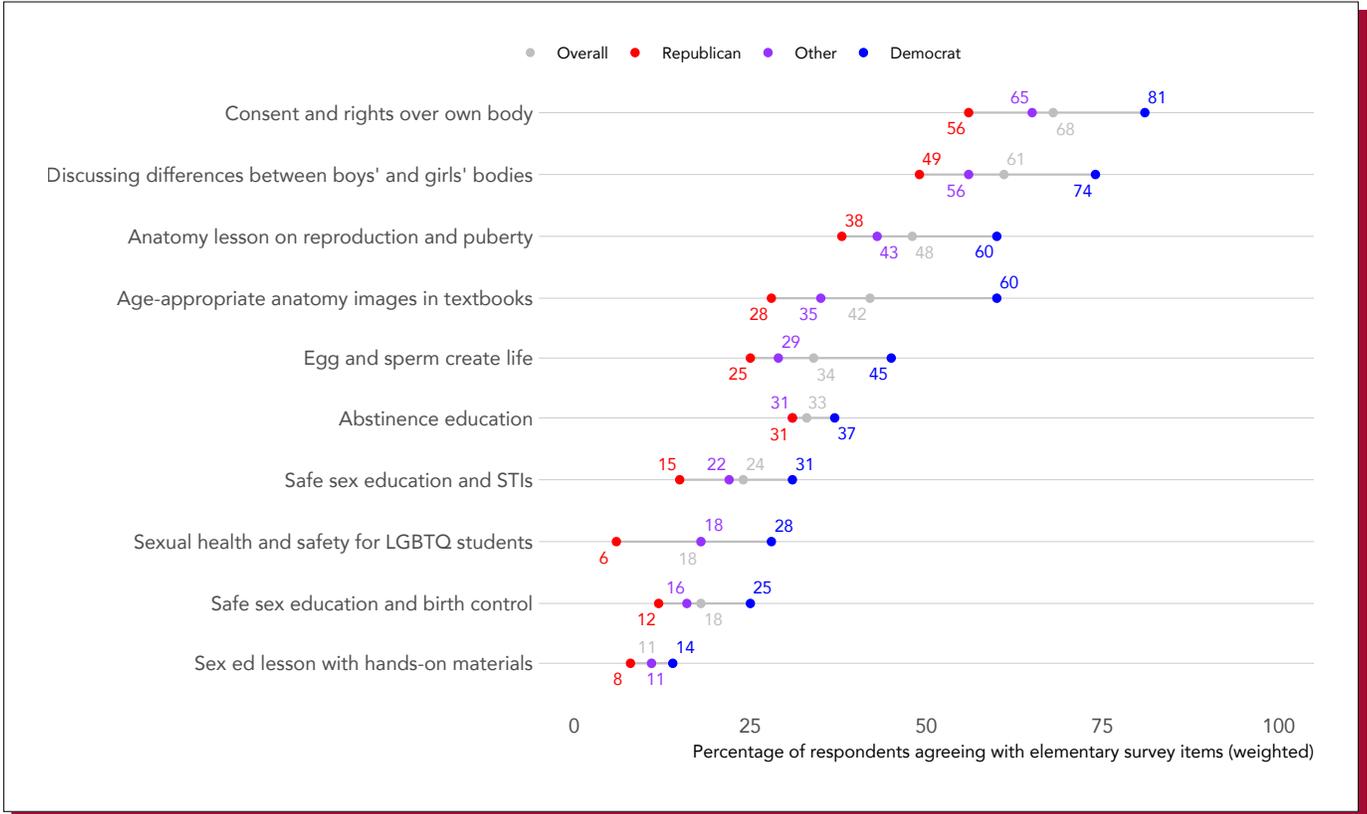
ABBREVIATED ITEM TEXT (FROM FIGURES)	FULL ITEM TEXT (FROM SURVEY)
Discussing differences between boys' and girls' bodies	Talking about differences between boys' and girls' bodies.
Abstinence education	Teaching about abstinence.
Safe sex education and STIs	Teaching students about safe sex, including sexually transmitted infections.
Anatomy lesson on reproduction and puberty	A lesson on human anatomy covering reproductive systems and changes during puberty.
Sexual health and safety for LGBTQ students	A lesson about sexual health and safety for LGBTQ students.

The majority of respondents do not approve of most sex education scenarios in elementary school

Of 10 specific classroom scenarios, listed in Figure 15, a majority of adults believe only two are appropriate for elementary children: talking about differences between boys' and girls' bodies (61% approval), and discussion about the importance of consent and rights over one's own body (68% approval). Three-quarters of Americans do not believe elementary children should be exposed to lessons explicitly related to intercourse or sexual health, including safe sex and STIs (24% approval), birth control (18%), and birth control with hands-on materials (11%).

In general, the partisan divides are smaller for sex education classroom scenarios than for LGBTQ scenarios. However, there is one elementary school scenario with majority support from Democrats (almost two-thirds) and opposition from most Republicans (fewer than one-third): a lesson on human anatomy and a book with age-appropriate pictures of male and female anatomy. On other items, partisan divides are somewhat smaller, and the parties agree about overall support. For example, though there is a 16-point difference between parties in their support for classroom scenarios related to safe sex and STIs, neither party shows majority support for teaching about these topics in elementary school (31% of Democrats, 15% of Republicans).

FIGURE 15. PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION AGREEING SEX EDUCATION CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ARE APPROPRIATE IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

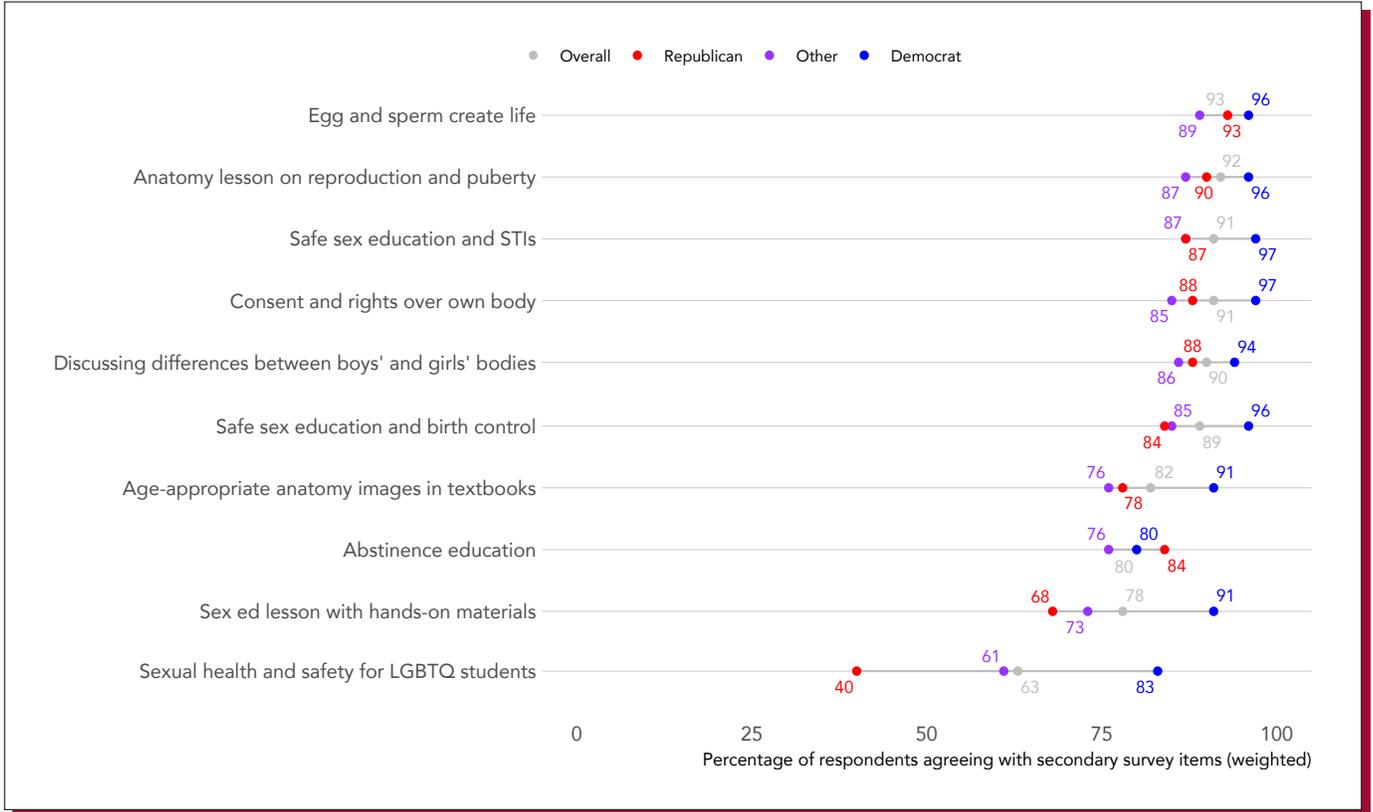


Strong bipartisan support for sex education scenarios in high school

In contrast to elementary school, overall, about two-thirds or more of adults believe all 10 sex education classroom scenarios are appropriate in high school (Figure 16). The only scenario with less than majority support by any partisan subgroup is a lesson about sexual health and safety for LGBTQ students (40% of Republicans approve versus 83% of Democrats and 61% of other political affiliations). Approving of all 10 classroom scenarios in high schools are more than 80% of Democrats and over 70% of Other (excepting the LGBTQ scenario with 61%).⁸

⁸ Given the relatively high partisan agreement in support for sex education scenarios relative to LGBTQ and race, we do not use IRT to describe sex education results in the text. We provide a visual summary of sex education IRT results in Appendix C.

FIGURE 16. PERCENTAGES OF ADULTS OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION AGREEING SEX EDUCATION CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ARE APPROPRIATE IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.

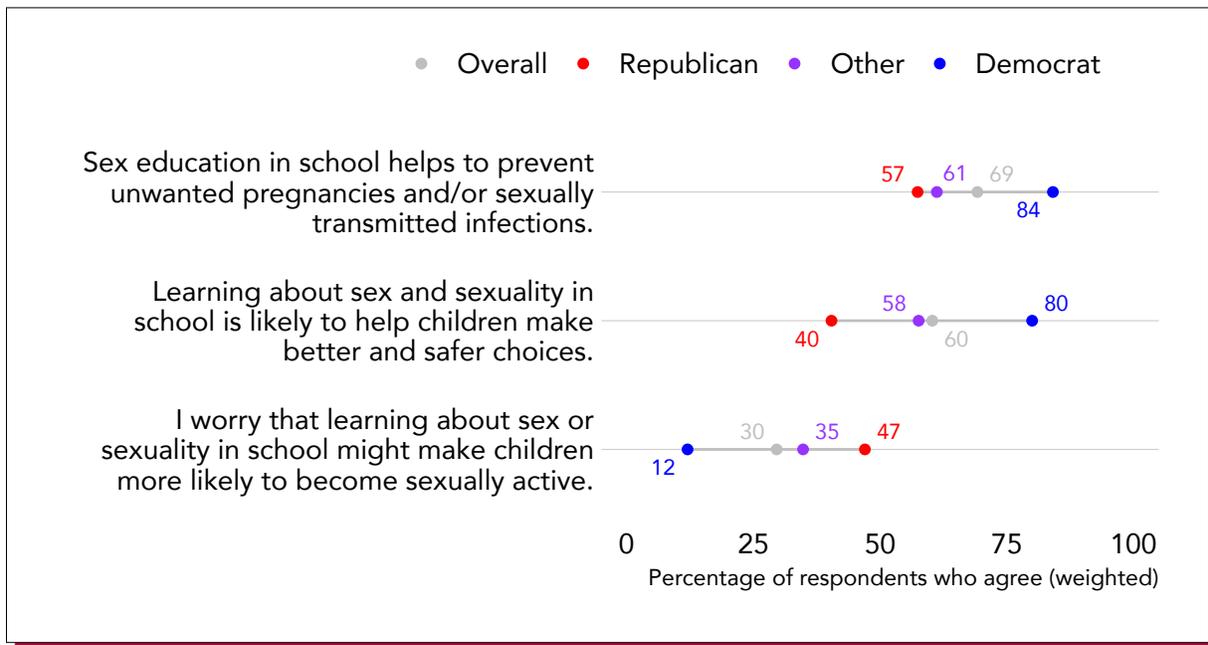


Reasons for supporting or not supporting sex education classroom scenarios

A systematic review of 218 studies of school-based sex education conducted over three decades highlights many [benefits of such programs for children starting in elementary school](#). To learn more about the underlying reasons for why adults feel sex education classroom scenarios are appropriate or not, we again presented respondents a list of potential explanations and asked the extent to which they agreed with each. We found bipartisan majority agreement, near seven in ten overall, who think sex education helps prevent unwanted pregnancies and/or sexually transmitted diseases (84% Democrat, 61% Other, 57% Republican). However, as shown in Figure 15, a majority of adults do not approve of most elementary classroom scenarios, likely because they feel unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases are less relevant for elementary children.

