

ALABAMA

Public Opinion Survey

2021



Alabama Public Opinion Survey: 2021 Edition

Published by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama
Birmingham, Alabama
www.parcAlabama.org

©2021

Alabama Public Opinion Survey: 2021 Edition

Survey and analysis conducted by:

Dr. Randolph Horn
Professor of Political Science
Director, Strategic and Applied Analysis
Samford University



**Public Affairs
Research Council
of Alabama**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction.....	2
Survey Results	3
I. State Budget Priorities	3
II. Taxes	6
III. Public Education.....	9
IV. Relationship with State Government	19
Conclusion.....	23
Survey Top Lines	24

List of Figures

Figure 1. Average rank of major budget areas, 2014–2021	3
Figure 2. Percent prioritizing each budget area #1, 2014–2021.....	4
Figure 3. Amount spent in major areas: percent saying too little, enough, or too much	6
Figure 4. What people like me in other states pay in state and local taxes*	7
Figure 5. Amount paid by people like me in state and local taxes, 2016–2021*	8
Figure 6. Amount paid by income groups in state and local taxes, 2020–2021.....	9
Figure 7. Top priority to address education	10
Figure 8. Percent saying keep education budget separate.....	11
Figure 9. Percent saying too little now being spent on education in Alabama.....	11
Figure 10. Willing to increase education funding by paying more	13
Figure 11. Should online sales taxes go to local schools?.....	14
Figure 12. Top priority for new education revenue	15
Figure 13. Best level of government to decide school spending	16
Figure 14. Best level of government to decide school policy	17
Figure 15. Best level of government to decide on school closings.....	17
Figure 16. Should Alabama have a voucher program?	18
Figure 17. Eligible students if Alabama had vouchers.....	19
Figure 18. Officials in Montgomery do not care what people like me think	20
Figure 19. People like me have no say in what the government in Montgomery does	21
Figure 20. People like me have no say in government by party identification	22

Executive Summary

PARCA's 2021 public opinion survey finds, once again, aversion to certain taxes, support for public education, and mistrust in state government. At the same time, the survey finds a lack of consensus on how the state should respond to other critical issues facing the state.

Among the findings:

- Alabamians continue to rank education as the most important state government activity, but its lead is declining. See page 3.
- Large majorities of Alabamians say the state spends too little on education and healthcare. See page 6.
- Alabamians say lower-income residents pay too much, and upper-income residents pay too little. See page 9.
- Alabamians are willing to pay more taxes to support education but do not agree on *which* taxes should be increased. See page 13.
- Alabamians are evenly split on tax-funded vouchers to pay for private school tuition. However, a majority believe vouchers, if allowed, should be available to all students. See pages 18-19.
- Alabamians continue to believe that they have no say in state government and that government officials in Montgomery do not care about their opinions. See page 20.

Introduction

PARCA conducted its annual public opinion survey of Alabama residents in January of 2021. The survey was in the field from January 13–25, 2021. Both cell and landline telephone numbers were included in a statewide random digit dialed (RDD) sample. The 404 completed interviews resulted in a margin of error of +/- 4.88%. Responses were weighted by race, gender, and age to match state demographics. Top lines at the end of this report contain exact question wording.

The 2021 PARCA survey includes a mix of repeated and new questions. This allows us to examine trends and identify continuities on opinion over time, as well as gather snapshots of current opinion on issues of importance to state residents and policymakers. Most polls discussed in media reports highlight the polarization of subpopulations. PARCA polls tend to demonstrate that on many important issues, there is broad agreement across subpopulations, and many policy preferences are consistent over time. The results presented below are tested to see if statistically significant differences are measurable across demographic or political groups, regions, or other factors that may affect where one stands on an issue. When substantial differences exist, they are reported.

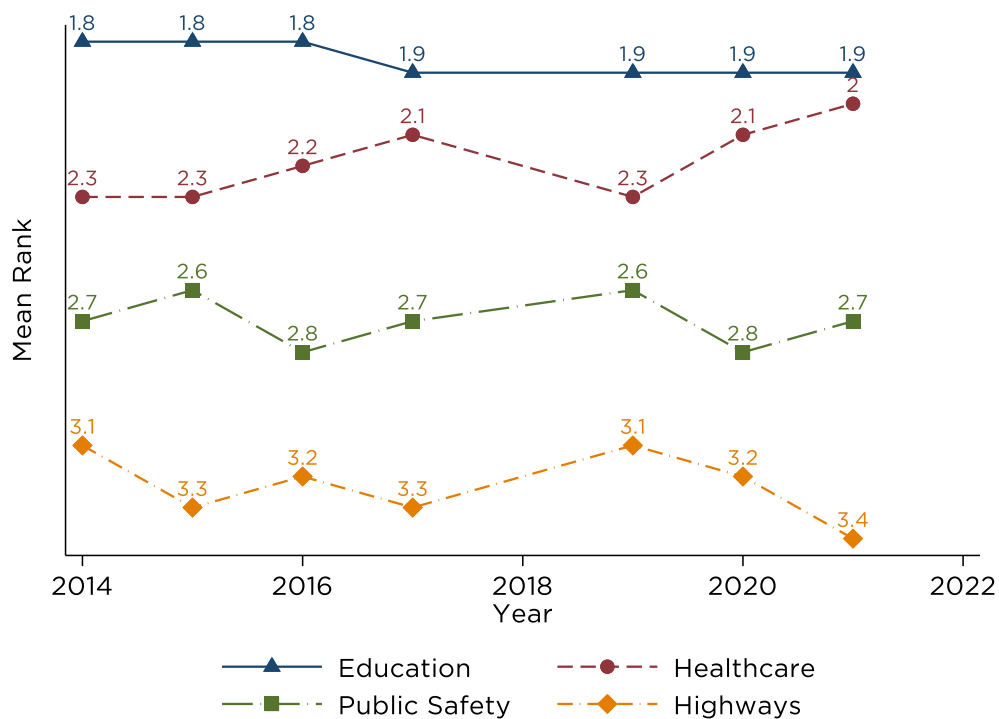
Survey Results

I. State Budget Priorities

Alabamians continue to rank education as the most important state government activity, but the percent prioritizing education is declining.

For many years, we have asked respondents to rank the importance of the four main areas of state government activity: education, healthcare, public safety, and highways. The areas are presented in random order. Respondents give the most essential service a rank of 1, the next most important 2, and so on. The average ranks for the last several years are presented in Figure 1. Education has consistently been identified as the most important service the state provides, with an average rank of less than 2. Healthcare has consistently ranked as second most important. It is not surprising that in a year when residents have confronted the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare has closed the gap behind education. Public safety's rank is in line with previous years, leaving it the third-ranked policy area with an average rank similar to recent years' rankings. Highways have dipped in importance a few tenths of a point compared to previous years.

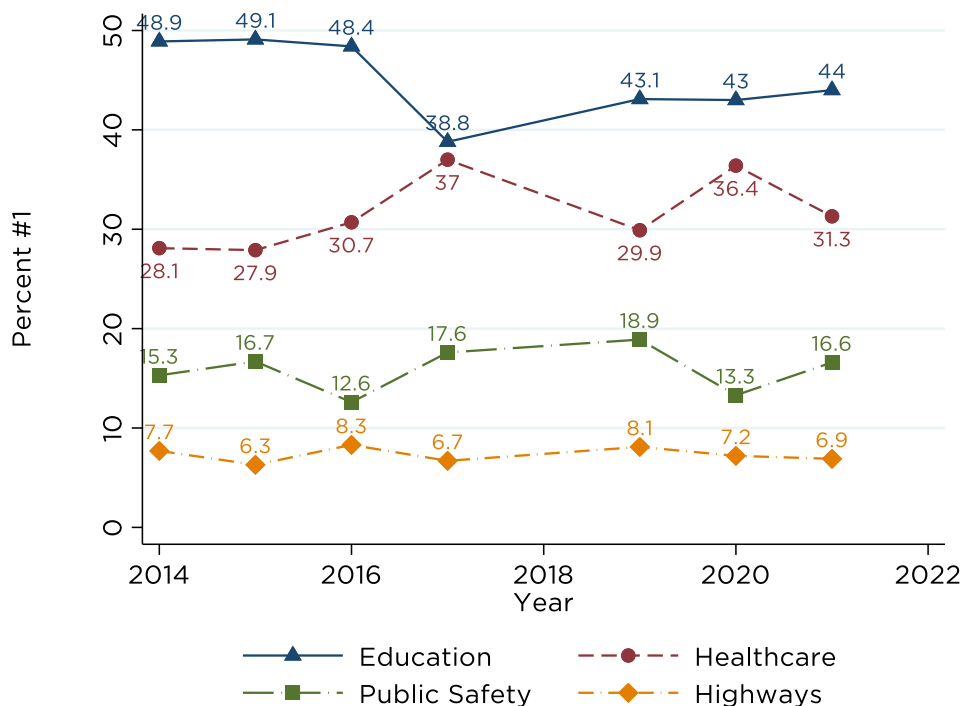
Figure 1. Average rank of major budget areas, 2014–2021



Another way to appreciate the importance of these policy areas is to evaluate the percentage of respondents who give each area a number one ranking. (See Figure 2.) A plurality of about 44% ranks education number one, with just over 30% (31.3%) saying healthcare is the most important service. About 16% rank public safety number one, with just under 7% saying highways are the most important service the state provides. While we don't see huge differences across subpopulations, younger residents tend to rate education more highly than older residents.

Similarly, those with higher levels of education see education as more important. While pluralities of Republicans and independents rank education number one, a majority of Democrats sees it as the most important service. Women, those with lower incomes, recent migrants to the state, and Democratic identifiers tend to rank healthcare as slightly more important than other respondents. While not a top priority, Republicans tend to rank public safety more highly than do independents or Democratic identifiers. While few list highways as the most important service the state provides, men are more likely than women to give it a higher ranking.

