

ALABAMA

# Public Opinion Survey

2023



Alabama Public Opinion Survey: 2023 Edition  
Published by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama  
Birmingham, Alabama  
[www.parcAlabama.org](http://www.parcAlabama.org)  
©2024

# **Alabama Public Opinion Survey: 2023 Edition**

Survey and analysis conducted by:

Dr. Randolph Horn  
Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Research  
Professor of Political Science  
Samford University



**Public Affairs  
Research Council  
of Alabama**



## Contents

List of Figures .....	2
Executive Summary .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Survey Results .....	5
State Budget Priorities .....	5
Taxes .....	7
Public Education .....	9
Relationship with State Government .....	18
Conclusion .....	21
Survey Toplines .....	23

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Average rank of major budget areas, 2014–2023 .....	5
Figure 2. Percent prioritizing each budget area #1, 2014–2023.....	6
Figure 3. Percent saying too little, enough, or too much spent in major areas.....	7
Figure 4. Amount paid by people like me in state and local taxes, 2016–2023 .....	8
Figure 5. Amount paid by income groups in state and local taxes, 2019–2023.....	9
Figure 6. Too little now being spent on education in Alabama .....	10
Figure 7. Willing to increase education funding by paying more .....	11
Figure 8. Should online sales taxes go to local schools .....	12
Figure 9. Top priority for new education revenue .....	13
Figure 10. Generally prefer public or private schools .....	14
Figure 11. Support for various school choice options.....	15
Figure 12. Eligible students if Alabama had vouchers.....	16
Figure 13. Expenses covered if Alabama had a voucher program.....	17
Figure 14. Public school standards private schools should meet to accept vouchers.	18
Figure 15. Officials in Montgomery do not care what people like me think .....	19
Figure 16. People like me have no say in what the government in Montgomery does .....	20

## Executive Summary

PARCA's 2023 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.

Among the findings:

- Alabamians continue to rank education as the most important state government activity. See page 5.
- Large majorities of Alabamians say the state spends too little on education and healthcare. See page 7.
- Alabamians have an aversion to taxes but say 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 11.
- A plurality (48%) of Alabamians would prefer to educate their children in public schools. See page 14.
- A majority of Alabamians support school choice options. See page 15.
- A large majority believe private schools receiving state funds should meet all standards required of public schools. See page 18.

## Introduction

PARCA's annual public opinion survey was conducted between October 24 and December 26, 2023. The mixed-mode sample includes a mix of respondents from a statewide random digit dialed (RDD) sample of cell and landline numbers and an Internet panel provided by Qualtrics. With a total of 545 cases, the margin of error is +/-4.2%. Responses were weighted by race, gender, and age to match state demographics. The toplines at the end of this report include the exact wording of each substantive question.

The 2023 survey includes a mix of questions that have appeared in previous surveys and some new questions. We tend to see continuity in the responses to the repeated items. There is broad agreement on many issues. Still, each result presented is tested to determine if differences exist across a variety of political, demographic, or regional factors that may affect respondents' views on issues. When substantial differences are identified, they are reported below.

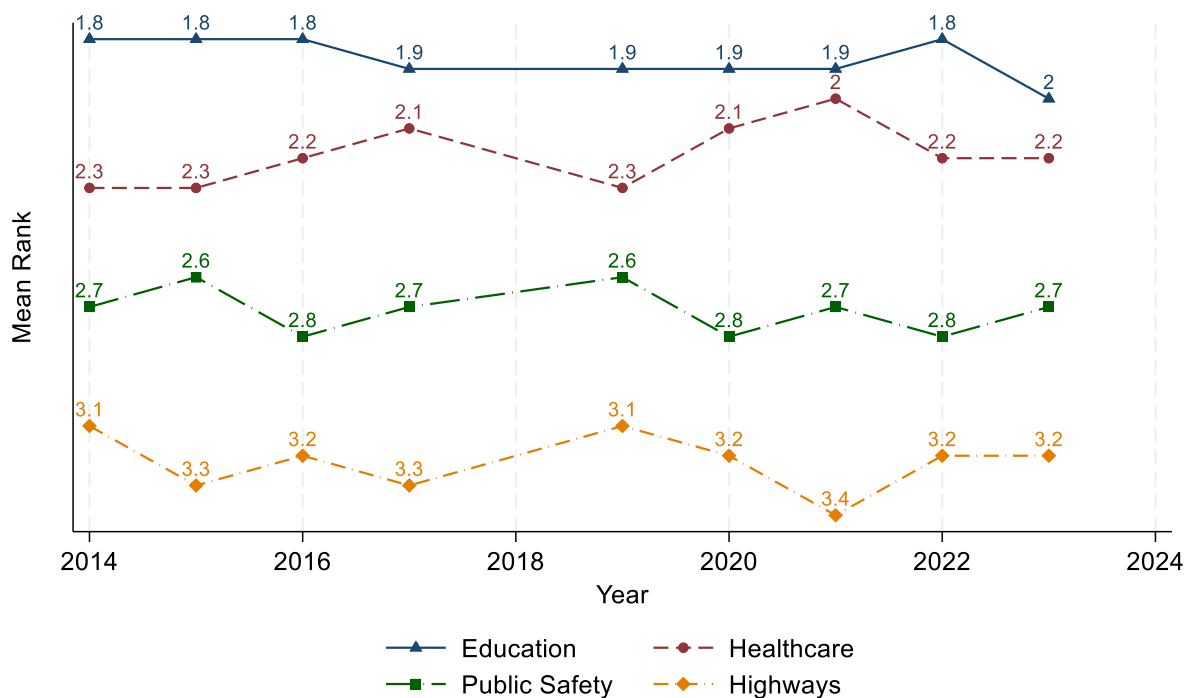


## Survey Results

### State Budget Priorities

We asked respondents to rank the importance of the four main areas of state government: education, healthcare, public safety, and highways. The items are presented in a random order, and respondents are asked to assign a rank of number one to the most important service, a rank of two to the next most important service, and so on until all four are ranked. The average rank for the last decade is presented in Figure 1 below. As has been the case for many years, education ranks top, followed by healthcare, public safety, and highways.

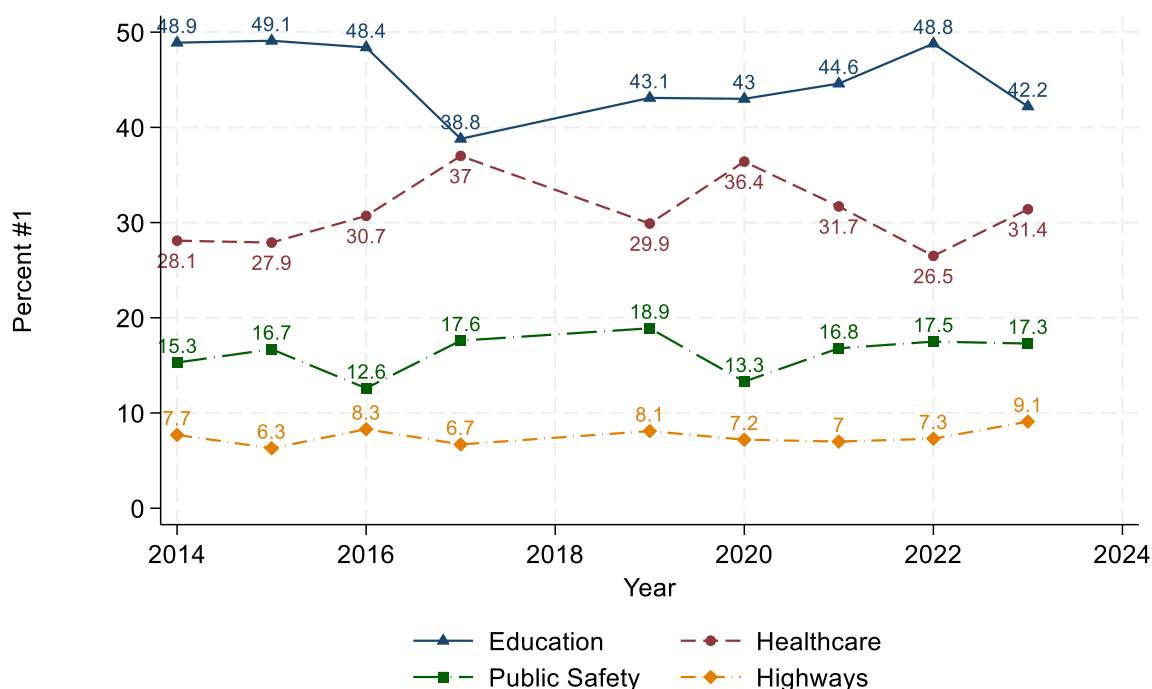
Figure 1. Average rank of major budget areas, 2014-2023



The relative ranks of the areas of service have been stable, although there is evidence of some fluctuation in the level of importance assigned to each. Figure 2 (see below) presents the percentage of respondents assigning each area a number one ranking. Respondents with higher incomes are more likely to see education as a top priority than others. Pluralities of every partisan stripe rank education number one, but Democratic identifiers are more likely to give healthcare a high ranking than Independents or Republicans. Respondents with lower incomes are also more likely to rate healthcare as more important than the others. While few rank it as a top

priority, males are more likely to see highways as important. Similarly, Republicans are more likely to give public safety a higher ranking than Independents or Democratic identifiers.