We also learned about underlying partisan differences in beliefs about sex education. Many more Democrats (80%) think learning about sex and sexuality in school is likely to help children make better and safer choices, compared to Republicans (40%). Those who don't identify with either party are in the middle at 58% agreement (Figure 17). While only about one in eight Democrats worry that learning about sex and sexuality in school might make children more likely to be sexually active, nearly half (47%) of Republicans worry about this. Republicans are far more concerned that children learning about sex and sexuality in school will negatively influence their behavior, while Democrats believe the opposite.

FIGURE 17. REASONS FOR ALLOWING OR RESTRICTING SEX EDUCATION CLASSROOM SCENARIOS BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



Parental Control

In 2023, many lawmakers translated beliefs about parental control of curriculum into legislation.

In 2023, many lawmakers translated beliefs about parental control of curriculum into legislation. As we argued in a [recent working paper](#), “parents’ rights” advocates believe they are entitled to know what their children are learning, particularly regarding race and LGBTQ issues, and that they should be able to restrict lessons and books they find inappropriate.

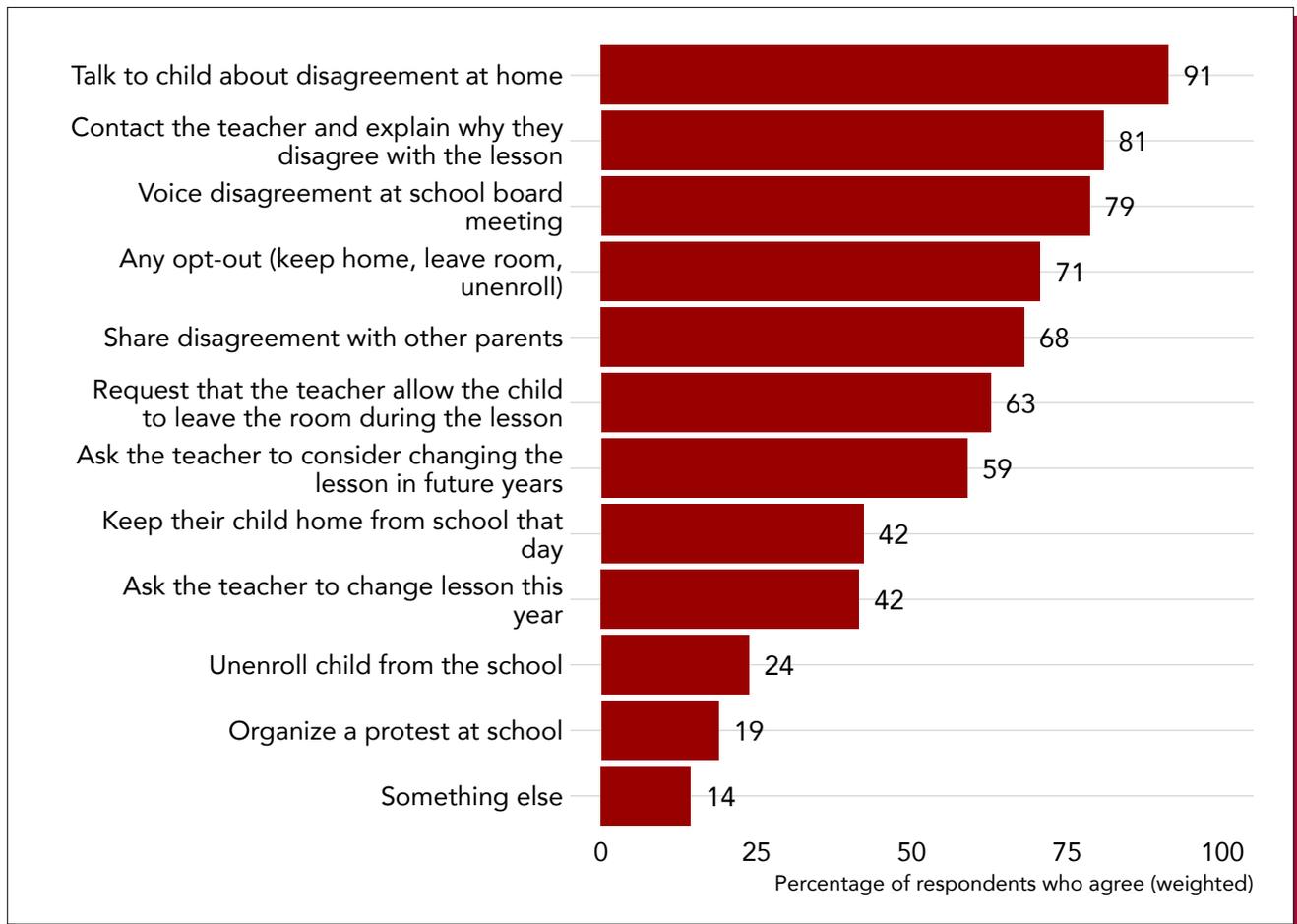
In fall 2022, our survey demonstrated widespread agreement that parents should have more control over the curriculum than they currently do, and that parents and teachers should decide what school curriculum should contain. While results show agreement that parents should be able to opt their children out of content with which they disagree, Republicans drive support for this position, with Democrats approximately split.

But what does more control look like in practice? In fall 2023, we asked questions designed to prompt adults to think about what parents should do when they disagree with content their child is learning in school.

Adults broadly support direct forms of parent engagement, are less supportive of removing children from the classroom or more active forms of engagement

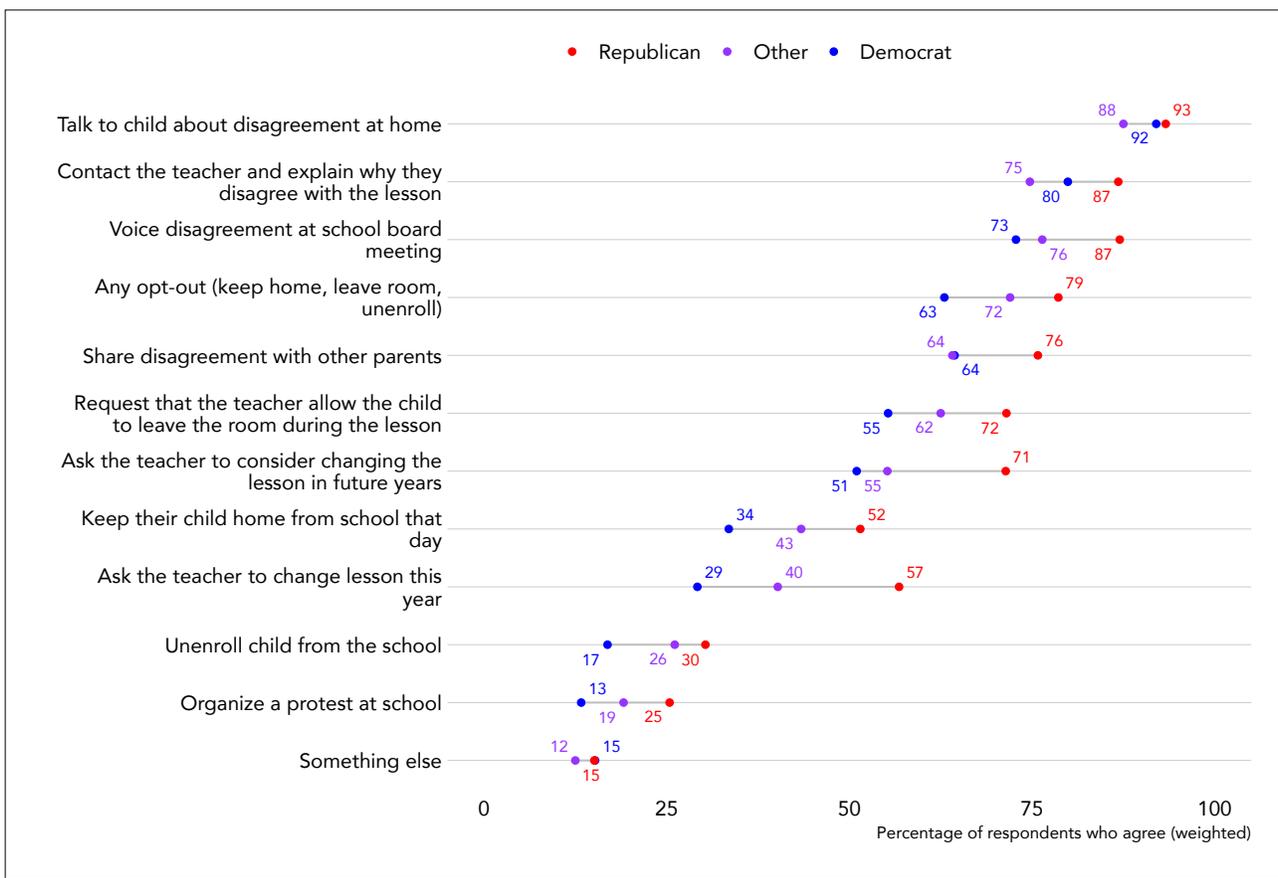
Nearly all adults across political alignments (91%) believe it is appropriate for parents to discuss their disagreements with the lesson at home with their child (Figure 18). There is also bipartisan support (81%) for parents’ engaging with educators about their disagreement with a lesson or with leadership at a school board meeting (79%), and nearly six in ten (59%) support a parent asking the teacher to change the lesson in future years as part of such discussion. It is less common for adults believe that it is appropriate for a parent, in response to disagreeing with a lesson, to unenroll their child (24%) or organize a protest (19%).

FIGURE 18. ADULTS’ OVERALL SUPPORT FOR ACTIVITIES PARENTS COULD TAKE WHEN THEY DISAGREE WITH CLASSROOM CONTENT.



As we show in Figure 19, there is more partisan agreement than disagreement, with the largest gaps present for asking the teacher to change the lesson either this year or in the future (Republicans are 20-30 percentage points more likely to support these options than Democrats).

FIGURE 19. ADULTS’ SUPPORT FOR ACTIVITIES PARENTS COULD TAKE WHEN THEY DISAGREE WITH CLASSROOM CONTENT, BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



We also asked about the appropriateness of three forms of opt-out: requesting that the child be allowed to leave the room during the lesson, keeping the child home from school on the day of that lesson, and unenrolling the child from the school. Support for requesting the child leave the room during a disagreeable lesson is bipartisan (71% of Republicans in support; 55% of Democrats), which approximately aligns to the levels of support we reported in 2022.