Figure 2. Percent prioritizing each budget area #1, 2014-2021

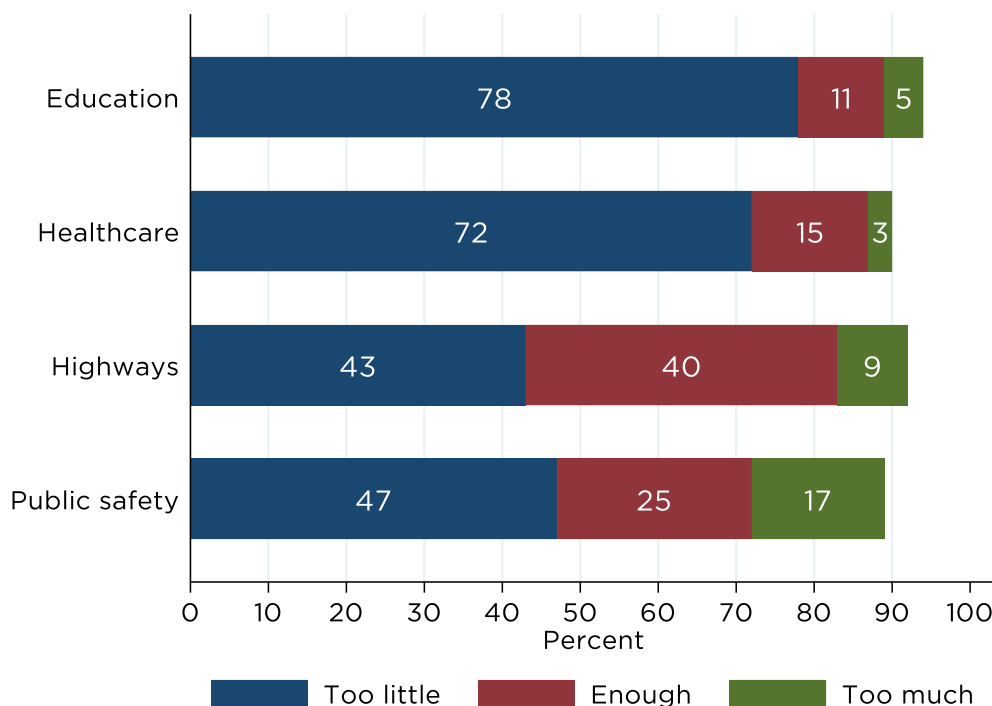


Large majorities of Alabamians say the state spends too little on education and healthcare.

We asked respondents about the amount of state investment in each of the major areas of state spending. (See Figure 3.) Large majorities say too little is being spent on education and on healthcare. Pluralities say too little is being spent on highways and public safety. The percentage of respondents saying too much is being spent in any area never rises above a fifth of respondents. Over three-quarters of Alabamians say too little is being spent on education, including large majorities of every subpopulation.

Similarly, over two-thirds of residents say too little is being spent on healthcare. While there are some variations across subpopulations, in no case do we see less than a three-fifths majority saying too little is being spent on healthcare. Residents are more divided about highways. While more than 40% overall say too little is being spent on highways, there is a sharp division by age, with majorities of those 45 years old and older saying too little is being spent and lesser numbers for younger residents. Residents of the Black Belt are more likely to say too little is being spent on highways than those in other parts of the state. About 47% say too little is being spent on public safety, including majorities of older residents, women, and those from South Alabama.

Figure 3. Amount spent in major areas: percent saying too little, enough, or too much



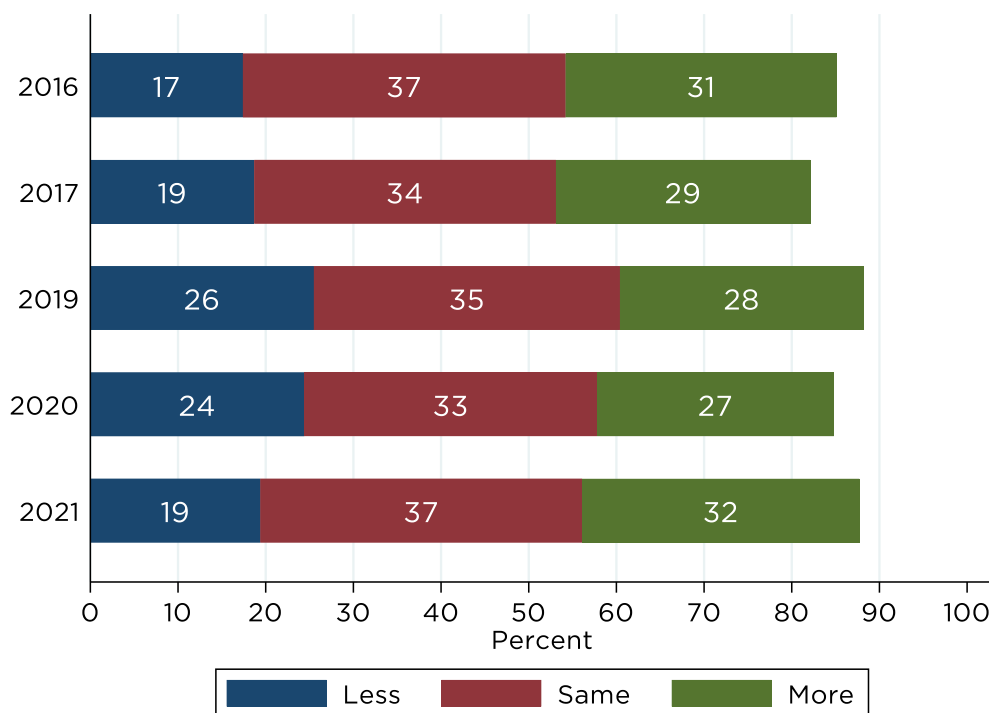
II. Taxes

Alabamians say lower-income residents pay too much, and upper-income residents pay too little.

We asked respondents how they think their state and local taxes compare to people like them in other states. Readers can refer to PARCA's annual report [How Alabama Taxes Compare 2020](#) to get the facts on this question. Alabamians have a lower state and local tax burden than residents in neighboring states. As has been the case in previous years, just over one-third of residents think their taxes are about the same as those in neighboring states and almost one-fifth thinking those in other states pay less. Residents with high levels of education are more likely to say those in other states pay more, as are parents who have children attending public schools.

A majority of Alabamians say lower-income Alabamians pay too much in state and local taxes, and 60% say upper-income Alabamians pay too little—a 10-point increase from 2020.

Figure 4. What people like me in other states pay in state and local taxes*



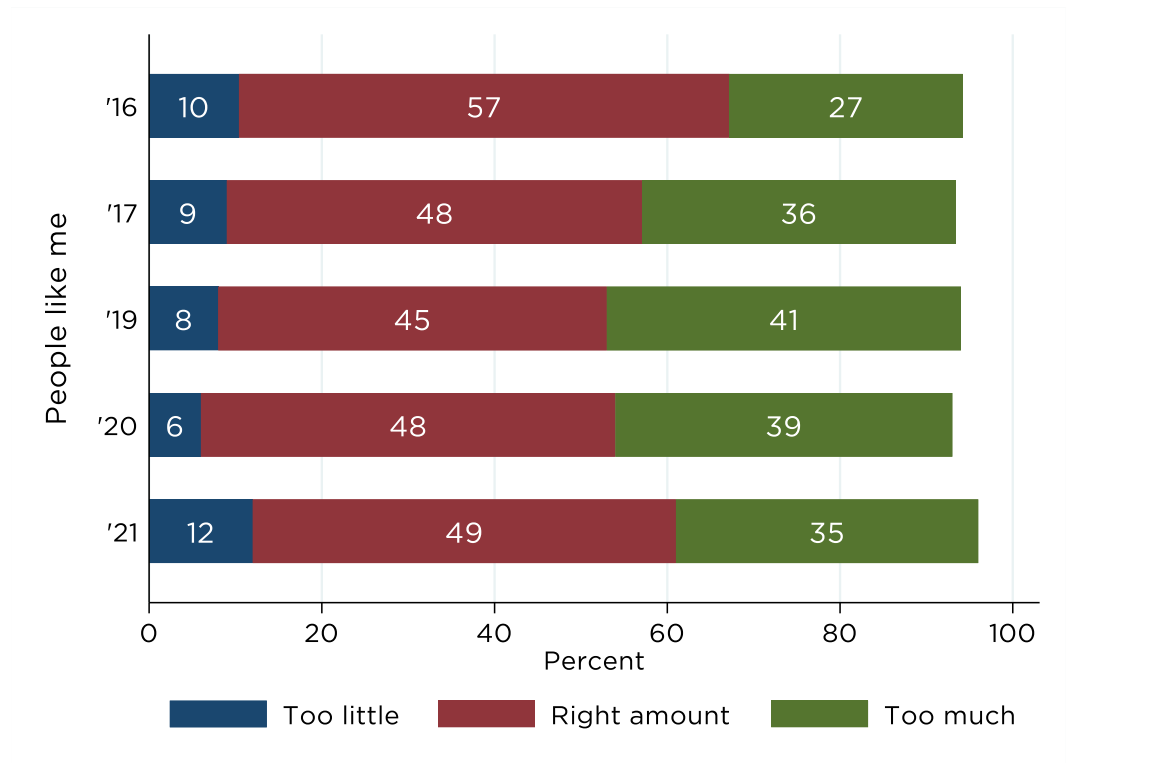
*This question was not asked in 2018

We also asked residents their views about their own taxes and the taxes paid by different income groups: low, middle, and upper. For the last several years, a plurality (nearly a majority) indicates that they are paying about the right amount in state and local taxes, with about one-third saying they are paying too much. (See Figure 5.) Those with a post-graduate education are more likely to say they are paying too little than others, although it is still a minority view. Similarly, those with the highest incomes are more likely to say they are paying too little, although nearly half of the high earners say they are paying about the right amount. When asked about other income groups, evaluations tend to follow a clear pattern. Alabamians think those with low incomes are overtaxed, and those with high income are under-taxed. Figure 6 summarizes the results for the last several years. In 2021, a majority of residents say lower-income Alabamians pay too much in state and local taxes, a slight uptick from the plurality (nearly a majority) holding this view in the preceding four years. Pluralities or majorities of every subpopulation have this view.