**Figure 2. Percent prioritizing each budget area #1, 2014–2023**

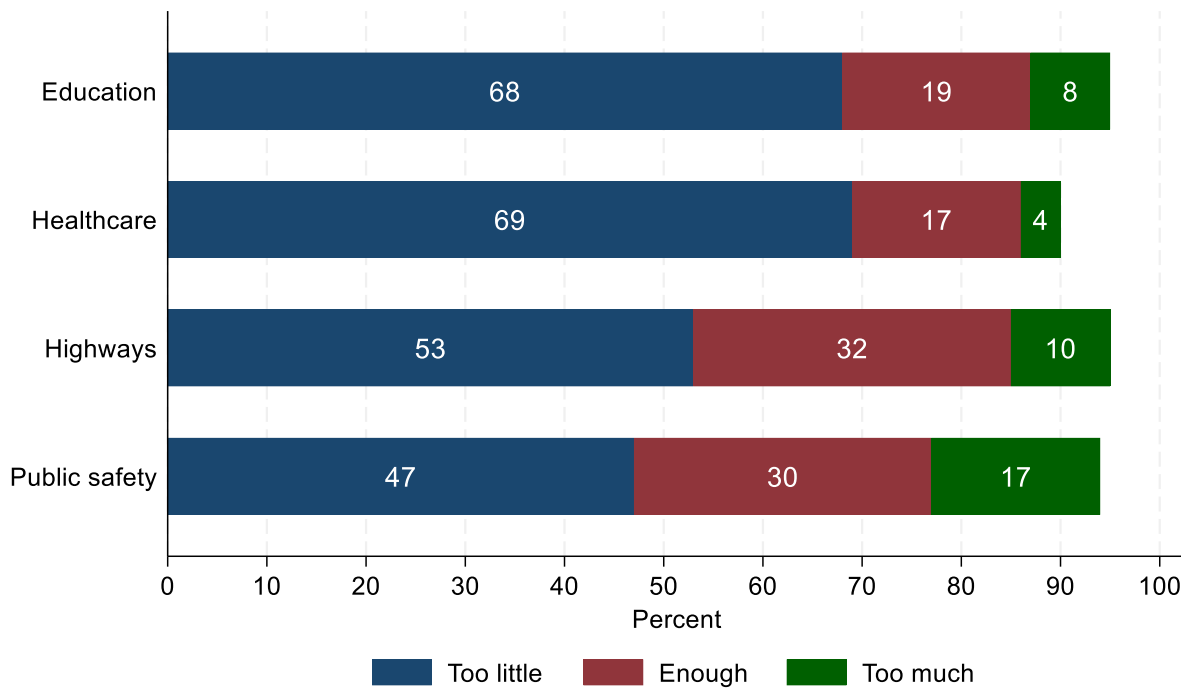


We asked respondents if they think the state is spending too little, enough, or too much in each of these areas. (See Figure 3.) About two-thirds of respondents indicate that too little is being spent on education and healthcare. About half say too little is spent on highways, and just under half say too little is spent on public safety.

While substantial majorities of every partisan group say too little is spent on education, about 84% of Democratic identifiers hold this view compared to about 64% of Republican identifiers. About two-thirds of male respondents say too little is being spent on education compared to about three-quarters of women respondents.

We see a similar pattern regarding healthcare; about 70% of males say too little is being spent on healthcare compared to about 82% of women. More than two-thirds of respondents older than 65 say too little is spent on highways, while only a quarter of those under 25 hold that view. Bare majorities of Republicans and Independents and a plurality of Democrats say too little is spent on public safety.

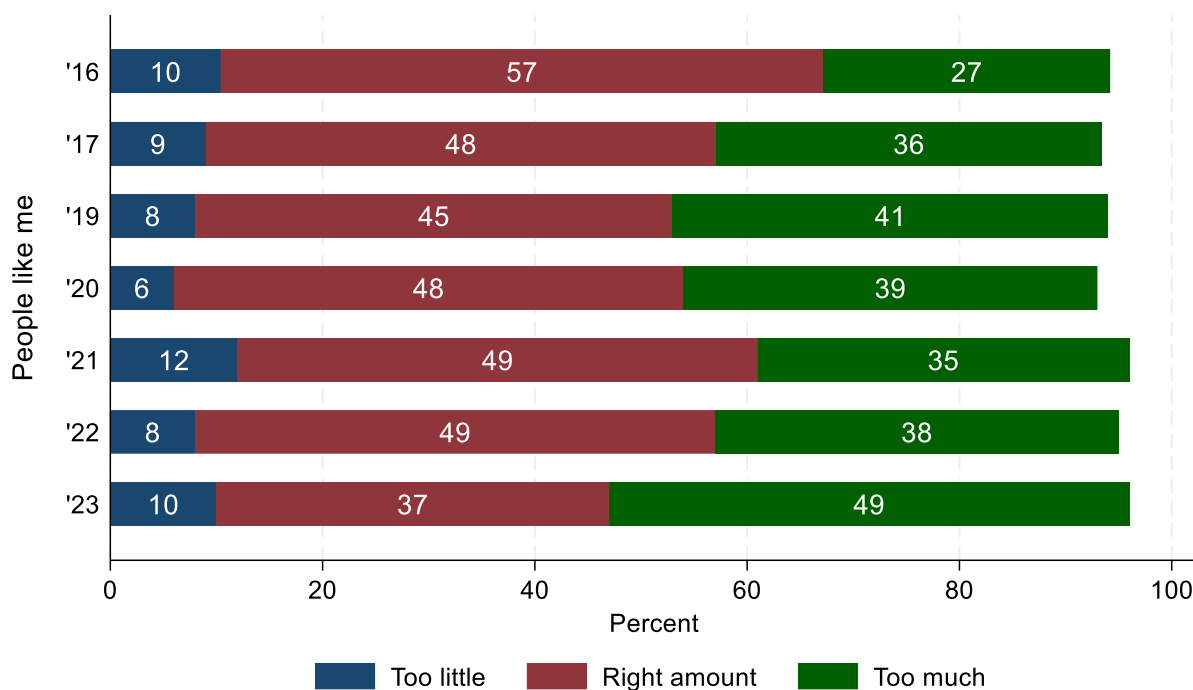
Figure 3. Percent saying too little, enough, or too much spent in major areas



## Taxes

As we have done for the last several years, we asked respondents if they and people like them were paying too much, too little, or about the right amount in state and local taxes. The results are presented in Figure 4 below. Compared to previous years, there appears to be an increase in respondents saying they are paying too much in state and local taxes. Nearly half say they are paying too much in 2023, while almost half in all earlier years said they were paying about the right amount. As had been the case in earlier surveys, those with the highest level of education were less likely to say they were paying too much compared with others.

Figure 4. Amount paid by people like me in state and local taxes, 2016–2023

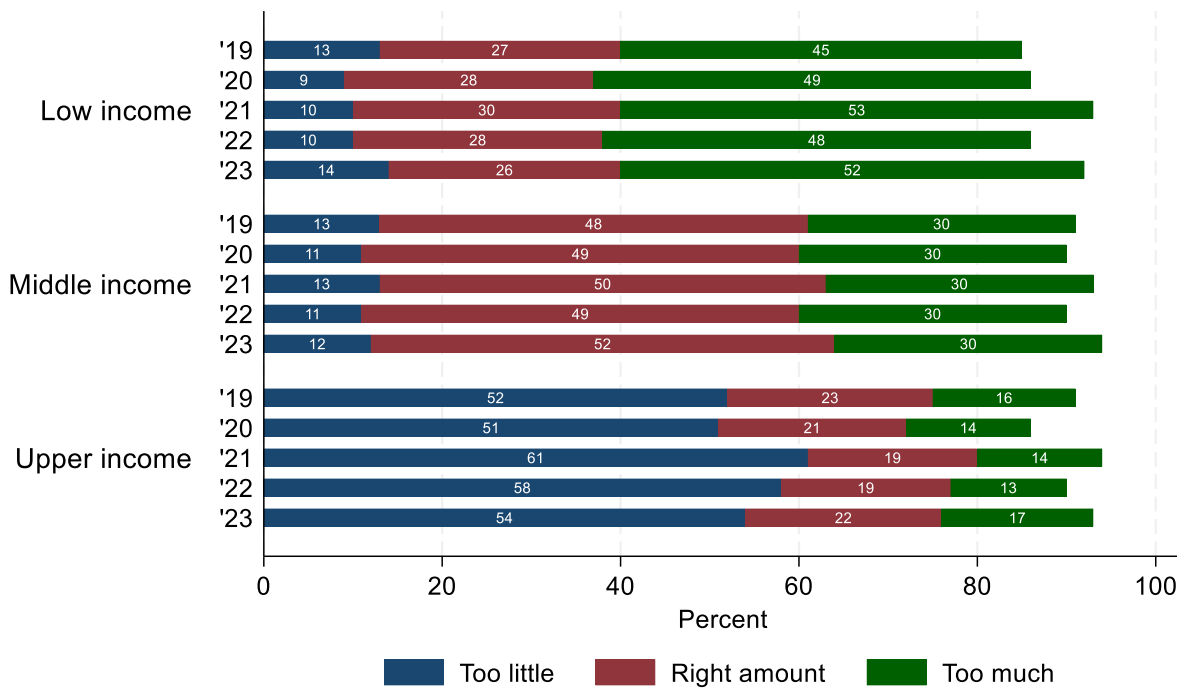


We also asked respondents if they thought people in different income groups were paying too much, too little, or the right amount in taxes. Results from the most recent five years are presented in Figure 5 below. The results here are similar to those of previous years, with about half saying that low-income people are paying too much, middle-income people are paying about the right amount, and upper-income residents are paying too little.