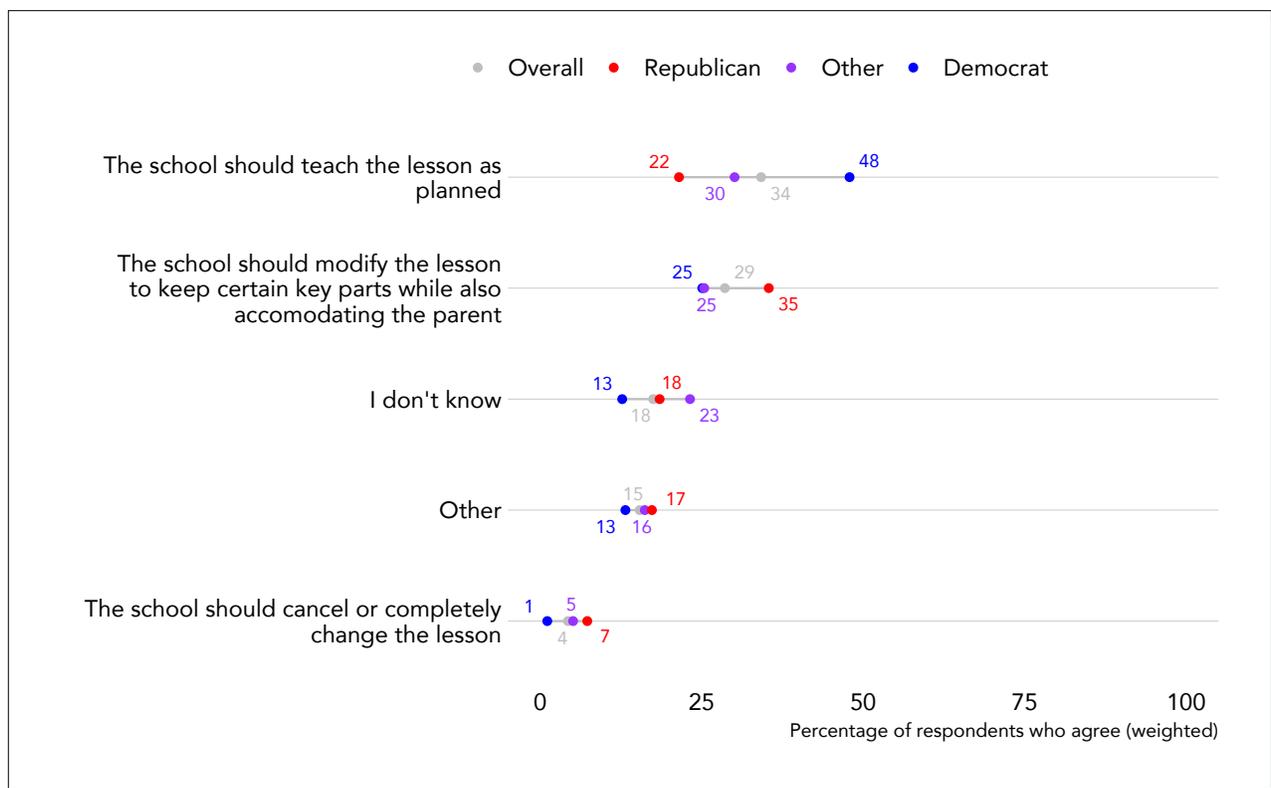
There is less support, and more partisan disagreement, for more disruptive forms of opt-out: 51% of Republicans believe it is appropriate for a parent to keep their child home from school on the day of a lesson with which they disagree, compared to 34% of Democrats. For a parent to unenroll their child from school in response to a lesson with which they disagree, 30% of Republicans say it is appropriate, compared to 17% of Democrats. Seven in ten adults support at least one of those forms of opt-out (79% of Republicans; 63% of Democrats).

Taken together, we found broad and bipartisan support for voicing dissent—to their child, to educators, and to the school board—and of opting a child out of a lesson. For the more active forms of dissent, support drops and takes closer alignment with political affiliation.

Americans are split on how to handle the practical details that follow from parental control

We also asked respondents how they think a school should react when a parent voices disagreement with an upcoming lesson. Respondents are split—more than one-third say the school should teach the lesson as planned (i.e., disregard the parent’s complaint), less than 30% say the school should modify the lesson to address the complaint, and another third either have a different idea of what the school should do or were not sure (Figure 20). The option of having the school either cancel the lesson or completely change it receives minimal support (4%).

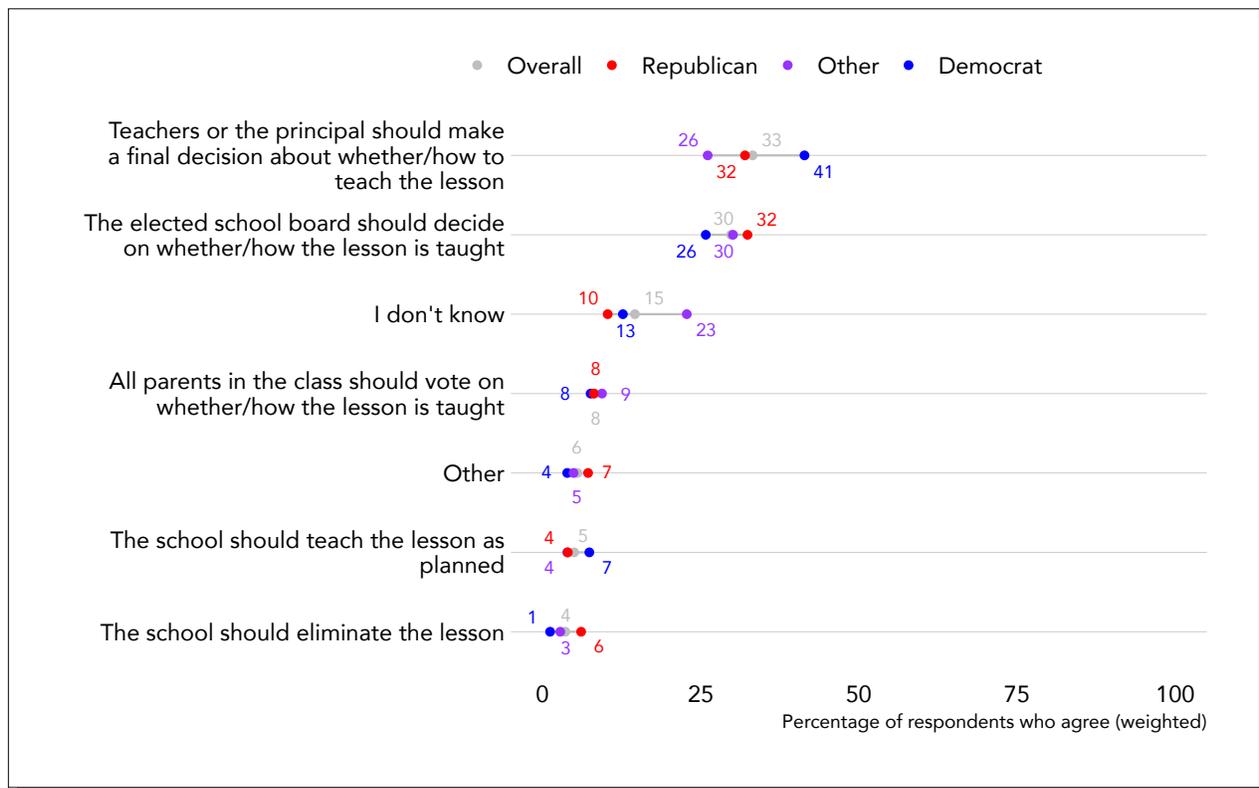
FIGURE 20. ADULTS’ SUPPORT FOR ACTIVITIES SCHOOLS COULD TAKE WHEN PARENTS DISAGREE WITH CLASSROOM CONTENT, OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



These beliefs show partisan splits, with Democrats tending to be more deferential to schools (48% believe the school should teach the lesson as planned; 25% believe the school should modify it) than Republicans (respectively, 22% and 35%).

Going one step further, for respondents who report the school should do anything other than teach the lesson as planned, we asked how schools should adjudicate situations where multiple parents voice disagreement and those parents also disagree with each other on what ought to be done. Again, there is little consensus. One-third of respondents believe the teacher or principal should make the final decision over what is taught in such a situation, another 30% believe the elected school board should decide, and the rest either had a different idea about how to navigate such a situation (e.g., leaving it up to a vote of parents) or did not know (Figure 21). Again receiving the least support was the maximalist option of eliminating the lesson (4%). Support for each of these courses of action is strikingly similar by political affiliation, with the exception that Other is more likely to respond “I don’t know” than those affiliated with Democrats or Republicans.

FIGURE 21. ADULTS’ BELIEFS ABOUT HOW SCHOOLS SHOULD REACT WHEN A PARENT VOICES DISAGREEMENT WITH AN UPCOMING LESSON, OVERALL AND BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



Despite broad support for increased parental control over school curriculum, our results suggest opinions are split on how control ought to play out in practice, though not by partisan differences. Such variance in overall responses—more than demonstrated through other results—might suggest adults across the political spectrum haven't typically thought through the logistics of how parents should exert control. The actual process for disagreeing with curriculum and asking educators to respond is unclear.

Language articulating the potential negative consequences of opting students out makes adults less supportive of asking the teacher for a different activity for a child

In 2022, we learned that nearly two-thirds of adults support a parent's choice to opt their child out of lessons that include content they do not support. However, we wondered whether respondents were considering the potential consequences, or real-world cascading implications, of choosing opt-outs—and if they had not, whether awareness of such potential drawbacks might influence their answers about how schools and parents should respond.

We tested whether highlighting drawbacks of opting out might diminish adults' tendency to support opting students out of lessons. Using an experimental design, we randomized whether survey respondents were exposed to contextual information about the implications of opting out. First, all respondents read about a hypothetical scenario where a school principal needed to decide whether to honor a parent's request that their child do an alternate activity during an upcoming "History lesson that includes content that (the parent) disagrees with." Next, we asked a random half of participants to choose whether they thought the principal should honor the parent's request or not. We presented the other random half, the treatment condition, with a short additional paragraph describing the teacher's desire for all students to see new perspectives and learn new things. The paragraph, which also highlighted the logistical difficulty of accommodating opt-out requests, presented only to the treatment condition was:

But the teacher believes that all students should participate, because learning about content they might not otherwise hear or learn about helps them. They may see a new perspective, learn to be a critical thinker, or simply learn an important new fact. And, it can be hard for a teacher to accommodate every parent's wishes for every lesson for every child.

This prompt served to highlight drawbacks of opting out that may not have been front-of-mind for most participants, while also painting the hypothetical teacher as someone who values student learning first and foremost. Portraying the teacher this way addresses a concern among some critics that teachers are more concerned with “indoctrinating” children than teaching them. We acknowledge that we tested just one message, and different messages could have different effects on respondents’ views. The focus of this exercise was to show the potential influence of additional information on participants’ responses.

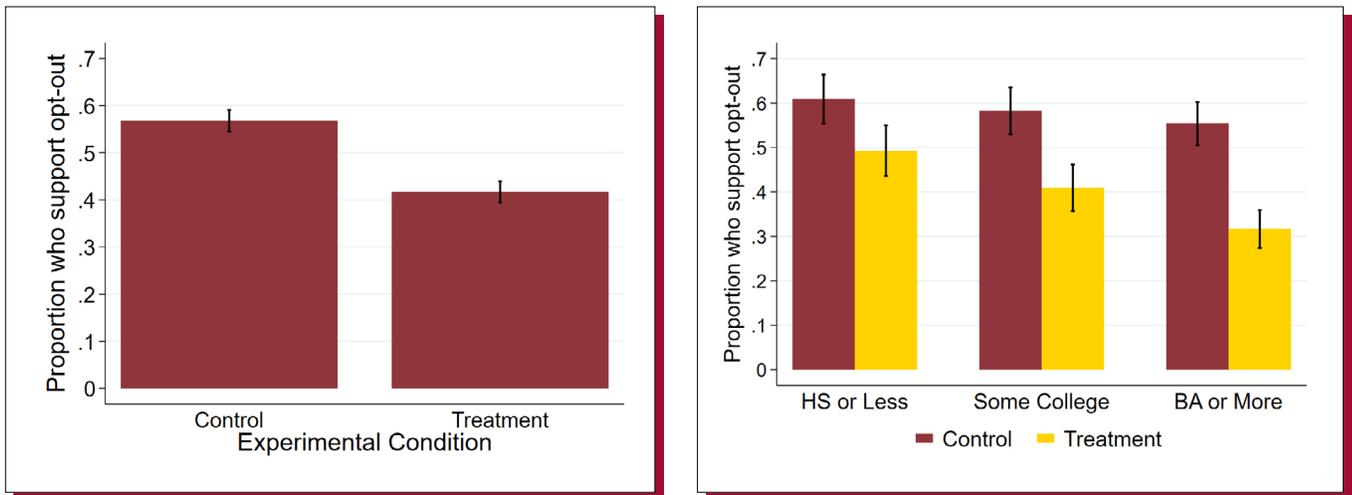
Leveraging random assignment of condition, the two groups of respondents were similar along lines of race, income, political affiliation, and other background characteristics (see Appendix E). This sample comparability is important, as compositional differences between those in the treatment and control conditions (which we did not observe) potentially could explain observed results, rather than the experimental manipulation.