Majorities in every year we have asked the question have said that upper-income Alabamians pay too little in state and local taxes. While narrow majorities held this

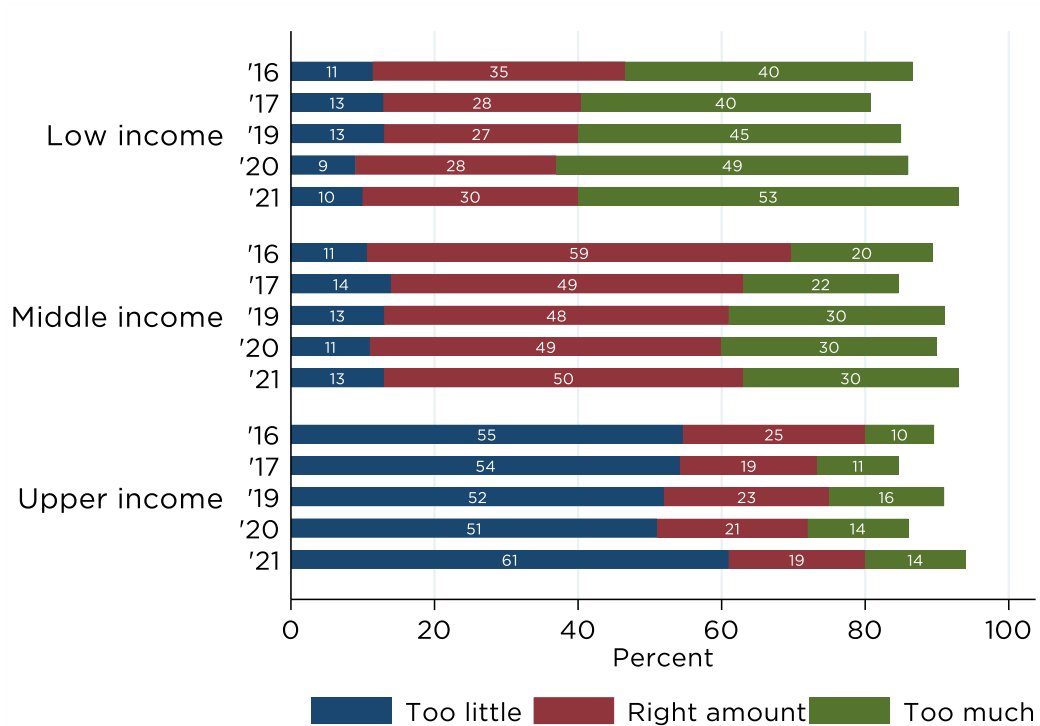
view from 2016 to 2020, this year, the percentage grew to more than 60%, about a 10-point increase over the preceding year. While this could be a blip, fluke, or aberration, it is worth noting that this is the only question in the survey that shows a one-year change of such magnitude. Therefore, it could represent a change in the underlying view of tax fairness in the population while other views are relatively unchanged. Pluralities or majorities of every subpopulation say upper-income residents are paying too little in state and local taxes.

Figure 5. Amount paid by people like me in state and local taxes, 2016–2021*



This question was not asked in 2018.

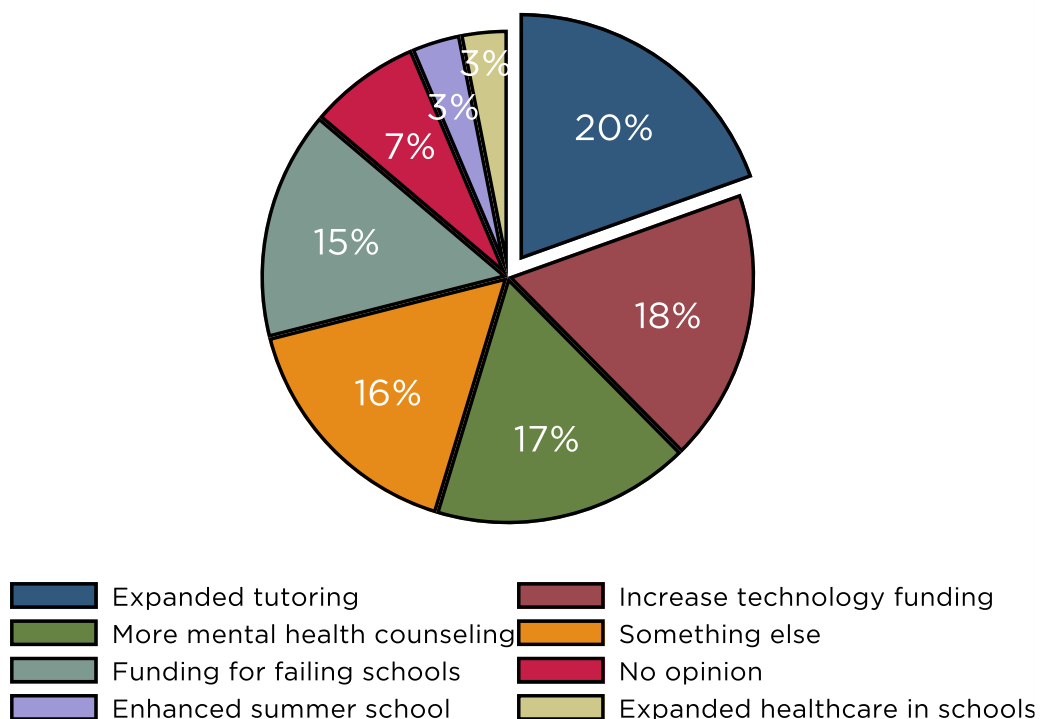
Figure 6. Amount paid by income groups in state and local taxes, 2020–2021



III. Public Education

Each year we ask a series of questions about public education in Alabama, underwritten in part by our partners at the Alabama Association of School Boards. While many of the questions are consistent from year to year, we do include some questions to address current concerns or topics that have not previously been addressed. This year, we used a question format similar to that used in our Alabama Priorities Project to ask about supplemental programs that might improve public education. Respondents were presented with a randomly ordered list of possible enhancements to current programs and were asked which would be their top priority for improving public education in the state. Support for any option was diffuse, with five ideas, including “something else” being chosen as a top priority by 15% to 20% of respondents. Parents of public school students are more likely to have a specific opinion (i.e., not something else) and support expanded tutoring and mental health counseling compared to respondents who do not have children in public schools.

Figure 7. Top priority to address education



Alabamians continue to support separate General Fund and Education Trust Fund budgets.

Alabama separates its operating budget into two major divisions: the Education Trust Fund and the General Fund. Occasionally, there are calls to unify the budget system, so we have asked respondents if they think the budgets should be combined or kept separate. The series is reported in Figure 8. In 2021, about three-quarters of residents say the education budget should be kept separate. This figure is consistent with previous years. The question concerning whether too much, too little, or the right amount is being spent in each of the major areas of state activity was discussed above. We have asked this question about education for the last nine years, and the complete series is presented in Figure 9 below. For the entire time we have asked the question, supermajorities of residents have said that too little is being spent on public education in Alabama. The percentage who say too little is spent on education has trended upward in the past few years, from about two-thirds at the beginning of the series to about three-fourths in recent years.

Figure 8. Percent saying keep education budget separate

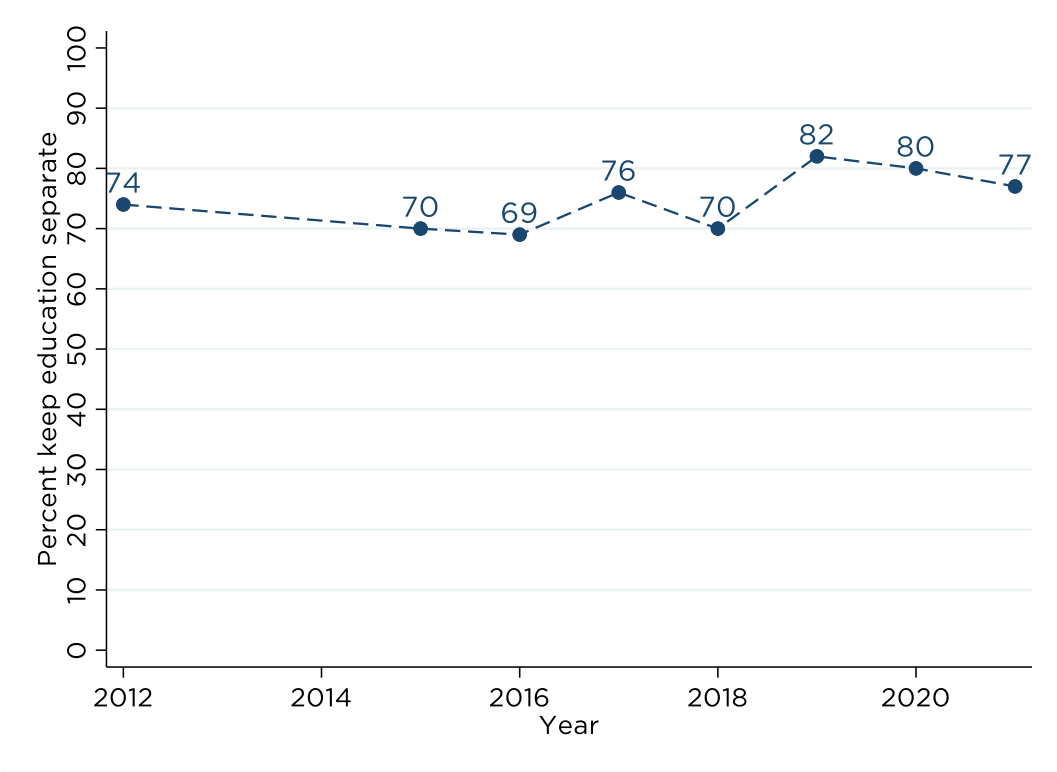
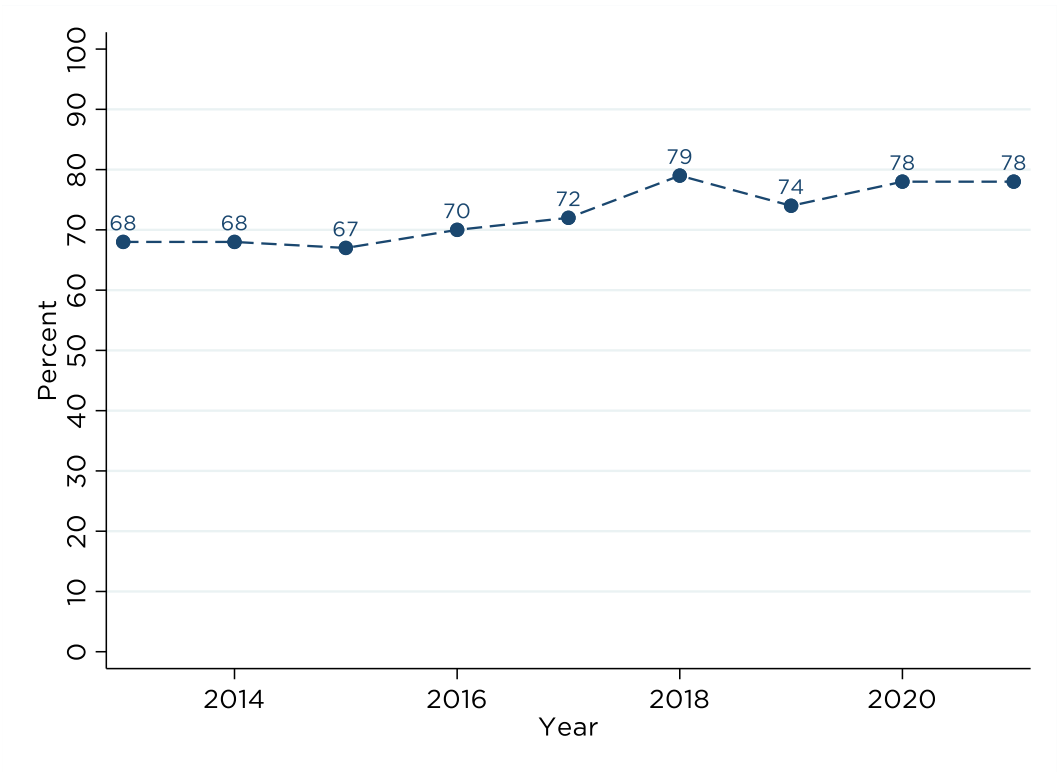