Majorities of all but the highest-income earners say those with lower incomes are paying too much, although a plurality of those with high incomes hold this view. Majorities of Independents and Democrats and a plurality of Republicans say those with lower income are paying too much in state and local taxes.

Pluralities or majorities of every income group are likely to say that middle-income residents are paying about the right amount in taxes. However, a higher percentage of higher-income respondents say this. While a majority say that those with higher incomes are paying too little in state and local taxes, those with higher levels of education are more likely to hold this view. While pluralities or majorities of males and respondents from South Alabama say that those with higher incomes are paying too little, they are slightly less likely to say that than women or respondents from the rest of the state.

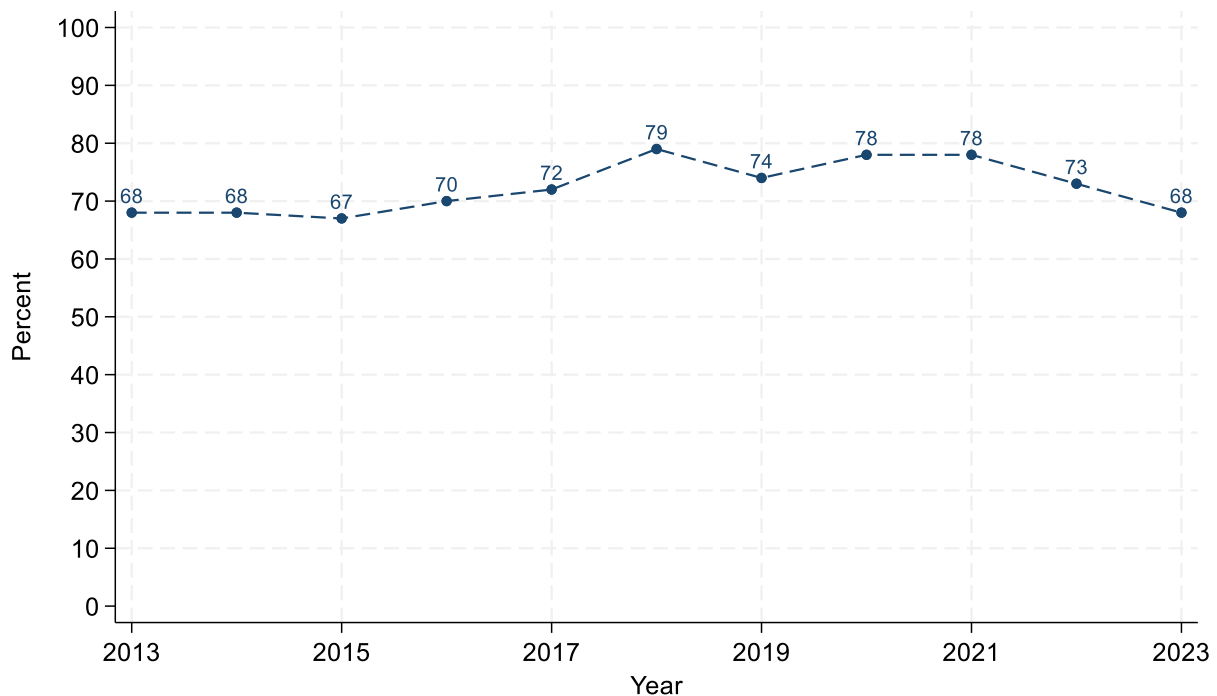
Figure 5. Amount paid by income groups in state and local taxes, 2019–2023



## Public Education

Each year, we ask a series of questions about public education, which is partly supported by the Alabama Association of School Boards. The education questions include some that have been asked in previous surveys and some that reflect current topics of interest. We have asked about spending in the major areas of state government for several years, but we have asked this question about state spending on education for over a decade. The entire series is reported in Figure 6. Each year since 2013, we have consistently seen two-thirds to three-quarters of respondents saying that too little is being spent on public education in the state.

Figure 6. Too little now being spent on education in Alabama



With majorities saying too little is being spent on education, we asked respondents if they would be willing to pay more taxes to increase education funding. We ask about their willingness to pay more of particular kinds of taxes: income, sales, Internet sales, and property. We typically see respondents willing to pay higher taxes to invest in education. Yet, respondents do not support increases in specific taxes.

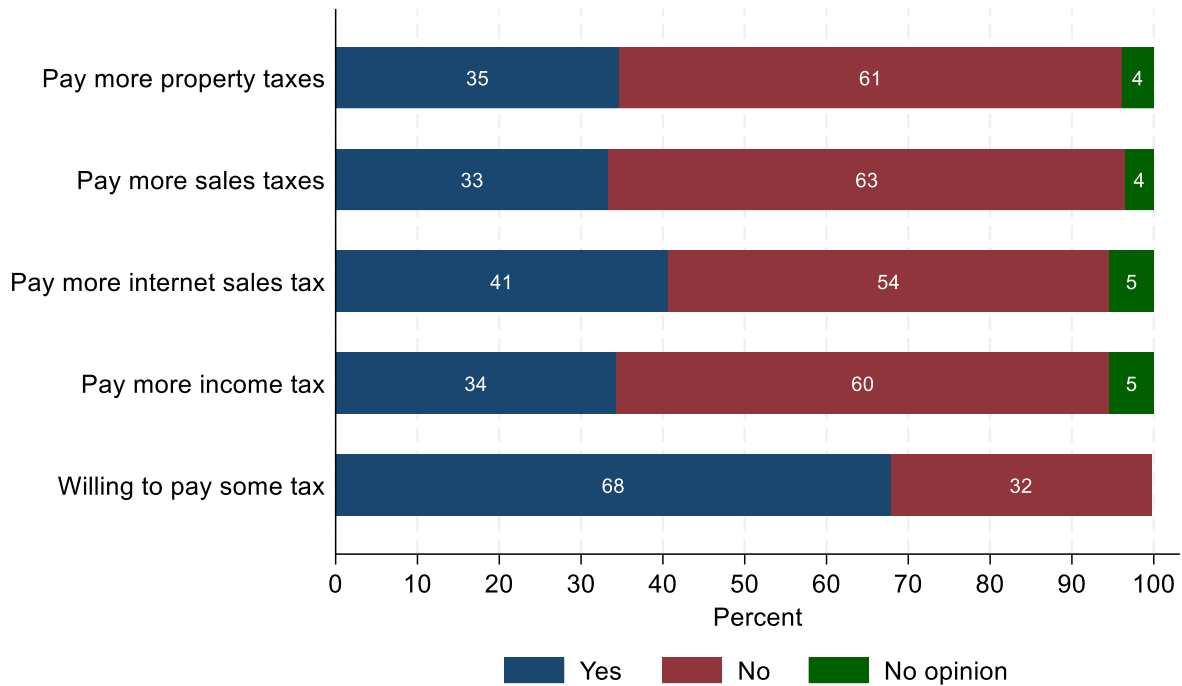
The results for 2023 are similar to previous years and are presented in Figure 7. More than two-thirds say they are willing to pay more taxes to increase education funding. However, as in previous years, only 30 or 40% of respondents are willing to pay more of any specific tax.

There are a few differences across subpopulations. Younger residents are more willing to pay more in sales or higher income taxes. Males are slightly more willing to pay higher taxes on Internet purchases than women. Those with higher levels of education are more willing to pay higher property taxes or income taxes.