This prompt served to highlight drawbacks of opting out that may not have been front-of-mind for most participants, while also painting the hypothetical teacher as someone who values student learning first and foremost.

We found that the additional paragraph substantially reduces support for honoring the opt-out request. While 57% of respondents in the control condition say the principal should honor the request, only 41% of treatment-condition respondents say the same (Figure 22, panel 1). This 16-point difference amounts to a nearly 30% reduction in the proportion of adults who support selective parental opt-out after reading just a few sentences about its downsides and establishing the teacher’s “trustworthiness.” Notably, this finding was independent of political party—the experimental manipulation is no more or less effective for Republicans, Democrats, or Other. The results also do not differ by whether or not respondents have K-12 children living in their household. We did find evidence of greater treatment effects for college graduates than for respondents with lower levels of education (Figure 22, panel 2). It is unclear exactly what drives that difference, particularly given one might anticipate the opposite, that those with less education may more readily change opinion in the face of additional information.

These results imply that messaging about these issues could affect public opinion—or potentially even parent action—about parental opt-out choices. Our results specifically suggest that messaging about teachers’ intentions or the costs of opting out could reduce support for opt-outs, and we have no doubt that a variety of messaging strategies could affect parents’ views. After all, different messaging could increase support for opt-outs. Though we did not explicitly test that hypothesis, these results exemplify how much messaging matters.

FIGURE 22. THE IMPACT OF SHARING WITH ADULTS THE BENEFITS OF CHILDREN LEARNING ABOUT ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES AND DRAWBACKS OF OPTING OUT, OVERALL AND BY RESPONDENT’S HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT.





Discussion

As partisan divisions continue to deepen, movements for parents' rights and curricular reform proliferate, the population of parents and children becomes more and more diverse, and privatization of public education receives legislative support, our results provide insight into the trends and drivers of attitudes about teaching and learning in U.S. public education. By helping to isolate actual parent/adult values and beliefs from politically charged terminology, they inform policy as well as effective messaging strategies.

By helping to isolate actual parent/adult values and beliefs from politically charged terminology, [results] inform policy as well as effective messaging strategies.

Privatization of education and school choice are not as sharply partisan as other issues

We found bipartisan support for public education and its purposes, and a lack of partisan splits about the foundational premises of school choice. These results indicate that while school-choice legislation is a partisan issue in terms of who is passing laws, with Republicans supporting and Democrats not, public opinion on the issues underlying school choice is not nearly as divided politically. Taken together, these results indicate privatization of education and school choice are not as sharply partisan as other issues we asked about.

Those who believe in the inclusion of LGBTQ topics in schools have work to do to increase public support

Adults' support for LGBTQ classroom scenarios is strongly tied to their partisan affiliation. This gulf is colossal, portending ongoing related battles in America's culture war. For those who think LGBTQ issues are important to include in schools—and indeed they likely are for the [wellbeing of LGBTQ children and those from LGBTQ families](#)—they have a great deal of work to do to convince those who don't. Because responses to LGBTQ scenarios are so sensitive to grade level, proponents of LGBTQ-inclusive education might focus on age-appropriateness in advocating for LGBTQ curriculum and supports.

Partisan differences in views about teaching about race are not all rooted in the panic over Critical Race Theory

Teaching about current racial inequality also is strongly tied to partisan affiliation, though to a somewhat lesser extent than LGBTQ issues. Even as the panic over Critical Race Theory fades, there remain fundamental partisan differences in support for teaching about race-related topics such as slavery, discrimination, and inequality. Like with LGBTQ topics, those who believe in the importance of schools addressing certain issues of race have work to do.

The public supports parents' rights to intervene in education, though the logistics of how this happens are less clear

Though some communities are homes to larger or smaller majorities of Republicans or Democrats, virtually all are “purple” to some extent. Coupled with stark partisan divides in the topics children should be learning, as well as high bipartisan support for parents' rights to intervene in their children's educational provision, these results suggest current and ongoing community-level struggles and stress for all involved in provision of children's education. Children themselves will lose out the most.

Superintendents, school boards, teachers, and parents must learn to productively navigate the disagreement.

There are some steps forward

A first step is for communities to embrace common support for public education and its purposes. This result was not a given; indeed, it was one of the most surprising findings of our study.

A second step is to recognize and attempt to reach consensus about how to address key differences in beliefs, including, though likely not limited to:

- Democrats think teaching children to embrace differences is a much more important purpose of education than Republicans, who do not think this is a primary purpose.

- Republicans are worried about children feeling guilty if they learn about racial injustices and inequality; Democrats are not.
- Republicans are more worried than Democrats that learning about topics related to LGBTQ and race will detract from learning what they view as more important content and skills.
- Republicans are more worried than Democrats that reading or learning about transgender or gay people might make children think about whether they are or want to be trans or gay.

Third, communities can harness bipartisan agreement that children should be reading books by authors from racial minority groups, because those books provide different experiences and perspectives.

Finally, messaging about the benefits of children learning diverse perspectives, and the logistical challenges of opting parents out of content with which they disagree, is effective for both Democrats and Republicans.

While our fall 2022 results highlighted broad areas of agreement and disagreement, and those for optimism and concern, this study provides considerably more detail describing each of these areas. We hope these results will provide educators, policymakers, parents, and the public with actionable steps to take in the best interest of students and their greater communities.

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Appendix A: Sample Demographics

TABLE A1. STATISTICS DESCRIBING SAMPLE FEATURES (WEIGHTED)

	WEIGHTED %
Democrat	39.6
Republican	33.7
Other	26.7
K-12 child in the household	49.0
No K-12 child in the household	51.0
Is a parent	75.4
Not a parent	24.6
Responding adult attended private school	25.2
Responding adult did not attend private school	74.8
At least one of responding adult's children (or in the household) attended private school	22.8
None of responding adult's children (or children in the household) attended private school	77.2
Responding adult has at least one close family member or friend who attended private school	38.3
Responding adult has no close family members or friends who attended private school	61.7
Responding adult has at least one friend whose children attend private school	31.1
Responding adult has no friends whose children attend private school	68.9

**TABLE A2: SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS (UNWEIGHTED AND WEIGHTED)
COMPARED TO U.S. DEMOGRAPHICS**

	UNWEIGHTED %	WEIGHTED %	NATIONAL % ⁹
Female	63	51	50
Male	37	49	50
Age 18-34	17	21	29
Age 35-54	49	41	32
Age 55-64	16	15	16
Age 65+	18	23	22
Education (HS degree or less)	20	38	38
Education (some college)	35	26	29
Education (BA or more)	45	36	33
HH income (\$24,999 or less)	18	21	16
HH income (\$25,000-\$49,999)	18	20	18
HH income (\$50,000-\$74,999)	16	16	16
HH income (\$75,000-\$149,999)	30	28	30
HH income (\$150,000 or more)	18	14	20
Non-Hispanic White	61	61	58
Non-Hispanic Black	10	12	12
Non-Hispanic Asian	7	5	6
Non-Hispanic Other	6	5	5
Hispanic/Latino	17	17	19

⁹ National demographics from 2022 American Community Survey one-year estimates.

Appendix B: Form A and B Sample Balance

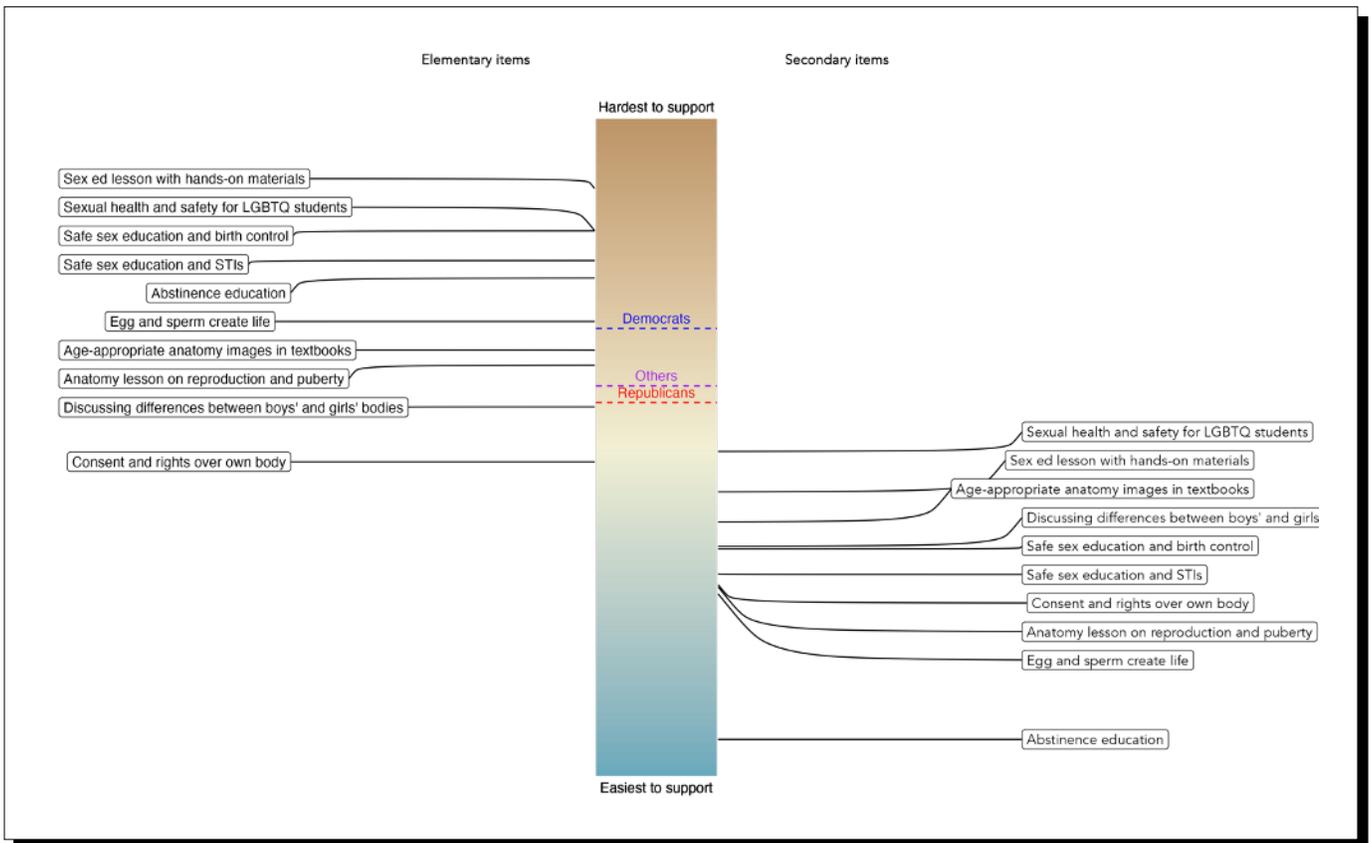
TABLE B1. SAMPLE BALANCE BY SURVEY FORM (UNWEIGHTED)

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE?