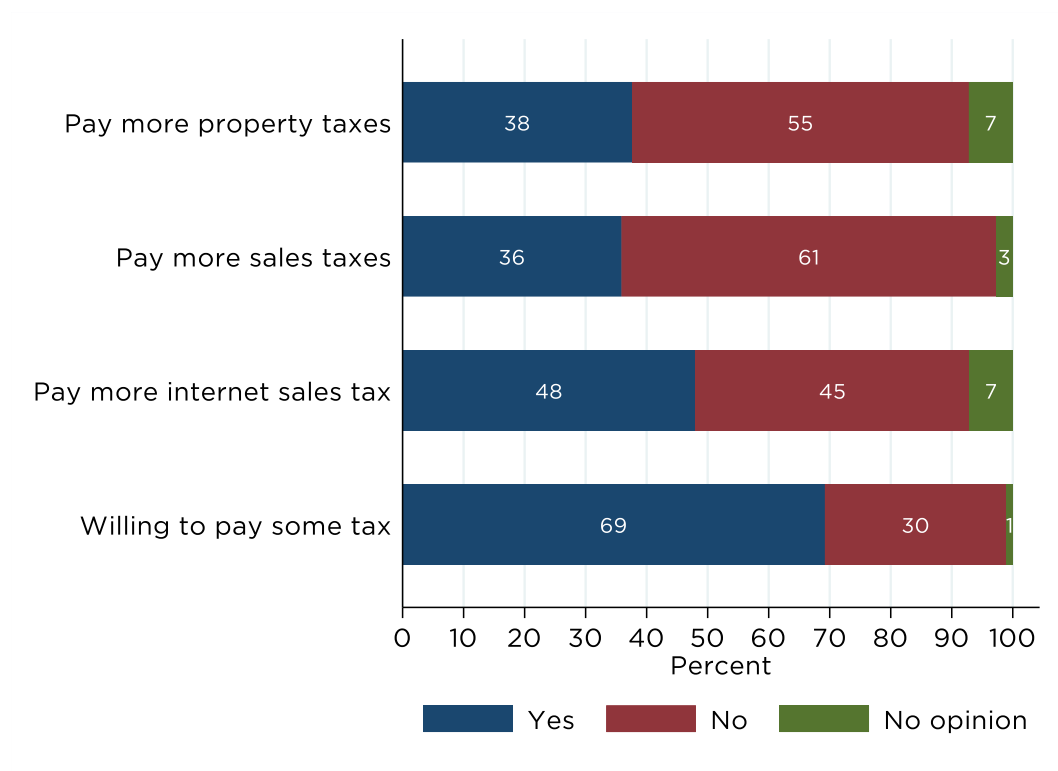
Figure 9. Percent saying too little now being spent on education in Alabama



Although 69% of Alabamians are willing to pay more in taxes to support education, there is no agreement upon which taxes should be increased.

If most Alabamians think too little is being spent on public education, it seems reasonable to ask if they would be willing to pay more taxes to fund it. We asked if respondents would be willing to pay more sales tax, taxes on internet purchases, or property taxes to increase funding for education. The results are presented in Figure 10. No single revenue mechanism garners majority support, although a plurality (nearly a majority) say they would be willing to pay more tax on internet purchases. Majorities say they would not be willing to pay more in sales or property taxes. Older residents tend to be less willing to pay more in sale tax or taxes on internet purchases than younger residents. Those with higher levels of education or income tend to be more willing to pay increased property taxes. However, it is only among those with post-graduate education that we find a majority willing to pay more. While no single mechanism is supported by a majority, more than two-thirds (69%) say they would be willing to pay more or some kind of tax to increase funding for education. Older residents are slightly less willing than younger ones to pay more, and higher-income residents are slightly more willing to pay more than lower-income residents. Policymakers are in a tight spot: Majorities of residents think too little is being spent on education and are willing to pay more taxes to increase funding for education, but they disagree on what specific tax they would be willing to pay.

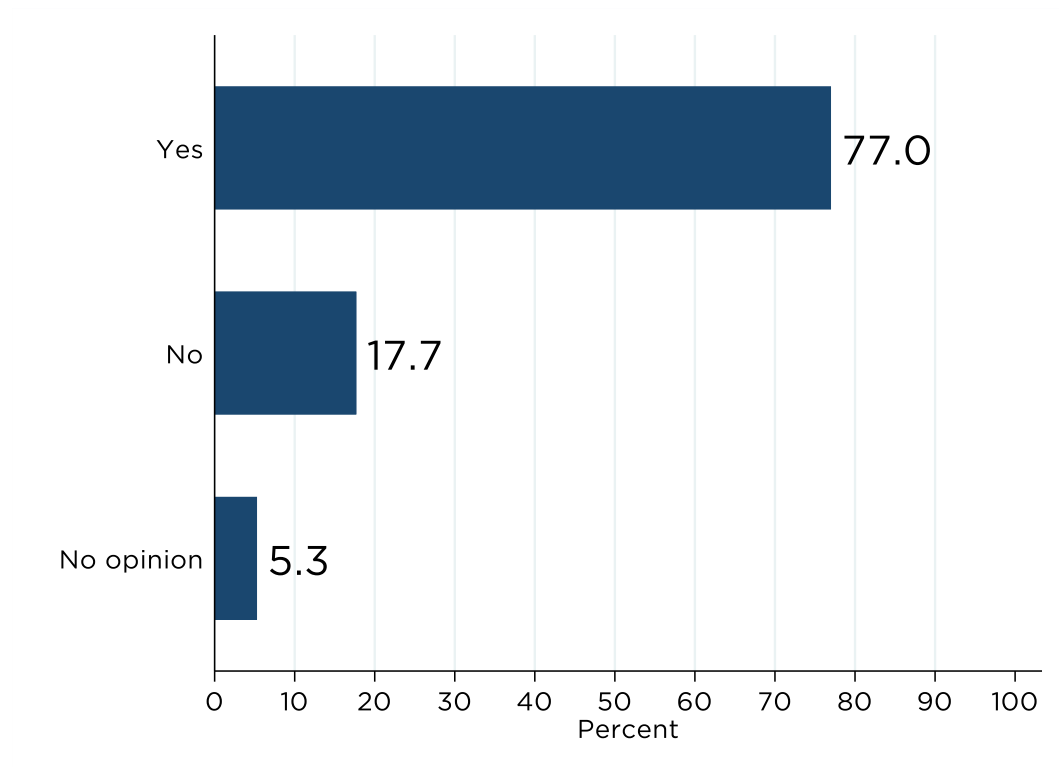
Figure 10. Willing to increase education funding by paying more



Seventy-seven percent of Alabamians say internet sales tax revenue should be dispersed to schools the same way that brick-and-mortar sales taxes are dispersed.

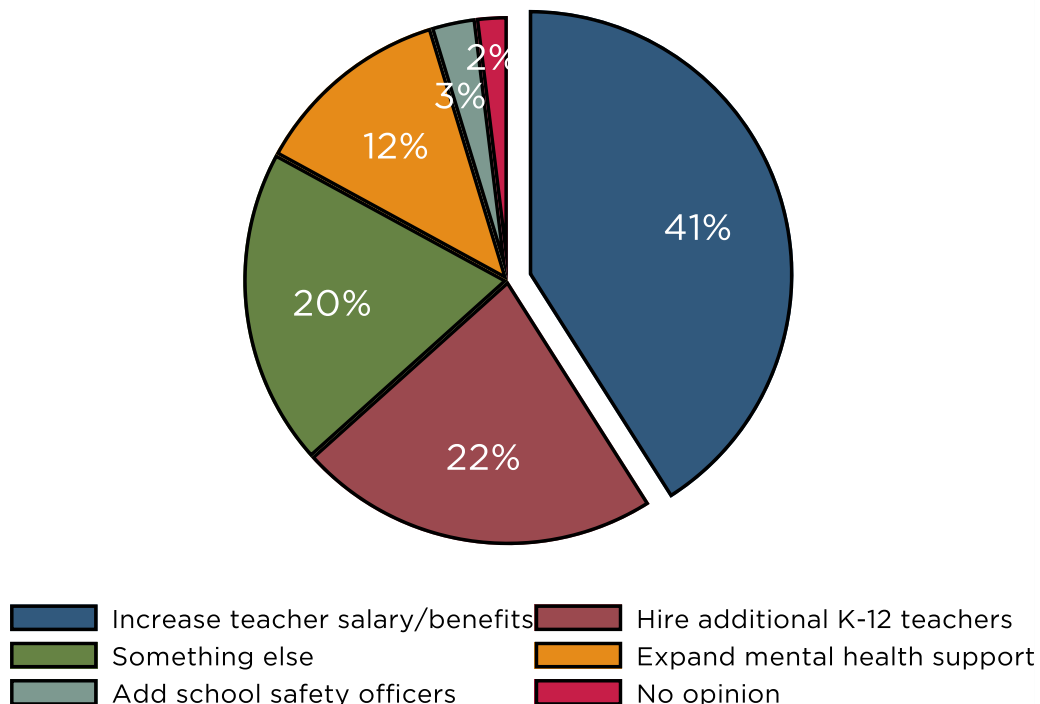
The State of Alabama collects sales taxes from many internet retailers and distributes a portion of the taxes to localities. Unlike many locally collected sales taxes, localities are not necessarily bound to distribute this tax revenue to local schools, although many localities do. We asked respondents if local governments should be required to distribute internet sales taxes the same way they distribute locally collected sales taxes. (See Figure 11.) Over three-quarters of state residents say localities should be required to distribute online sales taxes to local schools. There are no significant differences across any subpopulations or region of the state.