Majorities of every education level or age group indicate a willingness to pay more of some tax, with younger respondents and more educated respondents being even more willing than others. These findings pose a challenge for education leaders and policymakers. Citizens want to see higher levels of investment in education and are

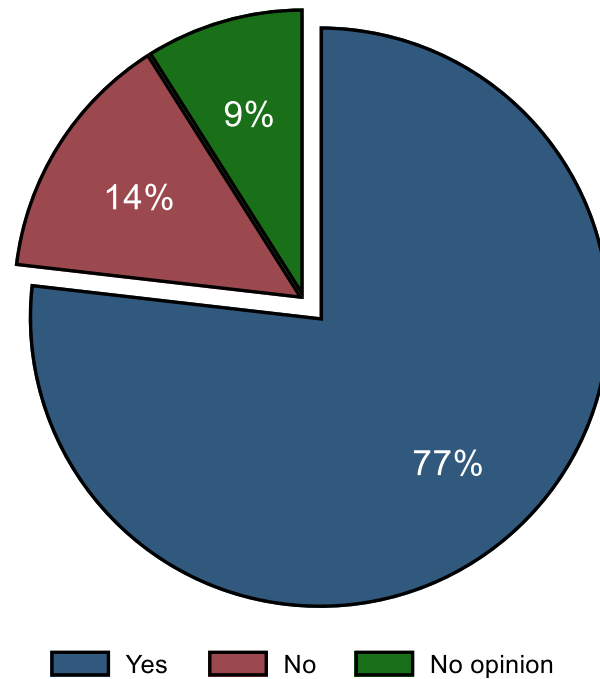
willing to put their money where their mouth is. Still, they do not agree on a specific revenue mechanism for funding increased education spending.

**Figure 7. Willing to increase education funding by paying more**



Sales taxes are collected on most purchases in Alabama, whether in brick-and-mortar shops or on the Internet. We asked respondents if cities and counties should share Internet sales tax revenue with schools the same way that they share regular sales tax revenue. As seen in Figure 8, about three-quarters of respondents (76.8%) say that counties and cities should share Internet sales tax revenues with local schools in the same way they share local sales taxes. There were no significant differences in this view across demographic, political, or regional subpopulations.

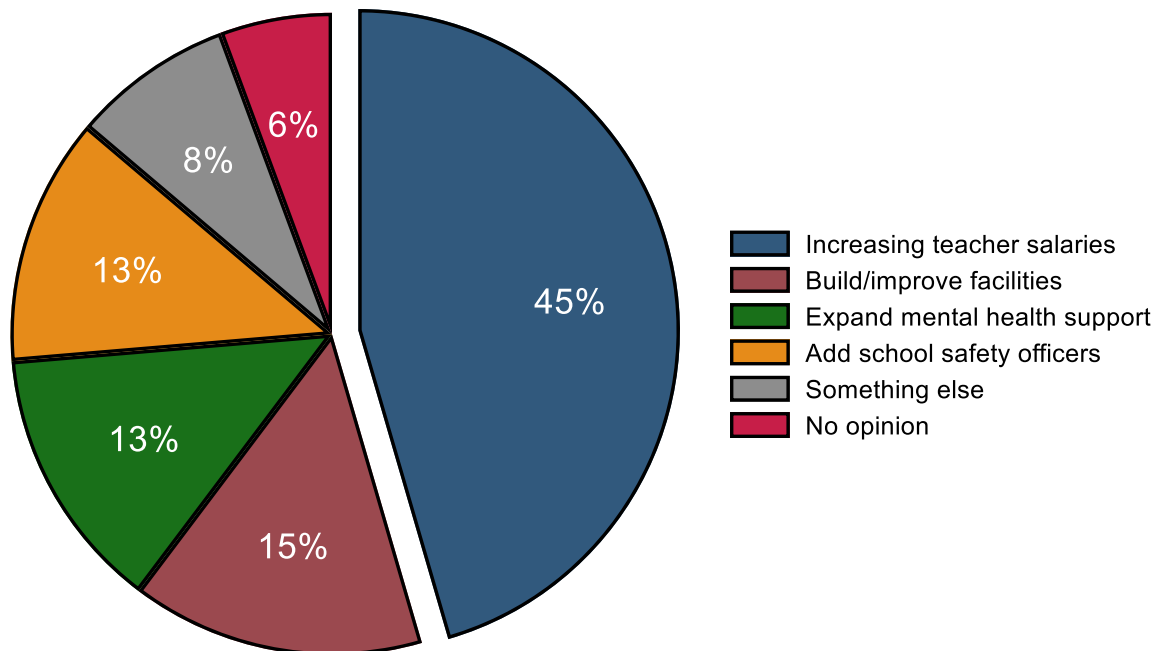
Figure 8. Should online sales taxes go to local schools



We asked respondents what their top priority would be for spending new education dollars if new revenue were realized. We offered them a randomized list of options ending with “or something else.” The results presented in Figure 9 show that increasing teacher salaries remains the preferred choice of respondents, with a plurality (45%) supporting increasing teacher salaries. Improving facilities, expanding mental health support, and adding school safety officers garnered support in the teens.



Figure 9. Top priority for new education revenue

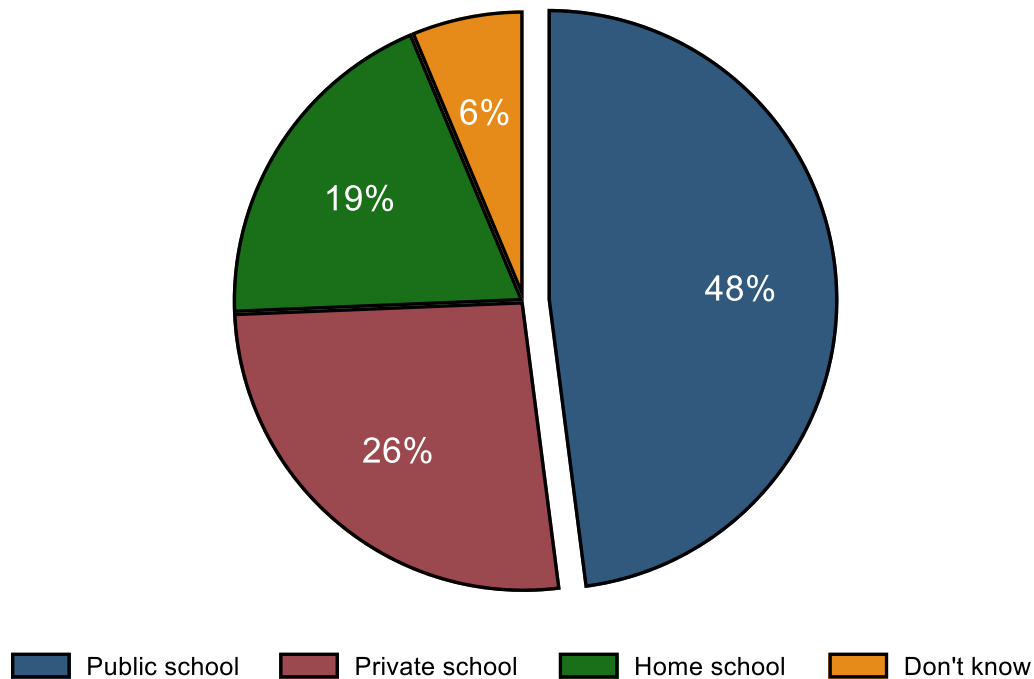


We asked respondents, “In general, would you prefer your children or grandchildren to be educated in the home, at a private school, or at a public school?” As can be seen in Figure 10, a plurality of those surveyed and a majority of those with an opinion on the question indicated that they preferred public schools for their children or grandchildren.

Public school represents the preferred option for every subpopulation with no statistically significant differences in the preference across regions, demographics, or political groups. About a quarter of respondents expressed a preference for private schools, with respondents from South Alabama being slightly more likely to prefer this option.

About a fifth (19%) preferred homeschooling, with middle-aged respondents, Republicans, and residents of North Alabama viewing this option slightly more favorably.