		FORM A (%)	FORM B (%)	(P-VALUE <.05)
Gender	Female	64	62	No (0.097)
	Male	36	38	No (0.097)
Age	18-34	17	16	No (0.334)
	35-54	48	50	No (0.247)
	55-64	16	16	No (0.991)
	65+	18	18	No (0.578)
Education	HS or less	21	20	No (0.283)
	Some college	34	36	No (0.253)
	BA or more	45	45	No (0.822)
Political ID	Democrat	44	44	No (0.747)
	Republican	32	32	No (0.948)
	Other	24	25	No (0.658)
Household income	\$25k or less	18	17	No (0.473)
	\$25k-\$50k	19	18	No (0.468)
	\$50k-\$75k	17	15	No (0.165)
	\$75k-\$150k	28	31	Yes (0.031)
	\$150k or more	18	18	No (0.848)
Race/ethnicity	NH White	60	62	No (0.276)
	NH Black	11	9	No (0.147)
	NH Asian	8	6	Yes (0.015)
	NH Other	5	6	No (0.567)
	Hispanic	18	18	No (0.310)

Appendix C: Sex Education IRT Visual

FIGURE C1. DIFFICULTY OF SEX EDUCATION CLASSROOM SCENARIOS TO APPROVE OF IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY PARTISAN AFFILIATION.



Appendix D: Method for Estimating Survey Participants' Latent Support for Teaching Controversial Topics in Elementary and Secondary Classrooms

To construct a measurement scale that places both survey respondents and items on the same continuum of support for different classroom scenarios, we fit two-parameter logistic (2-PL) item response theory (IRT) using the [MIRT](#) package in R. More formally, we estimated individuals' latent ability—that is, θ_i , which captures the degree to which respondent i supports the classroom scenario questions (k) included in each scale—using the 2PL model formally expressed in equation (1) below:

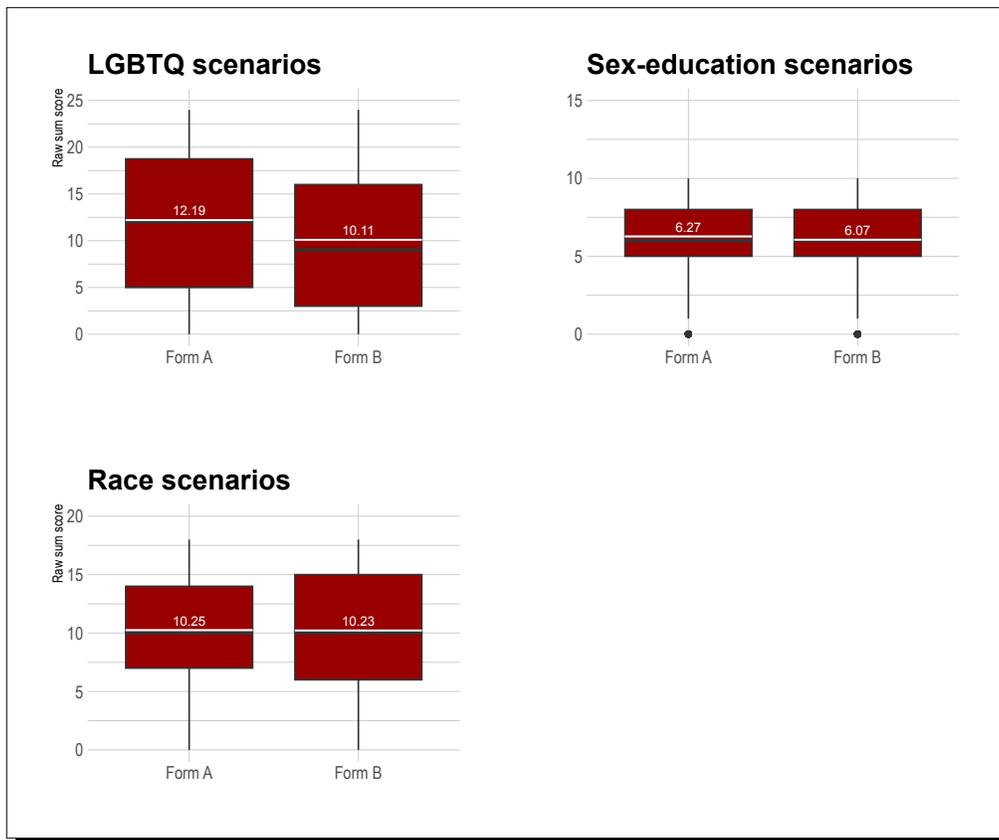
$$\theta_i = P(y_i=1) = \gamma_{k[ij]} (\text{logit}^{-1}(\theta_{j[ij]} - \beta_{(k[ij])})) \quad (1)$$

The 2PL model calculates students' latent ability as a combination of the difficulty of a given item (β_k), and the questions' ability to discriminate between “low” and “high” ability respondents (γ_k). More difficult items have lower rates of endorsement among respondents than easier items, and items with a larger estimated discrimination parameter are those that do a better of classifying respondents

according to their ability level. Respondents with higher scaled scores (θ_i) are more likely to express agreement with classroom scenarios that most respondents were unlikely to endorse—that is, more difficult items with a higher estimated difficulty—while respondents with lower scaled scores are less likely to endorse more controversial classroom or pedagogical choices.

Due to the length of the survey scales—the LGBTQ measurement scale, for instance, includes 48 unique items—we randomized survey items to one of two forms (Form A and Form B) to minimize the burden imposed on survey participants; then we randomized participants to receive either form A or B.¹⁰ We estimated the IRT models separately by form and survey scale to account for differences in item difficulty found when examining the distribution of raw item and person scores between forms (Figure D1).

FIGURE D1. DISTRIBUTION OF RAW SUM SCORES BETWEEN FORMS, BY SURVEY SCALE.



¹⁰ Table B1 in Appendix B demonstrates the effectiveness of the randomization of respondents to form and the comparability of the respondent sample based on observed baseline characteristics.

Figures D2-D4 display the difficulty parameters for each survey item estimated through the IRT method. For each survey scale, we arrayed the questions in descending order of difficulty: items at the top of the figure—that is, those with a higher ranking—are classroom scenarios that garnered a greater level of support from survey respondents and, thus, were assigned a large, negative estimated difficulty. Conversely, items at the bottom of the figure were more difficult to endorse. Items are further distinguished by the form to which they were randomly assigned, and whether the question asked if the respective classroom scenario was acceptable in an elementary or secondary classroom.

Because the IRT model places both items and respondents on the same measurement scale, the question difficulty estimates capture respondents' so-called 'ideal-points'¹¹ relative to their latent support for different classroom scenarios included in each survey scale—as such a respondent with an estimated θ_i of 1.0 is likely to endorse, or agree with, classroom scenarios with an estimated difficulty estimate of less than or equal to 1.0. For example, in Figure D2, a respondent with an estimated ability of 1.0—which represents the 85th percentile—has a greater than 50 percent chance of supporting all but four¹² of the 48 unique classroom scenarios proposed in the survey.

¹¹ Outside of education testing, this method is commonly used in political science to map legislators' positions along an ideological continuum to predict their support or opposition to bills using roll call voting data.

¹² On form A, these scenarios include “Discussing why students should play sports matching their gender identity” and “Reading an opposite-sex intimate scene,” while form B includes “Youths' right to gender-affirming medical care” and “Reading an opposite-sex intimate scene.”

FIGURE D2: ITEM DIFFICULTY PARAMETERS FROM A 2PL IRT MODEL FOR THE LGBTQ SURVEY SCALE, BY FORM AND SCHOOL LEVEL.

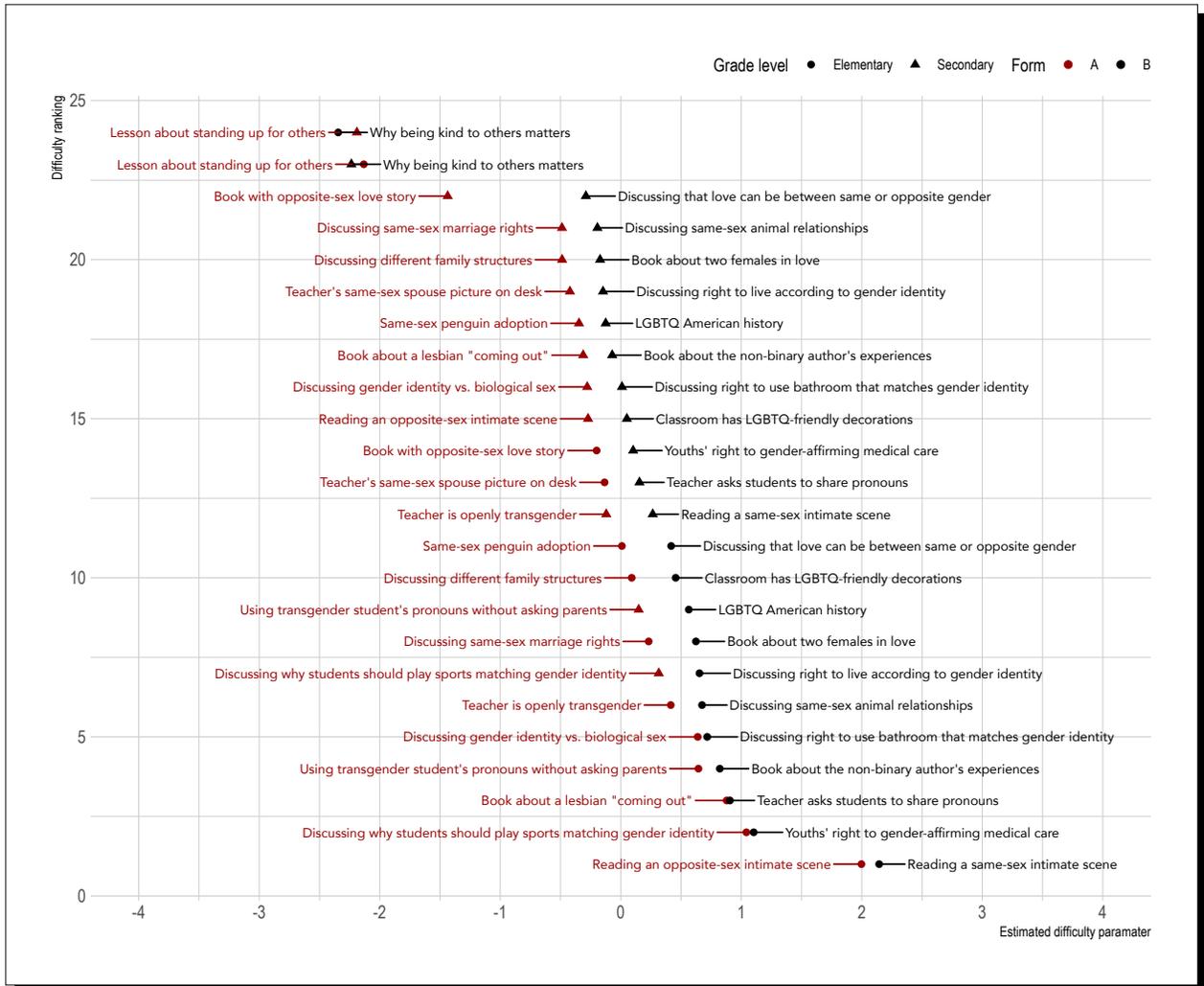
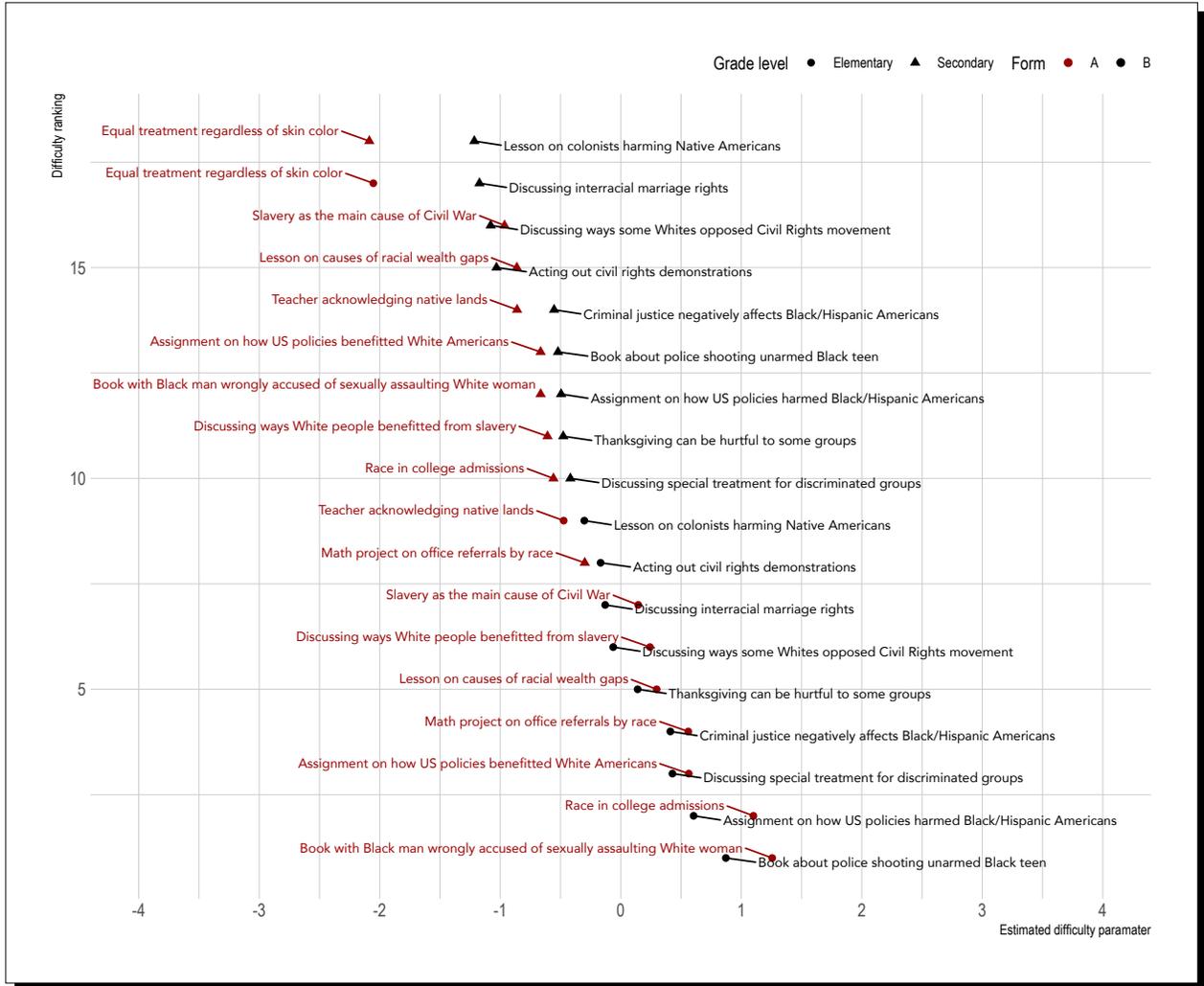