Figure 11. Should online sales taxes go to local schools?



We asked what respondents' top priority for new education revenue would be. (See Figure 12.) Although Alabamians are divided as to how to spend new education dollars, investing in teachers garners the most support, with a plurality (41%) saying new revenue should go to increasing salary and benefits for teachers and about 22% saying additional teachers should be hired. Together, these responses indicate 63% of Alabamians prioritize spending more on classroom teachers. Support is uniform, with no significant differences across any subpopulation, partisan, or demographic group. Responses get more diffuse after that, with “something else” and “expanded mental health support” polling in double digits.

Figure 12. Top priority for new education revenue



Alabamians prefer education decisions be made at the local level.

Nearly three-fifths of respondents (58.7%) say that local boards of education should make spending decisions. (See Figure 13.) Pluralities or majorities of every subpopulation hold this view. We see a similar preference for local control when we ask about the level of government best suited to decide policies such as start date or selecting curricula. (See Figure 14.) A majority say the local board of education is best suited to make these decisions, with about 30% saying the State Board of Education is best able to decide. Republicans are more likely to say local school boards are best equipped to make policy decisions than either independents or Democratic identifiers. Finally, we asked who is best equipped to make school closure decisions for health and safety reasons. (See Figure 15.) Again, we see a marked preference for local decision-making. More than a quarter of respondents (29.7%) identify the local school board as the entity best equipped to make school closure decisions, with a similar percentage (28.9%) saying local school superintendents are best equipped. While there are some differences by party,

majorities of Republicans, independents, and Democrats identify local entities as best equipped to make school closure decisions.

Figure 13. Best level of government to decide school spending

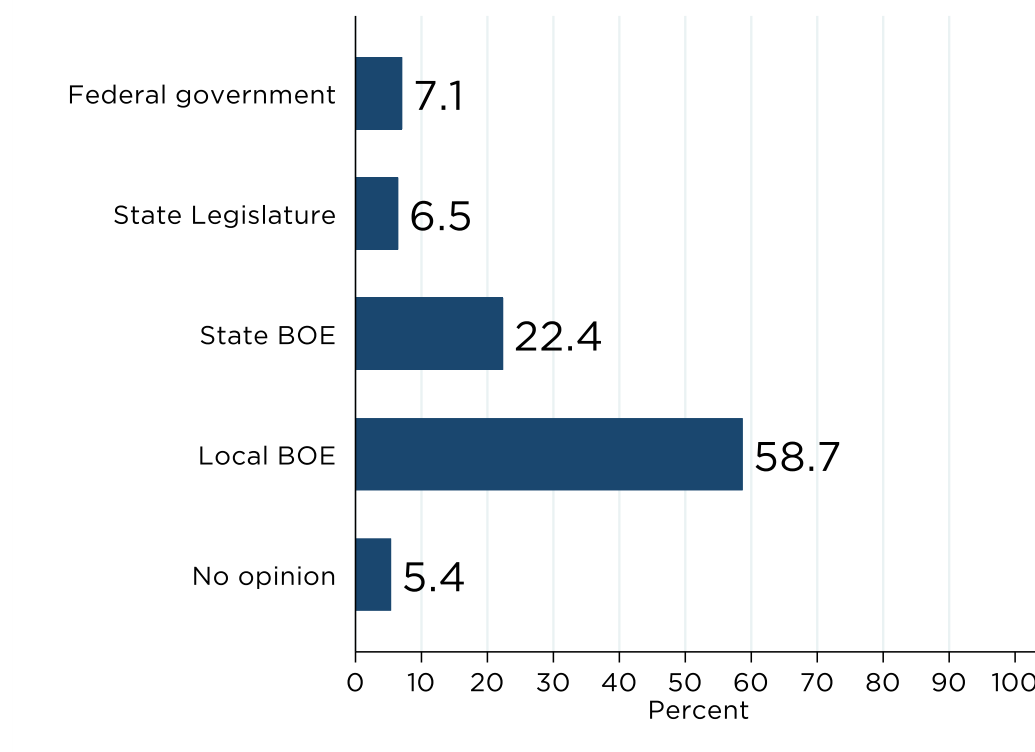


Figure 14. Best level of government to decide school policy

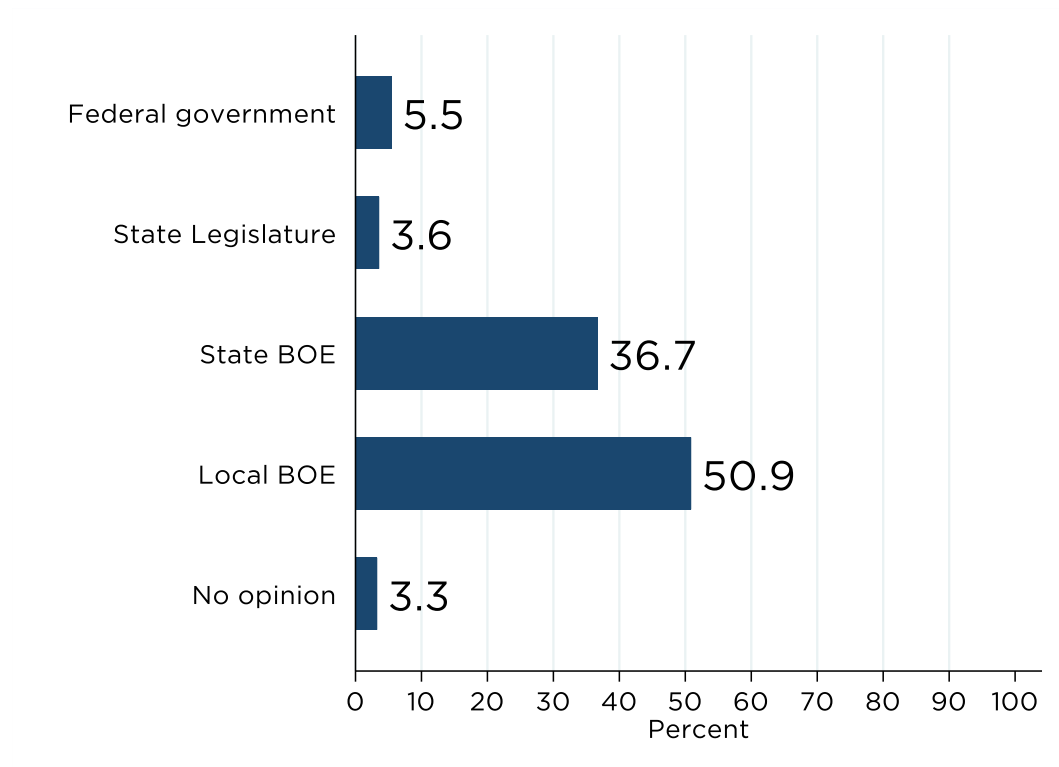
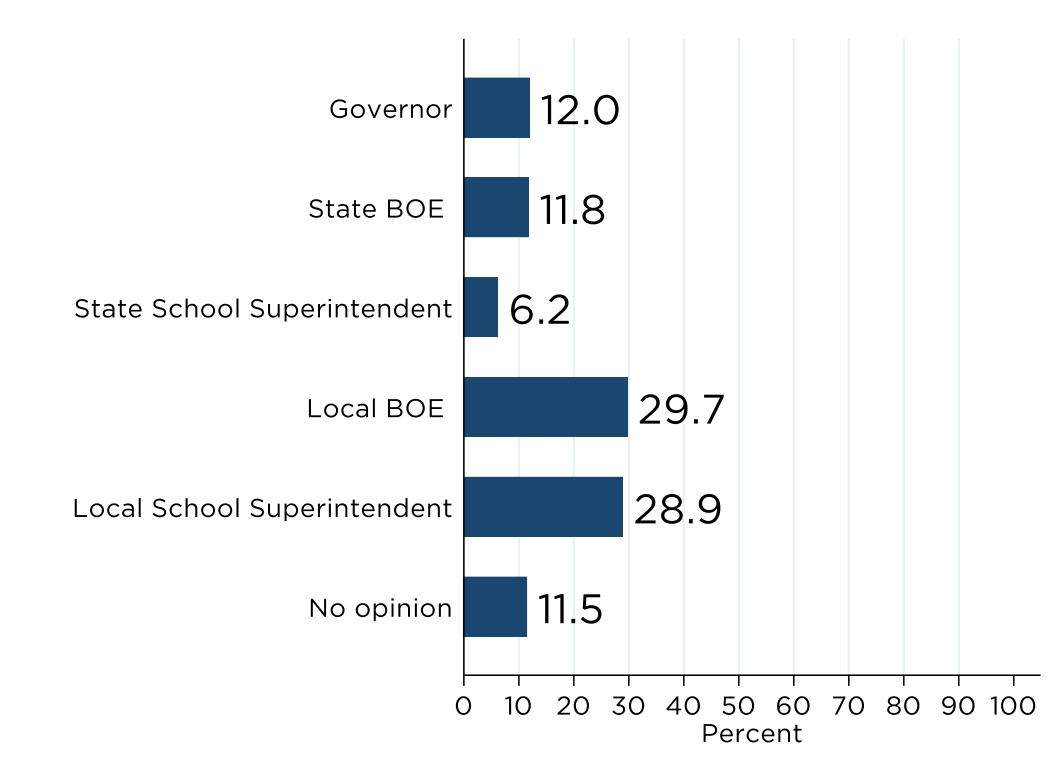


Figure 15. Best level of government to decide on school closings



Alabamians are evenly split on tax-funded vouchers to pay for private school tuition. However, 61% of Alabamians believe vouchers, if allowed, should be available to all students.