Figure 10. Generally prefer public or private schools



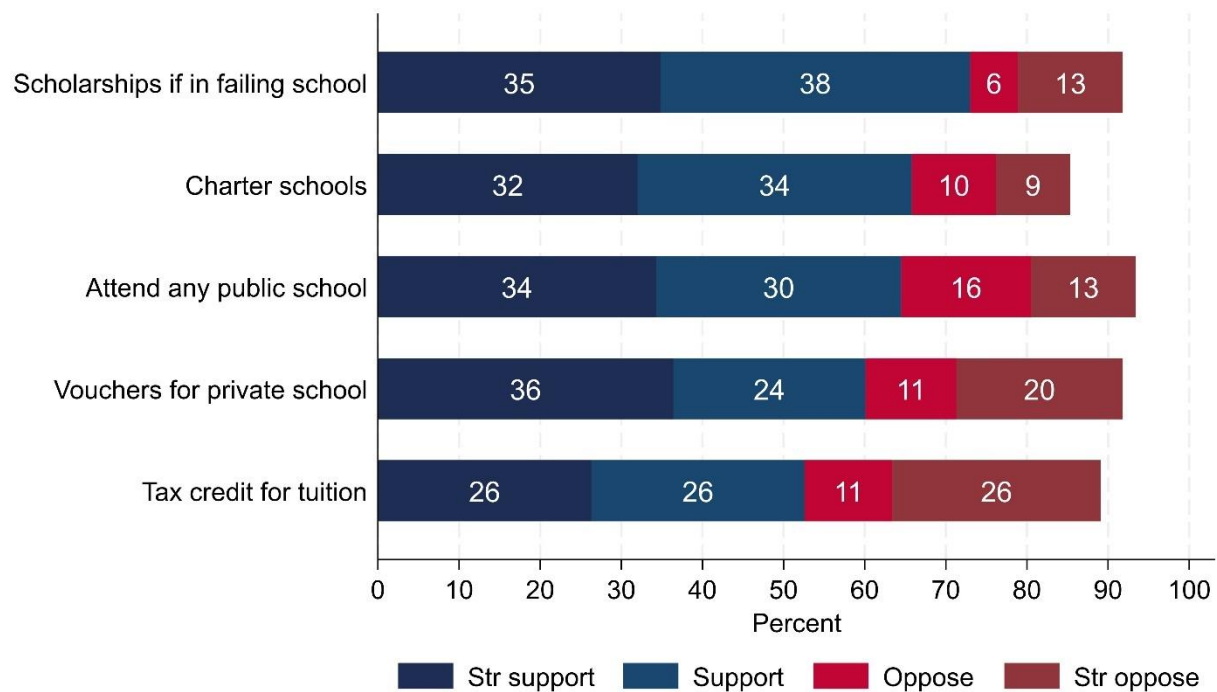
We asked respondents about their support for various proposals described as school choice. The options were presented in a random order. See the topline below for the exact question wording and Figure 11 for a summary of the results. A majority of respondents supported the various forms of school choice options. The most popular option was providing scholarships for students in school deemed failing, with nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) somewhat or strongly supporting that option. About two-thirds (66%) of respondents somewhat or strongly support charter schools in their community as an education option. About 64% of respondents indicated support for allowing students to attend other public schools regardless of school district or zoning. About 60% of respondents indicated that they somewhat or strongly support providing state-funded vouchers for parents to spend on private or home-school expenses. Finally, just more than half (52%) indicated that they somewhat or strongly supported allowing state tax credits to offset the cost of private school tuition.

In addition to the different levels of support for each option, there are some differences in the structure of support, i.e., some differences across subpopulations in their support of various proposals. For example, support for scholarships for students attending failing schools to attend other schools is slightly higher among those with

higher levels of education. There were no differences across any groups in their support for charter schools. Lower-income residents were more supportive of allowing students to attend any public school regardless of district or zone lines, although a majority of every income group supports this idea.

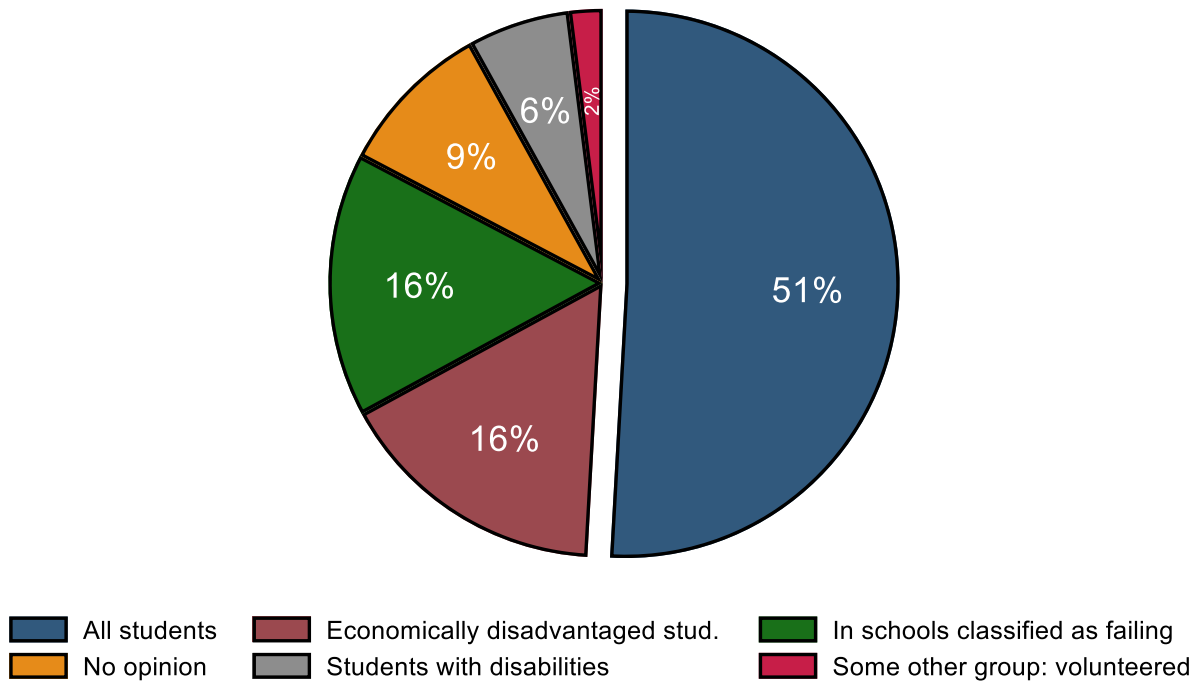
Vouchers are slightly more supported by younger respondents. Tax credits enjoy more support from Republicans (54%) than Democrats (44%).

**Figure 11. Support for various school choice options**



We asked respondents what students should be eligible for vouchers if Alabama had such a program. As the results presented in Figure 12 indicate, about half say vouchers should be available to all students, with about 16% each saying only economically disadvantaged students or those in failing schools should have access to vouchers. Among the half of respondents who say vouchers should be available to all students, there are no significant differences across any subpopulation. Respondents from North Alabama are slightly less likely to support limiting vouchers to those in failing schools.

Figure 12. Eligible students if Alabama had vouchers

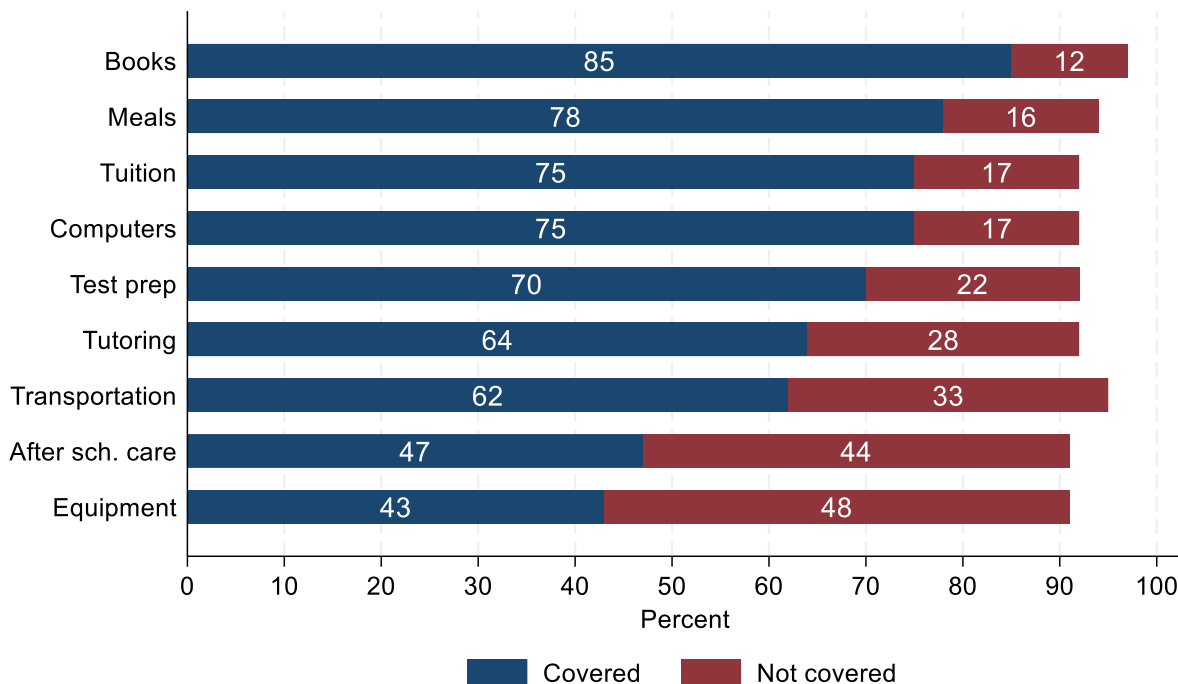


We asked respondents what educational expenses vouchers should be used for if the state had a voucher program. The results summarized in Figure 13 indicate that majorities support covering listed expenses from books (85%) to transportation (62%). A plurality support allowing vouchers to apply to after-school care (47%). Of the listed items, only sports and music equipment have more respondents saying vouchers should not cover the item than saying it should be covered (48% to 43%).<sup>1</sup>

While majorities of every income group say transportation should be covered, lower-income respondents are much more supportive of covering transportation than upper-income respondents. Republicans are more likely to say vouchers should not cover after-school care, while majorities of Independents and Democrats say after-school care should be covered. Majorities of wealthier respondents tend to say vouchers should not cover sports and music equipment, while majorities of lower-income respondents say it should be covered.

<sup>1</sup> We typically report every statistically significant difference across every subpopulation. However, when we have supermajorities for holding the same view, we sometime see differences that may be statistically significant but not substantively significant. Some examples are omitted when a region or other group's supermajority is only slightly smaller than the supermajority in the rest of the state.