FIGURE D3. ITEM DIFFICULTY PARAMETERS FROM A 2PL IRT MODEL FOR THE SEX EDUCATION SURVEY SCALE, BY FORM AND SCHOOL LEVEL.



FIGURE D4: ITEM DIFFICULTY PARAMETERS FROM A 2PL IRT MODEL FOR THE RACE SURVEY SCALE, BY FORM AND SCHOOL LEVEL.



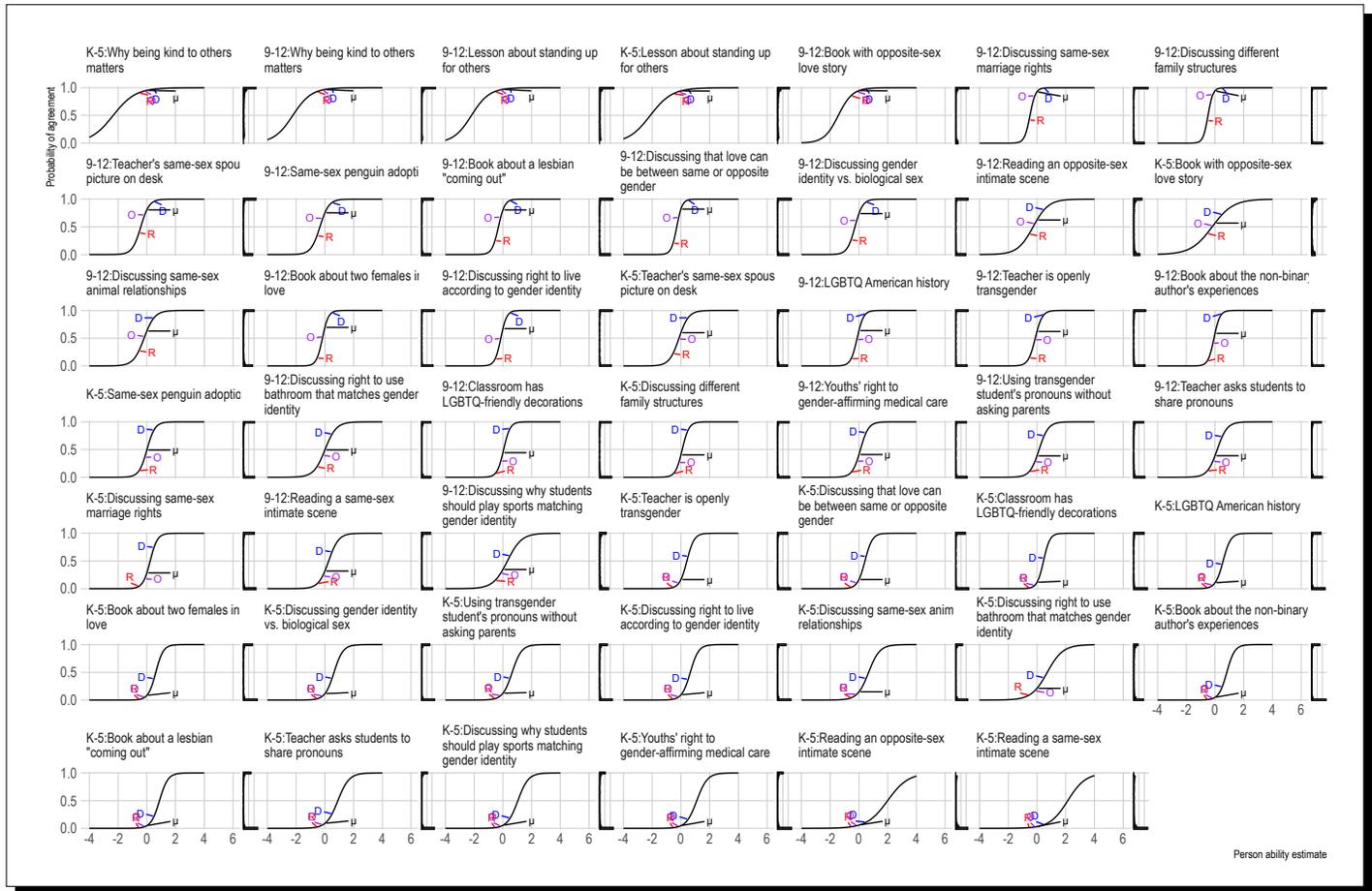
The item characteristic curves (ICCs) in D5-D7 visualize the relationship between respondents’ estimated person ability (θ_i)—that is, their latent support for classroom scenarios pertaining to one of the three controversial topics included in the survey—on the x-axis, and the probability they expressed agreement with each item, on the y-axis. On each plot, we superimposed the mean estimated person ability for four groups of respondents: Democrats (D), Other (I), Republicans

(R), and the typical survey respondent (μ)¹³. For each scale, the mean person ability is fixed; however, the mapping between a respondent's latent ability and the probability of agreeing with the delivery of a given classroom scenario varies depending on the difficulty of the item, and the strength of the relationship between ability and the likelihood of endorsing an item.

For instance, take two items with equal, below-average difficulty, but different discrimination coefficients: discussing gender identity compared to a person's sex assigned at birth, and a reading assignment containing a passage that portrays an intimate, heterosexual sex scene. This is evident visually by the different gradients, or steepness, of the predicted probability curves, but also in the partisan difference in the estimated probability of endorsing these classroom lessons. Democratic respondents were nearly 69 percentage points more likely than Republicans (95% versus 26%) to support teachers engaging in a discussion about gender identity with high school-aged students, and 44 percentage points more likely than Republicans (80% compared to 36%) to agree that exposing high school students to a reading assignment with an intimate heterosexual encounter is acceptable.

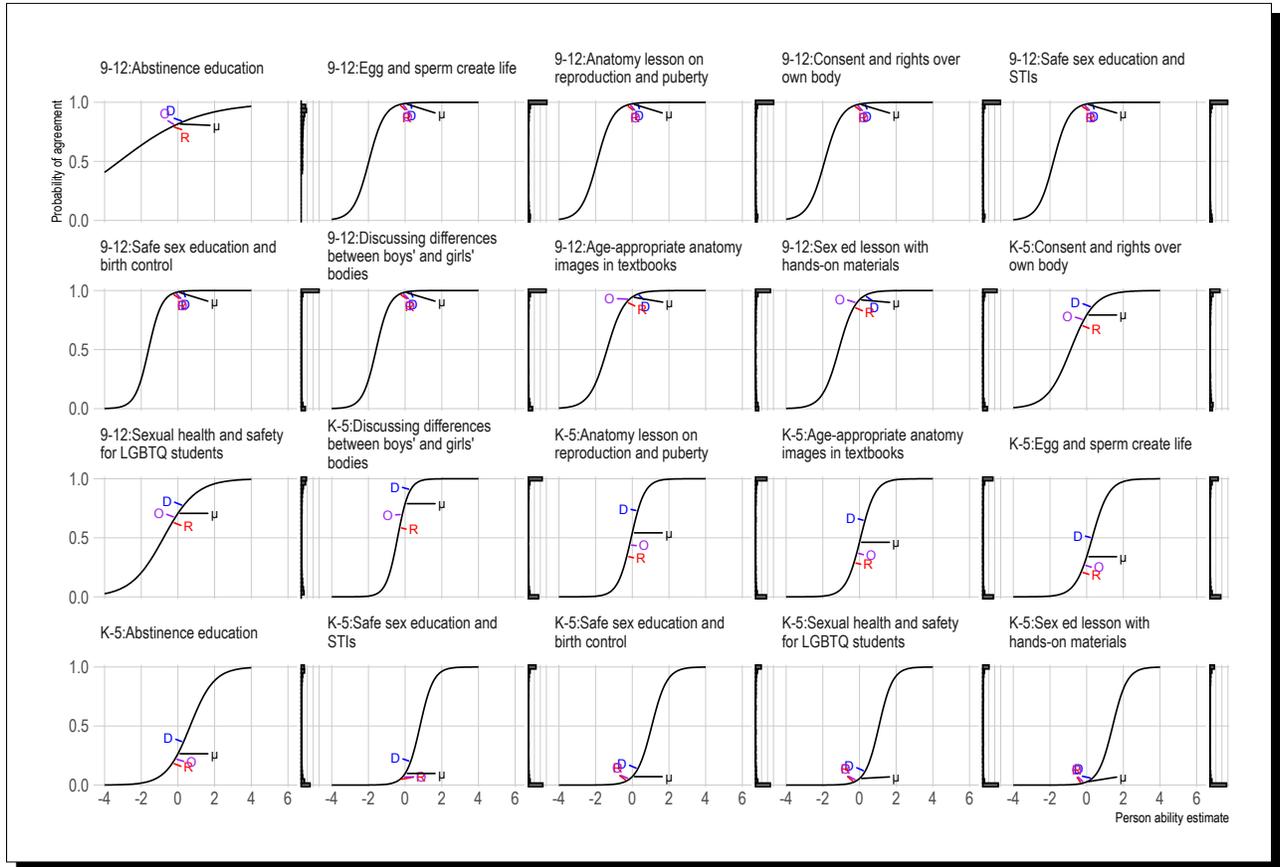
¹⁰ The average survey respondent for each scale has a mean latent ability estimate of zero.