About 18 states have school voucher programs that allow parents to spend state funds on private school tuition or homeschooling. We asked if Alabama parents should be able to use state funds to pay private school tuition or to homeschool their children. The results are presented in Figure 16. Alabamians are evenly divided on this question, with nearly 48% supporting vouchers and just over 49% opposing. There does not appear to be a particular constituency supporting vouchers, as there are no significant differences in the level of support or opposition across any demographic group, region, or partisan identity. As a follow-up, we asked if Alabama had a voucher program, to whom should vouchers be made available? Despite being divided on the voucher question itself, a majority (61%) of respondents indicated that if the state had such a program, the voucher should be available to all students. (See Figure 16.)

Figure 16. Should Alabama have a voucher program?

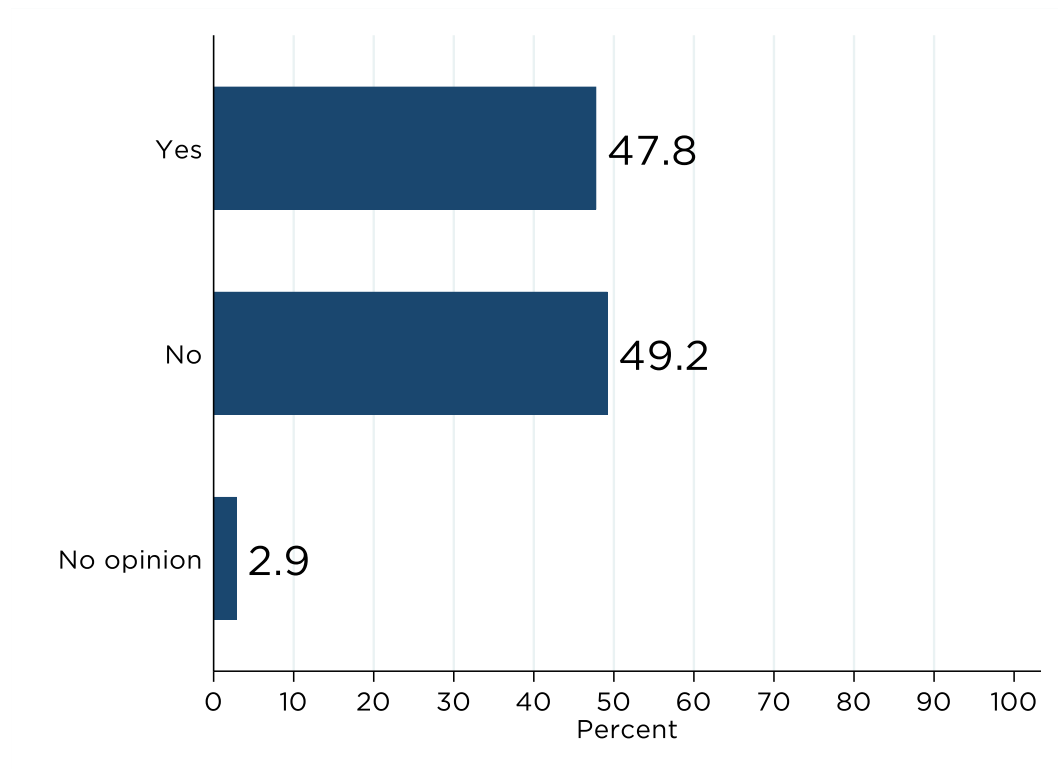
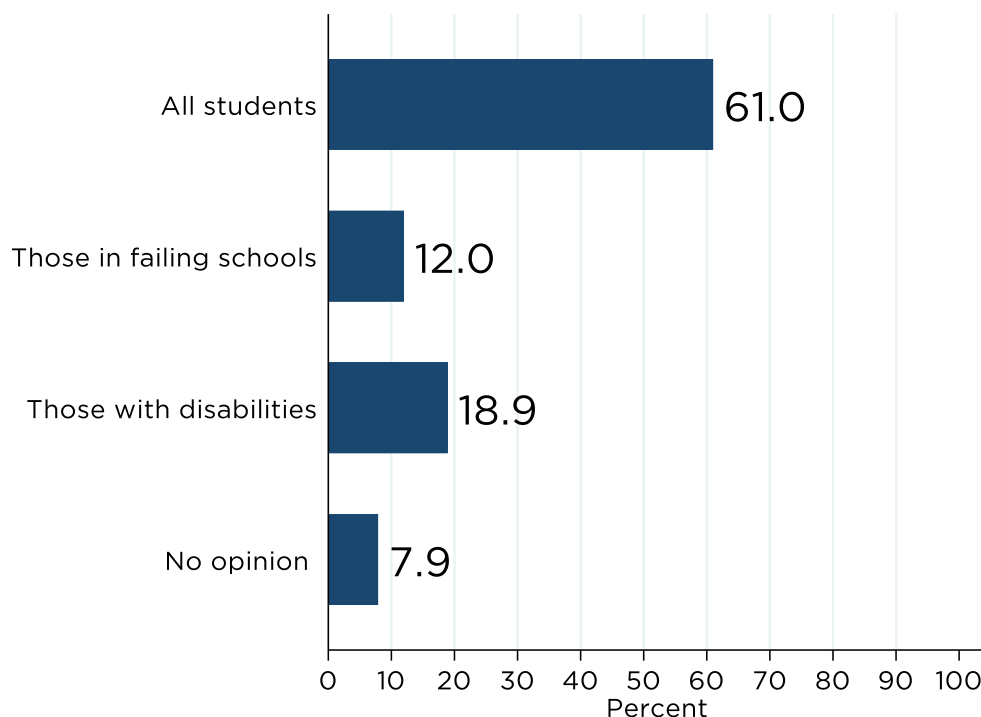


Figure 17. Eligible students if Alabama had vouchers

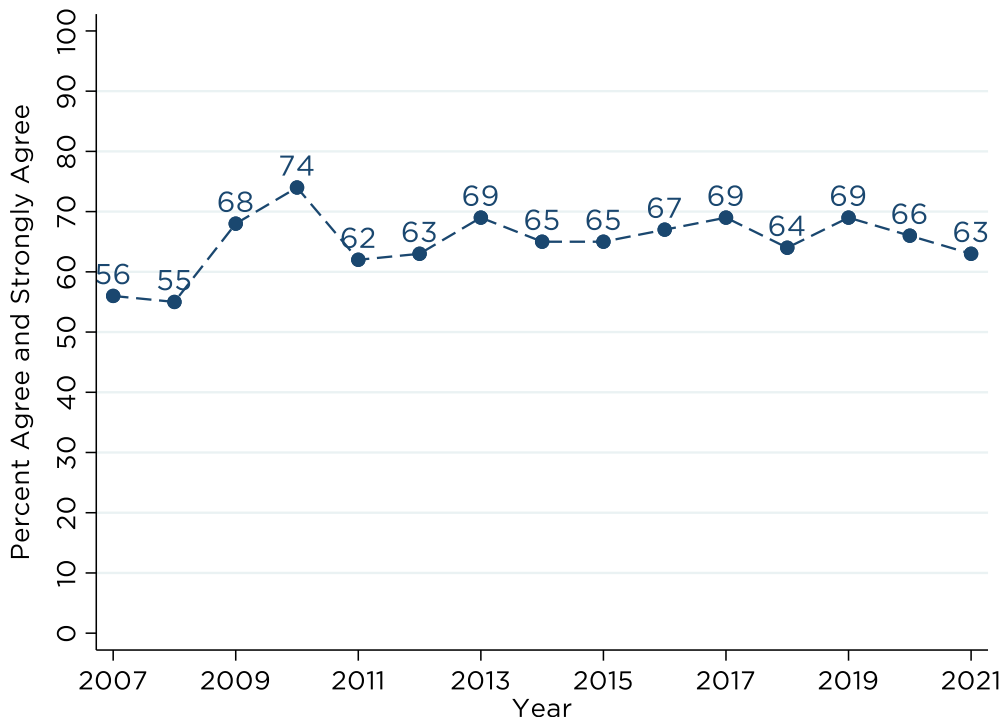


IV. Relationship with State Government

Alabamians continue to believe that they have no say in state government and that government officials in Montgomery do not care about their opinions.