Figure 13. Expenses covered if Alabama had a voucher program



We asked respondents if private schools receiving state funds through voucher payments should meet the same accountability standards as public schools. We broke the standards down into six categories presented in a random order. The results are presented in Figure 14 below.

By and large, supermajorities of respondents say that private schools receiving state funds through vouchers should meet the same standards as public schools. For example, 89% say private schools should be required to “teach math, English, social studies, and science or basic curriculum” as public schools do, with more educated respondents supporting the standard than others.

About 86% say private schools should “demonstrate students meet literacy and numeracy benchmarks,” with older and more educated respondents saying schools should meet this standard at slightly higher rates than younger respondents.

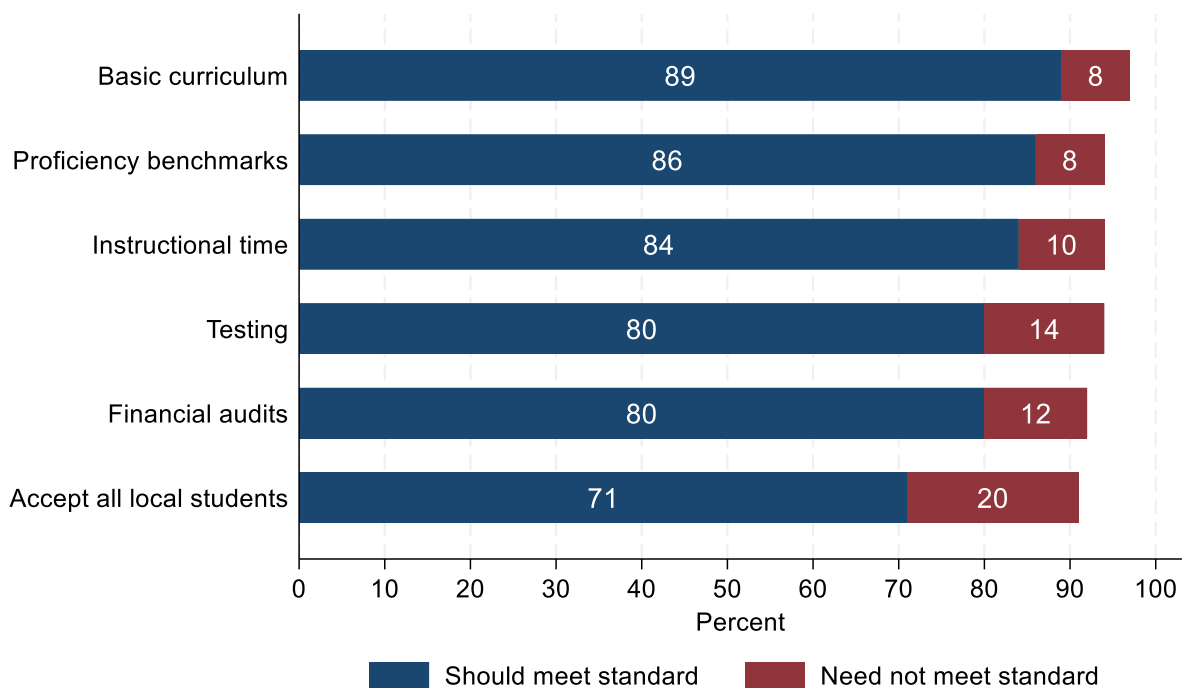
About 84% say private schools should “meet minimal instructional time requirements” as public schools do, with more educated respondents being more supportive of the standard than others.

About 80% say private schools should “annually administer standardized testing and publish results” as public schools do, with older respondents being more supportive of the standard than younger ones.

About 80% say private schools should “be subject to financial audits” if receiving state funds, with older respondents being more supportive of the standard than younger ones.

More than two-thirds of respondents say private schools should “accept or admit any student living nearby regardless of aptitude or disability status,” with wealthier respondents being slightly less supportive of the standard than others.

**Figure 14. Public school standards private schools should meet to accept vouchers**

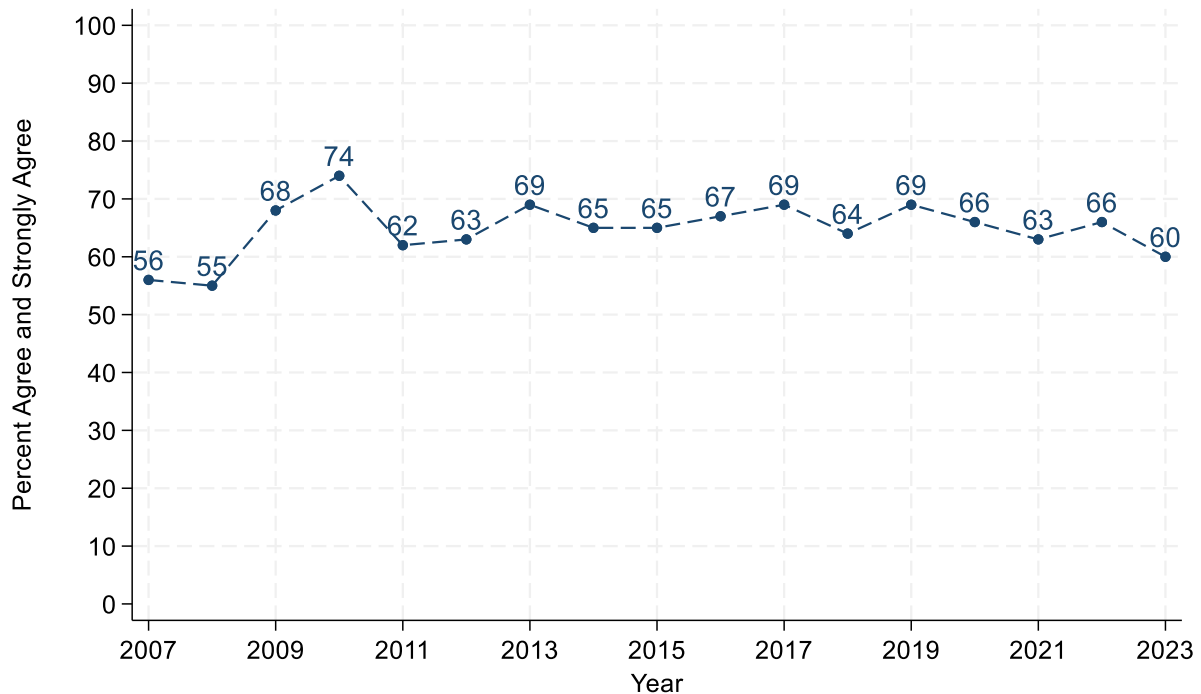


## Relationship with State Government

Since 2007, we have assessed respondents’ connection with their leaders in Montgomery by asking if they agree or disagree with two statements. The first is: “Government officials in Montgomery do not especially care what people like me think.” The entire series is presented in Figure 15. For most of the period covered, the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing that officials in Montgomery don’t care has been in the sixties. While majorities of every partisan stripe agree or strongly agree

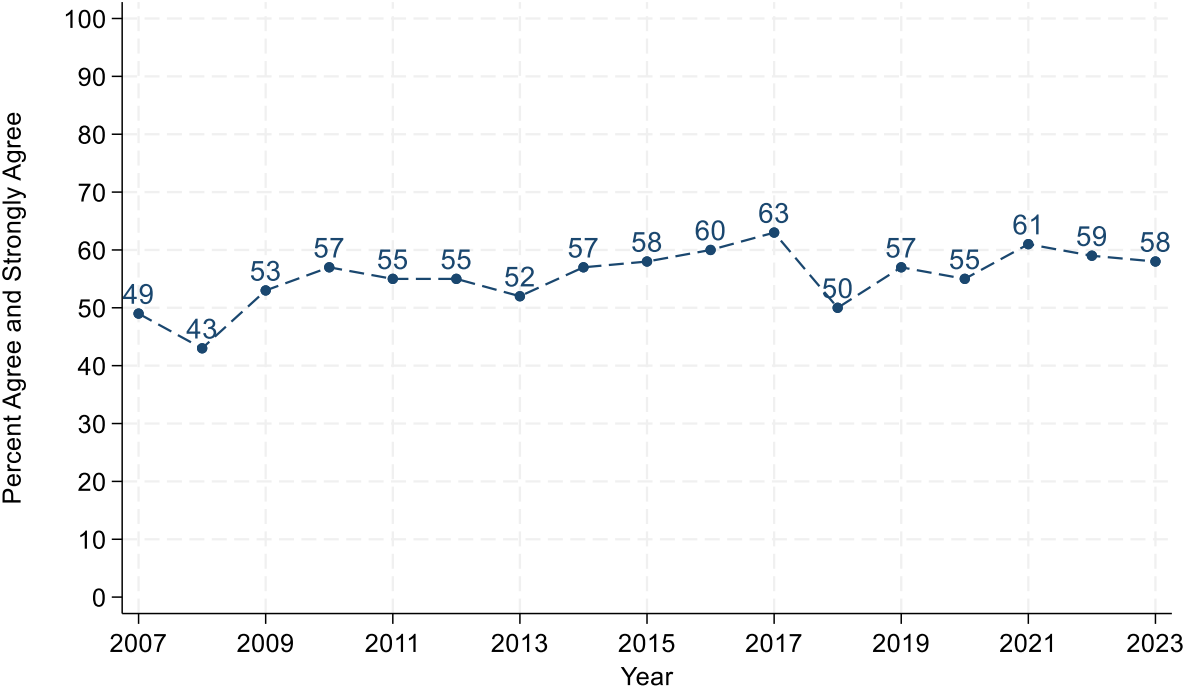
that officials don't care what they think, Independents and Democrats are more likely to hold this view.