FIGURE D5. ITEM CHARACTERISTIC CURVES DERIVED FROM A 2PL IRT MODEL, LGBTQ CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS SCALE.



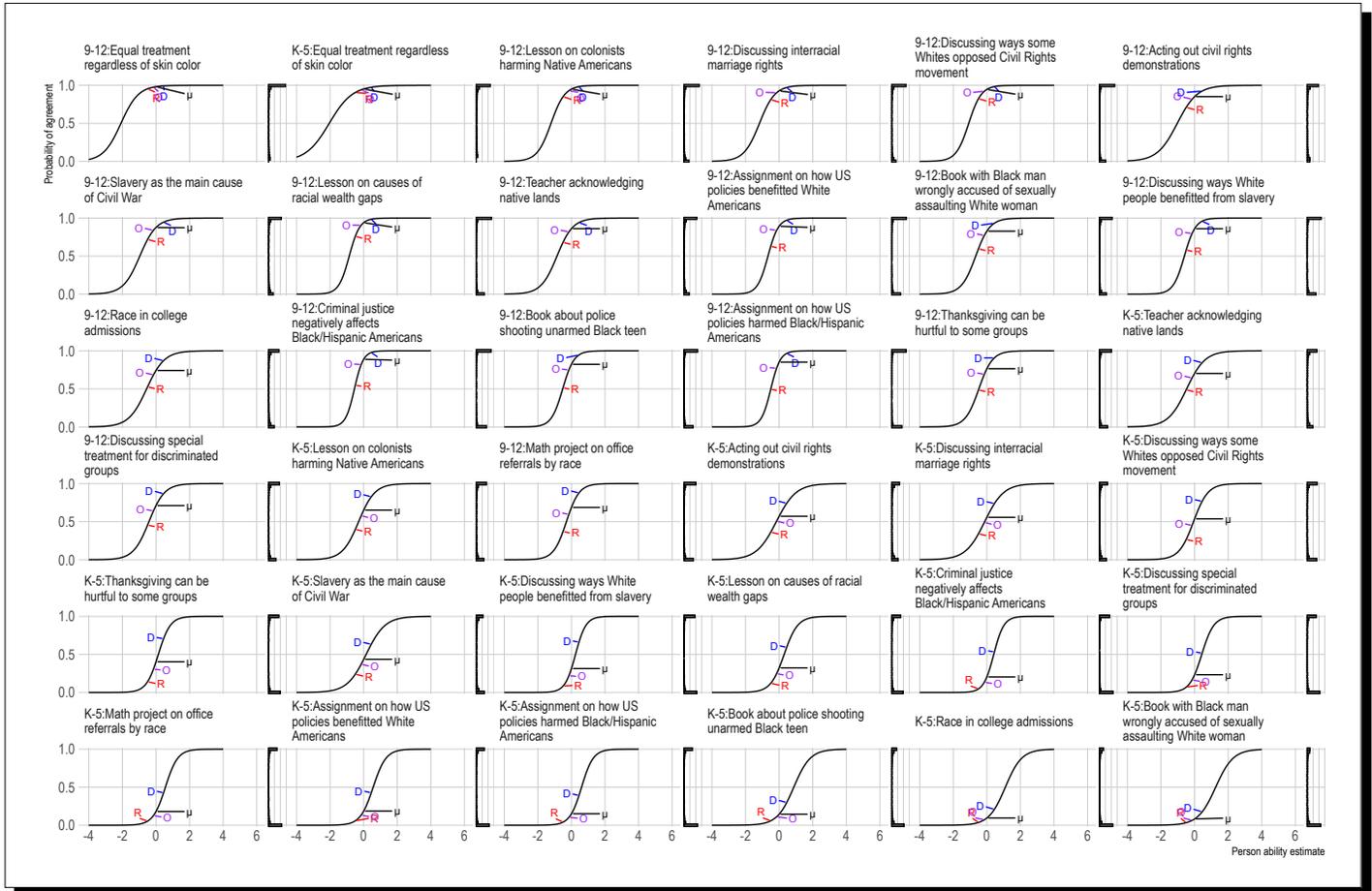
Note. Predicted probabilities of expressing support for each survey item derived from a 2PL IRT model. Questions are arranged in ascending order of estimated difficulty; the question in the top left panel has the smallest difficulty estimate, and the question in the bottom right of the figure is the most difficult. The histograms affixed to the right of each item's trace plot contain the distribution of probabilities derived from the IRT model. D=Democrat; O=Other; R=Republican; μ =survey respondent with average person ability estimate.

FIGURE D6. ITEM CHARACTERISTIC CURVES DERIVED FROM A 2PL IRT MODEL, SEX EDUCATION CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS SCALE.



Note. Predicted probabilities of expressing support for each survey item derived from a 2PL IRT model. Questions are arranged in ascending order of estimated difficulty; the question in the top left panel has the smallest difficulty estimate, and the question in the bottom right of the figure is the most difficult. The histograms affixed to the right of each item's trace plot contain the distribution of probabilities derived from the IRT model. D=Democrat; O=Other; R=Republican; μ =survey respondent with average person ability estimate.

FIGURE D7. ITEM CHARACTERISTIC CURVES DERIVED FROM A 2PL IRT MODEL, RACE CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS SCALE.



Note. Predicted probabilities of expressing support for each survey item derived from a 2PL IRT model. Questions are arranged in ascending order of estimated difficulty; the question in the top left panel has the smallest difficulty estimate, and the question in the bottom right of the figure is the most difficult. The histograms affixed to the right of each item's trace plot contain the distribution of probabilities derived from the IRT model. D=Democrat; O=Other; R=Republican; μ =survey respondent with average person ability estimate.

Appendix E: Sample Balance by Experimental Condition

TABLE E1. SAMPLE BALANCE BY
EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION (UNWEIGHTED)

STATISTICALLY
SIGNIFICANT
DIFFERENCE?

		CONTROL (%)	TREATMENT (%)	(P-VALUE <.05)
Gender	Female	62	64	No (0.292)
	Male	38	36	No (0.292)
Age	18-34	16	17	No (0.7)
	35-54	49	50	No (0.287)
	55-64	16	16	No (0.47)
	65+	19	17	No (0.284)
Education	HS or less	21	20	No (0.349)
	Some college	35	34	No (0.572)
	BA or more	44	46	No (0.193)
Political ID	Democrat	43	45	No (0.295)
	Republican	32	31	No (0.646)
	Other	25	24	No (0.476)
Household income	\$25k or less	17	18	No (0.66)
	\$25k-\$50k	18	19	No (0.408)
	\$50k-\$75k	16	16	No (0.98)
	\$75k-\$150k	30	29	No (0.586)
	\$150k or more	18	18	No (0.516)
Race/ethnicity	NH White	62	60	No (0.152)
	NH Black	9	11	Yes (0.017)
	NH Asian	7	6	No (0.372)
	NH Other	6	5	No (0.321)
	Hispanic	16	18	No (0.253)



Appendix F: Organizational Background and Author Biographies

About the Center for Applied Research in Education

The CESR Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE), established in 2022 by Marshall Garland, Amie Rapaport, and Anna Saavedra, is housed in the Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research (CESR) at the University of Southern California. CARE researchers conduct research and evaluations designed to increase understanding of how educational policies affect students, teachers, and schools, and whether interventions are effective, for whom, and under what conditions. We also oversee the education module of the Understanding America Study (UAS), a nationally representative survey panel of more than 13,000 households. Our partners include educators, school districts, state education agencies, foundations, and collaborating research organizations. Our work receives funding support from many public and private organizations, including but not limited to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Lucas Education Research, the National Science Foundation, the One8 Foundation, and the United States Department of Education.

About the USC EdPolicy Hub

The USC EdPolicy Hub is collaborating with Southern California schools, education systems, and community colleges to co-design and conduct relevant research that will help partners navigate challenges and improve outcomes and equity for students across the region. Research is built upon input from schools, families, education systems, community-based organizations, and civic leaders, with the intent of delivering practical, actionable solutions to these same stakeholders. While we hope the results of our work will be widely relevant outside of Southern California, our local partners will determine our focus. The Hub is based at the USC Rossier School of Education as part of Dean Pedro Noguera's Educational Equity Initiative. Serving as Executive Director is Dr. Jon Fullerton, USC

Rossier School of Education Research Professor. Hub leadership also includes USC Rossier faculty advisors Dr. Morgan Polikoff, Associate Professor of Education; Dr. Patricia Burch, Professor; and Dr. Anna Saavedra as the Director of Research.

Report authors

Dr. Anna Saavedra is a Research Scientist at CESR, where she co-directs CARE. She is also the USC EdPolicy Hub's Director of Research. In addition to studying public opinions about education-related topics through the UAS, she leads studies of student-centered learning and civics education interventions and policies.

Dr. Morgan Polikoff is an Associate Professor of Education at the USC Rossier School of Education, a CESR Fellow, and a faculty advisor to the USC EdPolicy Hub. In addition to studying public opinion on education policy, he investigates the design, implementation, and effects of standards-based curriculum, assessment, and accountability policies. His book *Beyond Standards* was published in 2021 by Harvard Education Press.

Dr. Daniel Silver is a Research Scientist at CARE. In addition to studying public opinions about education-related topics through the UAS, his expertise includes curriculum use and policy, and quantitative methods.

Dr. Amie Rapaport is a Research Scientist at CESR, where she co-directs CARE. In addition to studying public opinions about education-related topics through the UAS, she helps school districts and state agencies study the implementation and impact of education interventions and school policies.

Marshall Garland is a Research Scientist at CESR, where he co-directs CARE. In addition to studying public opinions about education-related topics through the UAS, his primary interest lies in the design and execution of evaluations of educational policies and interventions.

Jacob Scollan-Rowley is a PhD student at the Rossier School of Education. In addition to studying public opinions about education-related topics through the UAS, his primary interests are curriculum policy and racial discrimination in education.

Appendix G: Full Survey Questionnaire

Intro language: In this survey, we ask you to tell us what you think about education in schools today. You do not need to be a parent of a school-aged child to answer these questions—just tell us what you think!

Order of blocks:

Block 1 (always first): Purpose of education

Randomize order of:

Block 2: Market forces and education

Block 3: Limit; Random order: LGBTQ scenarios, Sex education scenarios, Race/racism scenarios.

Block 4: Parent control

Block 5 (always last): Household questions

Purpose of education (Block 1)

1. When thinking about the purposes of public education in the U.S., how important are each of the following to you? (**not important, a little important, important, very important, I don't know what this purpose means**).
[Display on single screen for relativity of items, include numbering in question texts]
 - a. Offering free education to every child
 - b. Protecting U.S. democracy
 - c. Teaching children subjects like reading, writing, and math
 - d. Teaching children about government, the constitution, laws, civil rights, and other civics topics.

- e. Encouraging children to be active citizens in adulthood by voting, engaging in politics, volunteering, and/or being active in their local communities.
 - f. Positioning children to have a financially secure future.
 - g. Helping children have a better life than their parents
 - h. Helping children to find happiness and fulfillment
 - i. Creating a strong community
 - j. Teaching children the importance of embracing differences
 - k. Helping immigrant children learn English and American culture
 - l. Offering meals and other supports to children from low-income families
2. Which three purposes from the list you just answered about are the most important to you? *[include numbering from series above in answer options]*

Beliefs about market forces (Block 2)

The number of students attending a school has important consequences for school operations, especially since public school funding is based on student attendance. When private or charter schools enter the community, they create competition because parents now have choices about where to enroll their child.

How much do you agree/disagree with the following statements? **(strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, I'm not sure)** *[show in random order]*

- Competition for students ultimately makes public schools better
- Competition for students makes public schools more careful in how they use resources
- Students in private schools generally learn more than students in public schools.
- If students leave public schools for other types of schools, the quality of public schools will get worse.