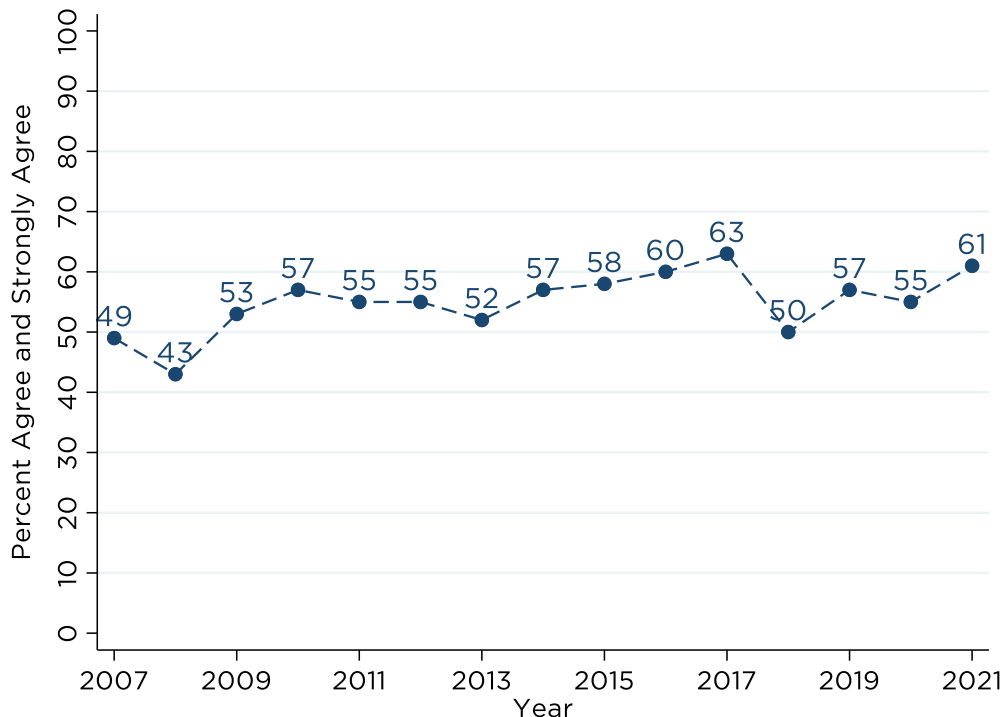
As we have done every year since 2007, in this year's survey, we asked two questions to gauge residents' connection with their elected officials in the state capitol. Both questions ask respondents to agree or disagree with a statement. The first statement is, "*Government officials in Montgomery do not especially care what people like me think.*" The entire series for this question is presented in Figure 18. Except for some volatility during a period of partisan upheaval (2007–2010), the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing that officials do not care has stayed in the 60s. While it has gotten as high as 69% a couple of times in recent years, it has declined about 3 points in each of the last two years. The feeling that state officials do not care what people like me think is widespread, with no significant differences across any demographic, regional, or partisan division.

Figure 18. Officials in Montgomery do not care what people like me think



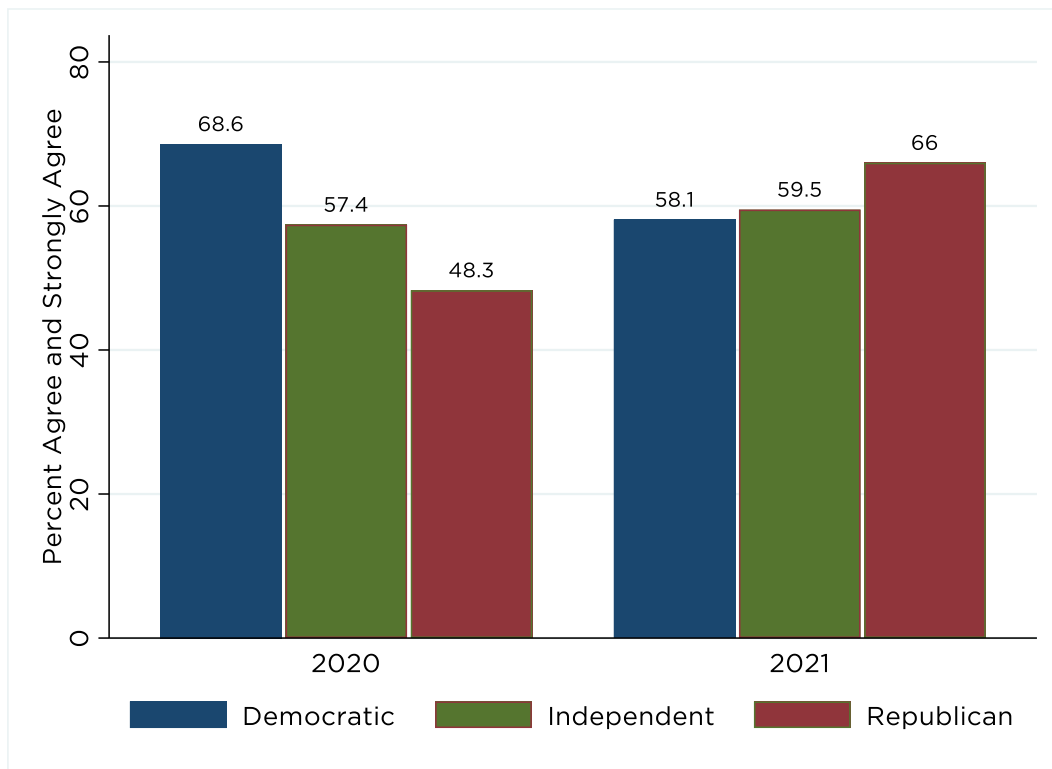
We also asked respondents to agree or disagree with the statement, “*People like me have no say in what the government in Montgomery does.*” The series is reported in Figure 19. The percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement has been edging up in the last few years after taking a steep drop between 2017 and 2018. In 2021, about three-fifths (61%) of Alabamians agree or strongly agree that they have no say in state government. While there are no large differences across groups, Republicans and those with lower incomes are more likely to agree with the statement than others. It is common to see socioeconomic status affecting people’s sense of efficacy. For example, in 2020, we saw those with higher levels of education were less likely to agree with the statement.

Figure 19. People like me have no say in what the government in Montgomery does



The partisan effect bears additional discussion because it represents a reversal from the previous year, when Republicans were the least likely to agree with the statement that they had no say in what the state government does. Figure 20 compares the 2021 and 2020 surveys, broken down by partisan identification. Between January 2020 and January 2021, Democratic identifiers and independents showed some movement with close to 60% agreeing they had no say. On the other hand, we see a shift of nearly 18 points among Republican identifiers, taking them from being the least disaffected to the most disaffected group. National polls have indicated that both evaluations of the presidential election and matters related to the pandemic have differed by partisan identification. It is possible that questions about the legitimacy of the presidential election repeated by Republican leaders have shaken the confidence that Republican citizens have in government, including the state government in Montgomery. Similarly, Republican identifiers may have a more negative response to state actions to address the COVID-19 pandemic, such as mask mandates.

Figure 20. People like me have no say in government by party identification



Conclusion

Many of the findings of the 2021 PARCA survey confirm what we have learned in previous years. Alabamians see education as a top priority for state government. This year, healthcare is a close second. Pluralities say that major areas of state government activity are underfunded. Alabamians tend to think that lower-income residents pay too much in state and local taxes, while a substantial majority (61%) say upper-income residents are paying too little. While majorities do not agree on a single revenue mechanism, about two-thirds (69%) express a willingness to pay more taxes to improve funding for education. If new funding is available for education, a majority prioritize investing in teachers by either improving teacher pay or hiring new teachers. Residents appear to want to protect education funding by keeping the Education Trust Fund separate from the General Fund Budget. There is a marked preference for local decision-making when it comes to schools in Alabama. Residents express a preference for local school boards or superintendents making spending and policy decisions over state entities or officials.

Some of the findings reported above may suggest some relationship trouble between residents and their state government. For example, substantial numbers of residents believing that major areas of state government service are underfunded is not merely budgetary nitpicking but may be understood as a critique of the state's performance. Concerns about tax fairness may imply concerns about fairness more generally. Longstanding preferences for earmarking and continued separation of the Education Trust Fund suggest a lack of trust in policymakers. Finally, the high percentages of residents who agree that officials do not care what people like them think or that they have no say in what the state government does should be of concern to state leaders. While the percentages agreeing with these statements have been consistently high, they are not set in stone. Policymakers can improve public trust by acting on the popular preferences discussed above and improving communication about their efforts to serve the public and improve state government performance in education, healthcare, public safety, and infrastructure.

Survey Top Lines

2021 PARCA Survey Toplines
 Conducted January 13 - 25, 2020
 State-wide RDD sample, n=404
 Margin of error +/- 4.88%

Weighted by race and gender to match state demographics

I'm going to name four big investments the state makes with your tax dollars. If you had to choose just one of them as the most important service the state provides, which one of these would it be? [Randomized]
 Which one of these services would you rank as the next most important?
 mean rank

	Mean	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
educmean	1.852316	.052951	1.748206	1.956426
healthmean	1.986564	.0493566	1.889521	2.083607
highwaymean	3.411448	.0493189	3.314479	3.508417
pubsafemean	2.749672	.0569252	2.637748	2.861596

 percent #1 priority

Four big investments-First Choice	
-----+-----	
Education	44
Healthcare	31.3
Highways	6.912
Public safety, including prisons	16.55
No opinion	1.243
Total	100

Do you think there is too little, too much or enough money now being spent on [ITEM] in Alabama?

Amount spent on Education	percentage
-----+-----	
Too much	4.745
Right amount	10.93
Too little	77.84
No opinion	6.479
Total	100

Amount spent on Healthcare	percentage
-----+-----	
Too much	3.149
Right amount	14.55
Too little	72.2
No opinion	10.1
Total	100

Amount spent on Highways	percentage
Too much	9.206
Right amount	39.69
Too little	43.28
No opinion	7.827
Total	100

Amount spent on Public safety	percentage
Too much	17.25
Right amount	24.78
Too little	47.24
No opinion	10.73
Total	100

Thinking about how much you pay in state and local taxes here in Alabama, do you think people like you in neighboring states pay more, less, or about the same in state and local taxes?

Amt people like you in other states pay in S&L taxes	percentage
More	31.64
Same	36.7
Less	19.41
No opinion	12.26
Total	100

Next, I want to ask you about how much different people in Alabama are paying in state and local taxes. For each group I name let me know if you think they are paying too much, too little, or about the right amount in state and local taxes? First, would you say that you and people like you in Alabama are paying too much, too little, or about the right amount in state and local taxes? [AFTER ANSWER: How about [NEXT ITEM]?

How much tax-You and people like you	percentage
Too much	35.11
Right amount	48.62
Too little	12.11
No opinion	4.151
Total	100

How much tax -People w/ lower income	percentage
--------------------------------------	------------

Too much		53.45
Right amount		29.53
Too little		9.998
No opinion		7.023
Total		100
How much tax -People w/ middle income		
		percentage
-----+-----		
Too much		29.9
Right amount		50.38
Too little		13
No opinion		6.723
Total		100
How much tax -People w/ upper income		
		percentage
-----+-----		
Too much		14.07
Right amount		18.6
Too little		60.56
No opinion		6.779
Total		100

The State of Alabama has two separate budgets. The biggest budget is for education and is funded mostly by state income and sales tax dollars. Other state programs are funded from a smaller general fund budget. Some policy makers want to combine the two budgets, to give the legislature more control over state spending. [ROTATE] Do you favor combining the two state budgets into one, or keeping education dollars in a separate budget? [ALTERNATE WITH THIS TEXT] Do you favor keeping education dollars in a separate budget, or combining the two state budgets into one?