Figure 15. Officials in Montgomery do not care what people like me think



The second statement we asked respondents to agree or disagree with is: "People like me have no say in what the government in Montgomery does." The series is reported in Figure 16. For most of the period covered, the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing that people like me have no say in what the government in Montgomery does has hovered in the upper fifties or lower sixties. This year, about 58% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Similar percentages of every partisan stripe agree or strongly agree, although Republicans are more likely to say they strongly disagree (12%) than Independents or Democrats (less than 2% each). Registered voters are less likely to agree with the statement than others.

Figure 16. People like me have no say in what the government in Montgomery does





## Conclusion

The results of the 2023 survey show considerable continuity with the results we have seen over the last decade. Alabama residents identify education as a top priority for state government, with healthcare a close second, public safety, and highways following. Majorities of residents indicate that education and healthcare are underfunded, with about half saying public safety and highways are underfunded. Majorities say lower-income residents pay too much in state and local taxes, while upper-income residents pay too little. While no revenue mechanism garners majority support, a two-thirds majority of Alabamians say they would be willing to pay more in some tax to increase funding for education, and about three-quarters say Internet sales taxes should be shared with schools in the same way other sales taxes are. That nearly half of respondents (and more than half of those with an opinion) would prefer that their children or grandchildren attend public schools may be seen as an additional indication of support for public schools. Not only do respondents think public schools should be strengthened, but substantial numbers would prefer that their children or grandchildren attend those schools.

It should not be surprising that there is support for various school choice options, although the more restrictive proposals receive the most support. About two-thirds of state residents support scholarships for students in failing schools or allowing students to attend charter schools, with only slightly fewer supporting transfers to public schools in other districts or zones. About three-fifths express support for vouchers, with just over half supporting tax credits for private school expenses. If Alabama had a voucher program, a majority would support broad access to it and support vouchers for educational expenses. What may be surprising is the level of support for accountability measures associated with private schools. Huge majorities support private schools being held accountable to many of the same standards public schools must meet if those private schools are to receive state funds through a choice or voucher program.

As noted in previous reports of PARCA surveys, there are continuing signs of a difficult relationship between Alabama residents and the state government and its leaders. Majorities of respondents saying major areas of government are underfunded could be read as a budgetary concern or as concerns about underperformance. Concerns about tax fairness and the possibly increasing sense that respondents themselves are taxed too much could also indicate system-level concerns about the quality and fairness of state government. Finally, the persistently

high numbers of residents who agree or strongly agree that state officials do not care what they think or who agree or strongly agree that they have no say in government continues to be a concern. Officials concerned about the relationship between citizens and state government can amplify their efforts to improve the performance and fairness of state government and strive to communicate this work better.

## Survey Toplines

2023 PARCA Survey Toplines  
Conducted October 24–December 26, 2023  
Statewide RDD/Mixed-mode sample, n=545  
Margin of error +/- 4.2%  
Weighted by race, gender, and age 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: Education; Healthcare for the poor and the elderly; Highways; Public safety, including prisons and law enforcement.] Which one of these services would you rank as the next most important?

	Mean
Education	1.96
Healthcare	2.16
Highways	3.17
Public safety	2.72

percent #1 priority

	Percent #1
Education	42.19
Healthcare	31.41
Highways	9.13
Public safety	17.27

Do you think there is too little, too much, or enough money now being spent on [ITEM] in Alabama? [Randomized: Education; Healthcare for the poor and the elderly; Highways; Public safety, including prisons and law enforcement.]

Education	Percentage
Too much	7.51
Enough	19.35
Too little	68.36
No opinion	4.78
Total	100.00

Healthcare	Percentage
Too much	4.32
Enough	17.15
Too little	69.38
No opinion	9.15
Total	100.00

Highways	Percentage
Too much	9.50
Enough	32.16

Too little		52.80
No opinion		5.54
Total		100.00

Public safety		Percentage
-----+-----		
Too much		17.07
Enough		29.73
Too little		47.07
No opinion		6.13
Total		100.00

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]?

You and people like you		Percentage
-----+-----		
Too much		49.08
Right amount		36.68
Too little		9.93
No opinion		4.31
Total		100.00

People w/lower income		Percentage
-----+-----		
Too much		51.78
Right amount		26.33
Too little		14.12
No opinion		7.77
Total		100.00

People w/middle income		Percentage
-----+-----		
Too much		29.90
Right amount		51.53
Too little		12.46
No opinion		6.11
Total		100.00

People w/upper income		Percentage
-----+-----		
Too much		17.12
Right amount		22.49
Too little		54.07
No opinion		6.32
Total		100.00

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: Sales taxes at local stores and businesses; Sales taxes on Internet purchases; Property taxes; State income taxes]? How about[next item]?

Pay more sales tax for education	Percentage
Yes	33.43
No	63.07
No opinion	3.50
Total	100.00

Pay tax on Internet purchases	Percentage
Yes	40.55
No	54.02
No opinion	5.42
Total	100.00

Pay more property tax for	Percentage
Yes	34.71
No	61.36
No opinion	3.92
Total	100.00

Pay more income tax for	Percentage
Yes	34.34
No	60.30
No opinion	5.36
Total	100.00

willing to pay one of these	Percentage
Yes	67.85
No	31.76
No opinion	0.38
Total	100.00

**What would be your top priority for spending NEW education dollars?**

[Randomized: **Building or improving school facilities; Increasing teacher salary and benefits; Hiring school counselors and providing mental health support; Hiring additional school safety officers; Or something else.**]

Priority for new educ dollars	Percentage
Building/improving school facili	14.79
Increasing teacher salary and be	45.48
Hiring counselors/providing ment	13.39
Hiring additional school safety	12.53
Something else	8.17
No opinion	5.64
Total	100.00

**Alabamians pay sales taxes on almost all purchases, whether in stores or online. Sales taxes collected in stores stay in the local community and some counties and cities share a portion of their sales tax revenue to support the local schools. Should counties and cities share Internet sales tax revenues with local schools in the same way they share local sales taxes?**

Internet tax to local schools	Percentage
Yes	76.83
No	14.21
No opinion	8.97
Total	100.00

**In general, would you prefer your children or grandchildren to be educated in the home, at a private school, or at a public school?**

Prefer public/private schools	Percentage
Home school	19.33
Private school	26.39
Public school	47.96
Don't know	6.31
Total	100.00\

**Some Alabama policy makers are discussing adopting "school choice." Listed below are some examples of school choice programs. For each one indicate if you would support or oppose implementing the program in Alabama or if you don't have an opinion.**

**Allowing students to attend any public school regardless of district or zone lines.**

	Percentage
Strongly support	34.32
Somewhat support	30.23
Somewhat oppose	15.99
Strongly oppose	12.87
No opinion	6.59

Total | 100.00

**Allowing state tax credits to offset the cost of private school tuition.**

	Percentage
-----	-----
Strongly support	26.25
Somewhat support	26.31
Somewhat oppose	10.75
Strongly oppose	25.71
No opinion	10.98
Total	100.00

**Allowing students to attend charter schools in my community.**

	Percentage
-----	-----
Strongly support	32.01
Somewhat support	33.82
Somewhat oppose	10.39
Strongly oppose	9.06
No opinion	14.72
Total	100.00

**Providing state-funded vouchers for parents to spend on private or church school tuition or homeschooling costs.**

	Percentage
-----	-----
Strongly support	36.43
Somewhat support	23.68
Somewhat oppose	11.24
Strongly oppose	20.51
No opinion	8.14
Total	100.00

**Allowing students attending failing schools to get scholarships to attend other schools.**

	Percentage
-----	-----
Strongly support	34.80
Somewhat support	38.15
Somewhat oppose	5.88
Strongly oppose	12.90
No opinion	8.27
Total	100.00

School voucher programs allow parents to spend state funds on private school tuition or homeschooling. If Alabama had a school voucher program, who should qualify for vouchers? [Randomized: All students; Students in schools classified as "failing"; Economically disadvantaged students; Students with disabilities]

	Percentage
All students	50.89
In schools classified as failing	15.61
Economically disadvantaged stud.	16.19
Students with disabilities	6.05
Some other group: volunteered	1.98
No opinion	9.27
Total	100.00