- Charter and private schools tend to take higher-performing students, leaving public schools with fewer of them.
- Sending students to charter or private schools increases segregation among students.

Which statement do you agree with more? If you don't have enough information to choose one or the other, please use the third response option .

(screen 1)

1. Public schools should have the freedom to select students and staff based on beliefs, values, or educational philosophy.
2. Public schools should not have the freedom to select students and staff based on beliefs, values, or educational philosophy.
2. Not sure/don't know

(screen 2)

Considering limited federal funding for public school, which option do you think is best for using those education dollars: **(select option 1 or 2)**.

1. Giving money to low-income families so they can pay for their children to go to private school
2. Giving money to public schools to improve their quality
3. Not sure/don't know

Banner: LGBTQ scenarios (Block 3)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following scenarios are appropriate in public school classrooms? Answer separately for elementary schools (generally grades K-5) and high schools (generally grades 9-12). (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, I'm not sure)

LGBTQ	APPROPRIATE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	APPROPRIATE IN HIGH SCHOOL
Talking about being kind to others and why it matters	×	×
A lesson about standing up for others when you see them being harmed.	×	×
Having LGBTQ-friendly decorations in the classroom, like rainbow flags or pride stickers	×	×
A teacher having a picture of their same-sex spouse on their desk.	×	×
An assignment with a book about a boy and girl who fall in love.	×	×
A history unit about important LGBTQ Americans.	×	×
Talking about a book's lesson that love can be between people of the opposite gender or the same gender.	×	×
A book assigned in class about two male penguins adopting a baby penguin.	×	×
Talking in science class about same-sex relationships in the animal kingdom.	×	×
A book on a classroom bookshelf featuring two female main characters who fall in love with each other.	×	×
Talking about different types of families, like same-sex couples.	×	×
Talking about how some people's gender identities may not match their biological sex	×	×
Discussing how people in the U.S. can marry the person they love, no matter their gender identity or sexual orientation.	×	×

LGBTQ	APPROPRIATE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	APPROPRIATE IN HIGH SCHOOL
Having a classroom teacher who openly identifies as transgender to students.	✗	✗
A teacher asking all students to share their preferred pronouns.	✗	✗
An assignment with a book by a non-binary author sharing their experiences growing up as a non-binary person (non-binary people do not identify as male or female).	✗	✗
An assignment with a book by a lesbian author sharing her experiences “coming out of the closet” to her family.	✗	✗
Talking about why people should be allowed to fully live as the gender they identify with, even if it's not their birth gender.	✗	✗
A teacher using a transgender student's preferred pronouns and chosen name at school without asking the student's parents first.	✗	✗
Talking about why people should be allowed to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity.	✗	✗
A reading assignment that includes a short intimate scene between two consenting partners—one woman and one man.	✗	✗
A reading assignment that includes a short intimate scene between two consenting adult males.	✗	✗
Talking about why transgender girls (i.e., people with “male” on their birth certificate who identify as girls) should be allowed to play on girls' sports teams.	✗	✗
Discussing why trans youth (youth who identify as a different gender than their sex, or who don't identify with either gender) should have access to medical care that helps them be the gender they identify with, not the one assigned at birth.	✗	✗

Banner: Sex education scenarios (Block 3)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following scenarios are appropriate in public (?) school classrooms? Answer separately for elementary schools (generally grades K-5) and high schools (generally grades 9-12). (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, I'm not sure)

SEX ED	APPROPRIATE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	APPROPRIATE IN HIGH SCHOOL
Talking about differences between boys' and girls' bodies.	×	×
A discussion about the importance of consent and rights over your own body.	×	×
Teaching students about safe sex, including birth control choices (including abstinence)	×	×
Teaching students about safe sex, including sexually transmitted infections.	×	×
A class discussion about the fact that both egg and sperm are required to create human life.	×	×
Books on a classroom bookshelf with pictures of male and female anatomy that are age-appropriate (e.g., cartoons for younger students; medical drawings for older students).	×	×
A lesson on human anatomy covering reproductive systems and changes during puberty.	×	×
Explanations about various birth control methods, how they work, how to use them, and what they do/don't protect against.	×	×
A sex education lesson with hands-on materials like condoms, IUDs, and anatomically accurate models of male and female reproductive systems.	×	×

Banner: Race scenarios (Block 3)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following scenarios are appropriate in public school classrooms? Answer separately for elementary schools (generally grades K-5) and high schools (generally grades 9-12). (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, I'm not sure)

RACE	APPROPRIATE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	APPROPRIATE IN HIGH SCHOOL
Talking about legal marriage in the U.S. including that people are allowed to marry the person they love regardless of their race.	×	×
A history lesson explaining the main cause of the Civil War was slavery.	×	×
Including a book from the 1870s in the classroom library that uses offensive language to describe Black characters.	×	×
A lesson on the harmful impacts of American colonists on Native Americans.	×	×
A discussion about whether people should be treated the same regardless of their skin color	×	×
A discussion about whether groups that have been treated unfairly in history should receive special treatment.	×	×
A discussion about whether race should be considered in college admissions.	×	×
A teacher beginning the school year by acknowledging that the classroom sits on land once belonging to Native American tribes.	×	×
A classroom activity where students act out important moments of the Civil Rights movement, like restaurant sit-ins and Rosa Parks' bus refusal.	×	×
A math project where students study national data on how often students of different races get sent to the principal's office.	×	×
Discussion of the ways White people benefited from slavery.	×	×

RACE	APPROPRIATE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	APPROPRIATE IN HIGH SCHOOL
Including a book in the classroom about an unarmed Black teenager who was shot and killed by the police.	×	×
Assigning students to read a story about a Black man who was wrongly accused of sexually assaulting a White woman.	×	×
Discussion of the ways some White people were against the civil rights movement.	×	×
Discussion of how current criminal justice policies affect Black and Hispanic Americans more negatively than White Americans	×	×
Discussing why celebrating traditional U.S. Thanksgiving can be hurtful to some groups of people.	×	×
A lesson where students learn about some of the reasons why there are wealth gaps between people from different racial groups.	×	×
An assignment asking students to reflect on how discriminatory U.S. policies, like unfair housing practices and unequal access to healthcare, have negatively impacted Black and Hispanic Americans.	×	×
An assignment asking students to reflect on how discriminatory U.S. policies, like unfair housing practices and unequal access to healthcare, have benefitted White Americans.	×	×

Exploring reasons for limiting access to books/curriculum about LGBTQ/sex education/race (Block 3)

“Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:”
 (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, unsure) [*display in random order*]

- I worry that reading or learning about transgender people in school might make children think about whether they are, or want to be, transgender.
- I worry that reading or learning about gay people in school might make children think about whether they are, or want to be, gay.
- It's good to assign books about the experiences of lesbian or gay people because this might make children understand that lesbian and gay relationships are normal.
- Including LGBTQ topics in school takes too much time away from academic topics like math and science.
- I worry that learning about sex or sexuality in school might make children more likely to become sexually active.
- It is good to expose children to stories with LGBTQ main characters so that LGBTQ children see main characters who are like them.
- It's important to include LGBTQ characters, books, and lessons in school because it can make all children more accepting of different sexual and gender identities.
- Learning about sex and sexuality in school is likely to help children make better and safer choices.
- Sex education in school helps to prevent unwanted pregnancies and/or sexually transmitted infections.
- Most U.S leaders have been White so it's reasonable that children's history courses focus on White people.
- Children learning about minority individuals/groups in school takes away time they should spend learning about more important things.
- Children should read books written by people from racial minority groups because those books provide different experiences and perspectives.

- White authors have written most of the important books over time, so children should mostly read books written by White authors.
- Children should learn about the ways White people have been racist historically in the U.S. even if that makes them feel guilty.

Parent control (Block 4)

1. A parent learns that an upcoming school English lesson will include content they disagree with. Which of the following actions are appropriate for parents to take? Select yes for all actions you think are appropriate, and no for all actions you think aren't appropriate. [display in random order]

- Keep their child home from school that day
- Request that the teacher allow the child to leave the room during the lesson
- Contact the teacher and explain why they disagree with the lesson
- Ask the teacher to change the lesson
- Ask the teacher to consider changing the lesson in future years
- Attend a school board meeting to talk to leadership about why the lesson should not be taught
- Talk to their child at home about the lesson and why they disagree with it
- Share with other parents why they disagree with the lesson
- Organize a protest at the school
- Permanently remove the child from the school (e.g., enroll them in another school or homeschool them)
- Something else: _____

2. **Experiment:**

A [3rd/10th] grader's parent in a local public school learns that her daughter's teacher plans to teach a history lesson including content that she disagrees with. The parent asks the teacher to find a different activity for her daughter to do during that lesson.

[But the teacher believes that all students should participate, because learning about content they might not otherwise hear or learn about helps them. They may see a new perspective, learn to be a critical thinker, or simply learn an important new fact. And, it can be hard for a teacher to accommodate every parent's wishes for every lesson for every child.]

The teacher brings this issue to the principal. The principal must decide how to proceed. Which of the following most closely reflects your opinion:

- The teacher should provide a different activity.
- The child should participate in the lesson.

3a. Sometimes, parents disagree with a lesson being taught in school and communicate their disagreement to teachers and principals.

When this happens, how should the school react? Select the response below that you believe is the best response for the school to take. [single-select]

- a) The school should teach with the lesson as planned
- b) The school should modify the lesson to keep certain key parts while also accommodating the parent.
- c) The school should cancel or completely change the lesson
- d) I don't know.
- e) Other: _____

- 3b. [IF 3a!=a] If parents have a say over what is taught in schools, there may be times when two or more parents disagree with a lesson the school is teaching AND disagree with each other about what lessons the school should teach.

When this happens, how should the school react? **[single-select]**

- a) The school should teach the lesson as planned.
- b) Teachers or the school principal should listen to the complaints and make a final decision about whether/how to teach the lesson.
- c) The elected school board should hear arguments for and against the lesson and decide on whether/how the lesson is taught.
- d) All parents in the class should vote on whether/how the lesson is taught.
- e) The school should eliminate the lesson.
- f) I don't know.
- g) Other: _____

Thank you! We just have a few more questions.

(Block 5: Always final set)

1. **[From uas479]:** Regardless of if or how you are registered to vote, are you more closely aligned with... Democrats, Republicans, Independents (no political party), Libertarians, Green party, Some other party, Not aligned with any political party.
2. **[From Ed001]:** How many members of your household are enrolled in preschool or daycare, primary school, middle school, high school, or post-secondary school in the 2023-2024 school year? Count yourself if you are enrolled in school (radio button must click one option for count of 0-10 for each school type).

Your response [to the following question] here might be different from the previous question, which asked about children in your household. This question asks about children for whom you identify as a parent.

There are many ways to define parenthood. Please use the definition that feels right to you including adoptive parents, foster parents, etc. among other types of parent relationships.

3. Are you a parent? **(yes/no)**

If yes, how many school-aged children are in your household? Include students in grades Kindergarten through 12.

Based on the answer, create a grid with the # of rows per child, labeled “Student 1”; “Student 2”, etc., Then the columns are enrolled in: public, private, charter, virtual, homeschooling, neither enrolled or homeschooling.

4. For each of the individuals or groups below, let us know if any have ever attended or currently attend a private school in any grade from kindergarten through grade 12 (do not include attending private colleges in your response):

(yes/no for each)

- a. Yourself
 - b. One or more of your children
 - c. Any close family members or your children’s friends
 - d. Any of your friends’ children not included in (c) above
5. How difficult were the questions in this survey to answer overall? Very easy, easy, not easy or difficult, difficult, very difficult)
6. Could you tell us how interesting or uninteresting you found the questions in this survey? Very interesting, interesting, neither interesting nor uninteresting, uninteresting, very uninteresting
7. Do you have any other comments on the survey? Please type these in the box below. (If you have no comments, please click next to complete this survey.)