Keep education dollars separate		
or combine budgets		percentage
-----+-----		
Combine budgets		16.95
Keep education separate		77.2
No opinion		5.856
Total		100

I'm going to list some ways to increase funding for education. Would you be willing to increase funding for education by paying higher[Items randomized]? How about[next item]? How about[next item]?

Pay more sales tax for education		percentage
-----+-----		
Yes		34.62
No		62.93
No opinion		2.449

Total		100
Pay more internet tax for education		percentage
-----+-----		
Yes		45.35
No		51.47
No opinion		3.181
Total		100

Pay more property tax for education		percentage
-----+-----		
Yes		35.95
No		61.23
No opinion		2.823
Total		100

willing to pay one of these taxes		percentage
-----+-----		
Yes		66.41
No		32.75
No opinion		.8386
Total		100

Mean taxfored=percent supporting any tax to increased education funding

		Mean	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]
taxfored		66.40964	2.569264	61.3588 71.46047

What would be your top priority for spending NEW education dollars?
[Randomized]

Top priority for new education dollars		percentage
-----+-----		
Hiring additional K-12 teachers		22.35
Increasing teacher salary and be		41
Hiring counselors/providing ment		12.34
Hiring additional school safety		2.766
Something else		19.6
No opinion		1.944
Total		100

Which level of government is best equipped to make decisions about spending for public schools in your area? Would you say it is the federal government, the state legislature, the state board of education, or the local board of education?

Level of government best suited |

to make spending decisions for schools		percentage
-----	+	-----
Federal government		7.053
State Legislature		6.481
State BOE		22.44
Local BOE		58.65
No opinion		5.378
Total		100

Which level of government is best equipped to make decisions about public school policies, such as school start and end dates or curriculum choices, for schools in your area? Would you say it is the federal government, the state legislature, the state board of education, or the local board of education?

Level of government best suited to decide school policies		percentage
-----	+	-----
Federal government		5.475
State Legislature		3.565
State BOE		36.73
Local BOE		50.93
No opinion		3.296
Total		100

Who is best equipped to make decisions about closing schools for health and safety reasons? Would you say it's the Governor, the state Board of Education, the state School Superintendent, the local school board, the local school superintendent, or someone else?

Entity best suited to decide school closing for health		percentage
-----	+	-----
Governor		11.99
State BOE		11.79
State School Superintendent		6.157
Local BOE		29.7
Local School Superintendent		28.85
No opinion		11.52
Total		100

Alabamians pay sales taxes on almost all purchases, whether in stores or online. Sales taxes collected in stores stay in the local community. Taxes on internet sales are collected by the state and distributed to local communities through a population-based formula. Some counties and cities share a portion of their sales tax revenue to support the local schools. Should all counties and cities be required to share internet sales tax revenues with local schools?

Internet sales tax to local schools		percentage
-----+-----		
Yes		77.04
No		17.66
No opinion		5.3
Total		100

About 18 states have school voucher programs which allow parents to spend state funds on private school tuition or home schooling. Should Alabama parents be able to use state funds to pay private school tuition or home school their children?

Should Alabama have voucher program		percentage
-----+-----		
Yes		47.84
No		49.22
No opinion		2.935
Total		100

If Alabama had a school voucher program, who should vouchers be available to? (Randomized)

Eligible students if AL had vouchers		percentage
-----+-----		
All students		61.17
Students in failing schools		12
Students with disabilities		18.91
No opinion		7.911
Total		100

We want to ask you about your thoughts about ways to improve Kindergarten through 12th grade education in Alabama. I'm going to list some proposals, please tell me which one would be your top priority for improving public education, if something else should be done, or if you have no opinion. (Randomized) (PROMPT IF NECESSARY) Which of these is your top priority?

Top priority for K12 education		percentage
-----+-----		
Enhanced summer school		3.274
Expanded tutoring before and aft		19.53
Expanded healthcare in schools		3.104
More mental health counseling		17.1
Increase technology funding		18.06
Increased funding for failing sc		15.15
Something else		16.33
No opinion		7.435

Total | 100

Now I'm going to read some statements. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement. Government officials in Montgomery do not especially care what people like me think.

Officials in Montgomery do not		
care what people like me think.		percentage
-----+-----		
Strongly Disagree		4.489
Disagree		17.58
Neither Agree nor Disagree		11.82
Agree		26.27
Strongly Agree		36.41
No opinion		3.429
Total		100

People like me have no say in what the government in Montgomery does.
People like me have no say in what the government in
Montgomery does. | percentage

-----+-----		
Strongly Disagree		6.392
Disagree		23.37
Neither Agree nor Disagree		7.396
Agree		26.08
Strongly Agree		34.81
No opinion		1.956
Total		100



**Public Affairs
Research Council
of Alabama**

We all want similar things...good schools, safe neighborhoods, a strong economy, freedom, equality, and opportunity. Achieving these shared goals is impossible without an honest assessment of where we are, an idea of where we want to go, and paths to take us there. As Americans and Alabamians, we answer these questions through vigorous debate and honest negotiation which require accurate and unbiased information.

PARCA provides this information.

We are...

...Alabama's first and only nonprofit, nonpartisan, good government research center.

We work...

...to inform and improve the decision making of state and local leaders in Alabama through objective research and analysis.

We research...

...government structure and performance
...public education
...public finance
...workforce development.

We provide...

...data analysis, policy research, performance evaluation, and technical assistance.

We believe...

Alabama can do better.
Sound public policy is essential.
Sound public policy requires open, transparent and responsive government.
Sound public policy is based on fact, pursues a clear goal, and is assessed honestly.

We search...

...for people who believe these things too, and who will join this effort.

Learn more and join the cause at www.parcAlabama.org

P.O. BOX 293931 · 800 LAKESHORE DRIVE · BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35229 · 205 726 2482

PARCALABAMA.ORG



**Public Affairs
Research Council
of Alabama**

2021 Board of Directors

BETSY HOLLOWAY, Ph.D.*

PRESIDENT
*Vice President Marketing and
Communication*
Samford University
-Birmingham-

DAVID DONALDSON*

VICE PRESIDENT
*Senior Adviser to the Chairman
& CEO, Retired*
Vulcan Materials Company
-Birmingham-

MACKE MAULDIN* TREASURER

President
Bank Independent
-Florence-

TYRONE FENDERSON, JR.*

SECRETARY
*Mobile-Baldwin County Market
President Synovus Bank*
-Mobile-

LARKIN MARTIN*

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
Agent
Martin Farm
-Courtland-

Rose Allen

President
INTERFUZE
-Huntsville-

Fred Blackwell

President
Fred Blackwell Roofing
-Smith's Station-

Stan Blanton

Managing Partner
Balch & Bingham
-Birmingham-

Preston Bolt

Member
Hand Arendall Harrison Sale
-Mobile-

Alexia Borden

*Senior Vice President & General
Counsel*
Alabama Power Company
-Birmingham-

Fred O. Braswell, III

*President & CEO Alabama
Rural Electric Association*
-Montgomery-

Tom Brinkley

Shareholder
Maynard Cooper Gale
-Birmingham-

Derek Conrad Brown+

*Ken Chapman &
Associates*
-Birmingham-

Daniel Coleman

President
Birmingham
Southern College
-Birmingham-

Kate Cotton

Executive Director
Leadership Alabama
-Birmingham-

John Driscoll

CEO
Alabama State Port Authority
-Mobile-

Liz Freeman

President
Long's Human
Resource Services
-Mobile-

Brian Hamilton

CEO
Trillion Communications
-Birmingham-

Joe Hampton

President
Spire Energy
-Birmingham-

Abe Harper

President
Harper Technologies
-Mobile-

Judd Harwood

Partner
Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings
-Birmingham-

Ted Hosp

*Vice President,
Governmental Affairs*
Blue Cross and
Blue Shield of Alabama
-Montgomery-

C. Wayne Hutchens

President
AT&T Alabama
-Birmingham-

Donny Jones

Chief Operating Officer
Chamber of Commerce of
West Alabama
-Tuscaloosa-

Cathy Sloss Jones

President and CEO
Sloss Real Estate
-Birmingham-

Mary Pat Lawrence

*Senior Vice President,
Government Affairs*
Protective Life Corporation
-Birmingham-

Kim Lewis

CEO
PROJECTXYZ
-Huntsville-

Deborah J. Long*

*Executive Vice President, Chief
Legal Officer and Secretary,
Retired*
Protective Life Corporation
-Birmingham-

Scott McLain*

*Principal and Managing
Broker*
Coldwell Banker Commercial
McLain Real Estate
-Huntsville-

David Muhlendorf

President & CEO, Retired
LDM Company
-Florence-

Charles Nailen

Owner
BSG Specialty Foods
-Dothan-

Steven Nichols

Associate General Counsel
Mercedes-Benz USA
-Tuscaloosa-

Stratton Orr

CEO
Sexton, Inc.
-Decatur-

J.T. Price*

CEO
McKinney Capital
-Birmingham-

Alan Register

Birmingham Market President
Regions Financial Corporation -
Birmingham-

Dudley Reynolds

CEO, Retired
Alagasco
-Birmingham-

Lindsay Sinor

President
Vulcan Lands, Inc.
-Birmingham-

Reggie Sykes, Ph.D.

President
Bishop State Community
College -Mobile-

Bryson Stephens

Chairman
EBSCO
-Birmingham-

Neal Wade

*Director, Economic
Development Academy, Retired*
University of Alabama
-Oneonta-

Tony Waldrop, Ph.D.

President
University of South Alabama
-Mobile-

Andrew Westmoreland, Ed.D.

President
Samford University
-Birmingham-

* Executive Committee
+ Ex Officio



**Public Affairs
Research Council
of Alabama**

800 Lakeshore Drive
P.O. Box 293931
Birmingham, Alabama 35229
205.726.2482
www.parcAlabama.org