I'm going to list some expenses associated with education. If Alabama had an educational voucher program for K-12 students, let me know if you think each expense should be covered by the vouchers. [Randomized: Tuition; Books and materials; Computer equipment; Extra-curricular materials, like sports equipment or musical instruments; After-school care; Extra tutoring and academic support; Testing and test preparation classes; Transportation to and from school; Meals at school]

Voucher expense - tuition	Percentage
Covered	75.19
Not covered	17.28
No opinion	7.53
Total	100.00

Voucher expense - books	Percentage
Covered	85.31
Not covered	11.94
No opinion	2.75
Total	100.00

Voucher expense - computers	Percentage
Covered	74.87
Not covered	16.64
No opinion	8.50
Total	100.00

Voucher expense - equipment	Percentage
Covered	42.81
Not covered	47.86
No opinion	9.33
Total	100.00



Voucher expense - after-sch. care | Percentage

	Covered	47.48
	Not covered	43.69
	No opinion	8.83
	Total	100.00

Voucher expense - tutoring | Percentage

	Covered	63.54
	Not covered	28.11
	No opinion	8.35
	Total	100.00

Voucher expense - test prep | Percentage

	Covered	69.94
	Not covered	22.12
	No opinion	7.95
	Total	100.00

Voucher expense - transportation | Percentage

	Covered	61.67
	Not covered	32.70
	No opinion	5.63
	Total	100.00

Voucher expense - school meals | Percentage

	Covered	78.49
	Not covered	16.35
	No opinion	5.16
	Total	100.00

I'm going to list some requirements that public schools must meet to receive state funding. For each one tell me if you think private and church schools should also meet these standards if receiving state funding. Should private and church schools [read first item]? How about [NEXT ITEM]? Randomized: Annually administer standardized testing and publish results; Teach math, English, social studies and science or basic curriculum; Meet minimal instructional time requirements; Demonstrate students meet literacy and numeracy benchmarks; Be subject to financial audits; Accept or admit any student living nearby regardless of aptitude or disability status ]

Standards for receiving state  
funding - testing | Percentage

	Yes, should meet standard	80.02
	Does not need to meet standard	14.15

No opinion		5.83
Total		100.00
Standards for receiving state funding - basic curriculum		Percentage
Yes, should meet standard		88.64
Does not need to meet standard		8.03
No opinion		3.33
Total		100.00
Standards for receiving state funding - instructional time		Percentage
Yes, should meet standard		84.46
Does not need to meet standard		10.31
No opinion		5.23
Total		100.00
Standards for receiving state funding -lit./numeracy benchmarks		Percentage
Yes, should meet standard		85.90
Does not need to meet standard		8.38
No opinion		5.72
Total		100.00
Standards for receiving state funding - financial audits		Percentage
Yes, should meet standard		79.82
Does not need to meet standard		11.81
No opinion		8.37
Total		100.00
Standards for receiving state funding - accept all local students		Percentage
Yes, should meet standard		70.79
Does not need to meet standard		20.38
No opinion		8.84
Total		100.00

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		8.77
Disagree		10.05
Neither Agree nor Disagree		21.33
Agree		30.61
Strongly Agree		29.24
Total		100.00

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		6.26
Disagree		19.17
Neither Agree nor Disagree		16.00
Agree		29.37
Strongly Agree		29.20
Total		100.00



**Public Affairs  
Research Council  
of Alabama**

## 2024 Board of Directors

**Tyrone Fenderson, Jr.\***

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

**J.T. Price\***

Vice-President  
CEO  
Landscape Workshop  
-Birmingham-

**Rose Allen\***

Treasurer  
CEO, Retired  
decibel Research  
-Huntsville-

**Kim Lewis\***

Secretary  
CEO  
PROJECTXYZ  
-Huntsville-

**Macke Mauldin\***

Immediate Past President  
Bank Independent  
-Florence-

**Fred Blackwell**

President  
Fred Blackwell Roofing  
-Smiths Station-

**Preston Bolt**

Member  
Hand Arendall Harrison Sale  
-Mobile-

**Tom Brinkley**

Shareholder  
Maynard Cooper & Gale  
-Birmingham-

**Greg Butrus**

Partner  
Balch & Bingham LLP  
-Birmingham-

**J.W. Carpenter**

President  
Prosper  
-Birmingham-

**Clinton Carter**

CFO  
Huntsville Hospital  
Health System  
-Huntsville-

**Daniel Coleman**

President  
Birmingham-Southern College  
-Birmingham-

**Watson Donald**

Director of Corporate  
Stakeholder Strategy  
Alabama Power Company  
-Birmingham-

**David Donaldson**

Retired Executive  
Vulcan Materials Company  
Donaldson & Associates  
Consulting and  
Senior Advisor, Summit  
Strategy Group, LLC  
-Birmingham-

**Mark Drew**

Executive Vice  
President, Chief Legal  
Officer  
Protective Life Corporation  
-Birmingham-

**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-

**Betsy Holloway, Ph.D.**

Vice President, Marketing and  
Communication  
Samford University  
-Birmingham-

**Horace Horn**

Vice President  
of External Affairs  
PowerSouth Energy  
Cooperative  
-Montgomery-

**Ted Hosp**

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

**C. Wayne Hutchens**

President, Retired  
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-

**Ashley Kaplan**

Executive Director  
Leadership Alabama  
-Birmingham-

**Sean Kelly**

Market Executive  
Regions Bank  
-Huntsville-

**Deborah J. Long\***

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

**Larkin Martin**

Agent  
Martin Farm  
-Courtland-

**Scott McLain\***

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

**Chrystal Morgan**

Director of State and  
Local Government  
Operations  
Boeing  
-Huntsville-

**David Muhlendorf**

President & CEO, Retired  
LDM Company  
-Florence-

**Charles Nailen**

Owner  
BBG Specialty Foods  
-Dothan-

**Steven Nichols**

General Counsel  
Mercedes-Benz USA  
-Tuscaloosa-

**Stratton Orr**

CEO  
Sexton, Inc.  
-Decatur-

**Ryan Robichaux†**

Partner  
Bradley Arant Boulton  
Cummings  
-Birmingham-

**Dudley Reynolds**

CEO, Retired  
Alagasco  
-Birmingham-

**Lindsay Sinor**

President  
Vulcan Lands, Inc.  
-Birmingham-

**Bryson Stephens**

Chairman  
EBSCO  
-Birmingham-

**George Talbot**

Vice President of External  
Affairs  
Volkert, Inc.  
-Mobile-

**Beck Taylor, Ph.D.**

President  
Samford University  
-Birmingham-

**Neal Wade**

Director  
Advanced Economic  
Development Leadership  
Program  
-Oneonta-

\* Executive Committee  
+ Ex Officio



# Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama

## WHO WE ARE

The Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, PARCA, is Alabama’s trusted source for non-partisan, non-ideological research, founded in 1988 by former Governor Albert Brewer.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

State and community leaders make better-informed decisions when provided with unbiased, nonpartisan data and resources about the topics they care about the most.

## HOW WE WORK

We conduct *nonpartisan research* on issues affecting the people of Alabama so state and community leaders, and others, can make better-informed decisions based on facts, not rhetoric.

We *independently evaluate* the efficacy of public programs and services.

We offer technical and research assistance for public and nonprofit partners to help them integrate the use of *accurate data* into their work.

We engage in *meaningful dialogue* with state and community leaders and others on the topics Alabamians care about the most.

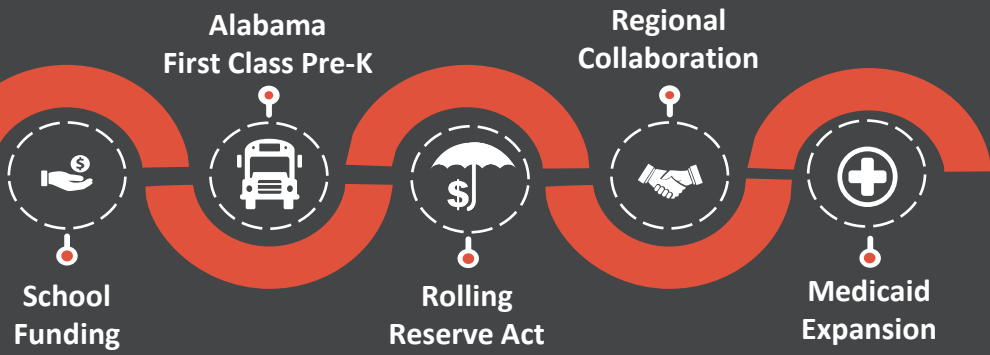


## WHY WE MATTER

Good leaders use good information to make sound policies. This is what PARCA provides: trustworthy, non-ideological data, policy research, and evaluation so that public decisions might be made, and public money, both tax dollars and charitable donations, might be spent, informed by fact, not rhetoric.

### Major Projects

PARCA’s research informs major policy debates of the day and is relied upon policymakers and policy organizations across the political spectrum.



## CONTACT US



**Public Affairs  
Research Council  
of Alabama**

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

[PARCALABAMA.ORG](http://PARCALABAMA.ORG)