

# **NEPC Review: Who's on Board? School Boards and Political Representation in an Age of Conflict (Fordham Institute, October 2025)**



**Reviewed by:**

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# Acknowledgements

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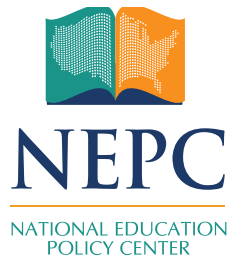
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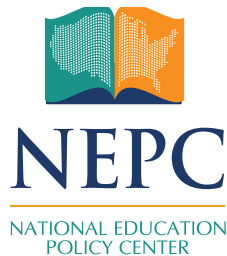
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## Summary

The Fordham Institute recently published a report of survey results from more than 5,000 school board members across 3,000 school districts. It finds that : (1) that school board members are disproportionately White, college educated, and likely to be current or former teachers; (2) that their politics generally reflect those of both national and local views; and (3) that despite often aligning with their local communities' views, they tend to differ slightly from the U.S. public in their beliefs about school quality, school choice, and teachers' unions. The report concludes that those discrepancies—as well as the underrepresentation of Black Americans and Hispanic Americans on school boards—are concerning, but it offers no recommendations for alleviating them. One positive aspect of the report is its use of both nationally representative and enrollment-based weighting, providing a relatively nuanced snapshot of board members' views. But leading and ambiguous survey questions cast doubts on findings related to board members' views of charter schools and school quality. Overall, the results may interest readers, but offer no guidance for policymakers on how to address the identified areas of concern. Notably, the Foreword differs significantly from the report itself. Framed largely in partisan language, it draws unsubstantiated conclusions, overstating some findings and largely ignoring others. For example, the finding that school boards are less supportive of charter schools than other groups is discussed under a heading that asks whether school boards are “the most anti-charter groups in the country.” Readers should be wary of its misleading summary and its unsubstantiated recommendation for still more partisanship. The Foreword's anti-school board, pro-charter school screed significantly misrepresents the actual report.



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## I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement that resulted in nationwide protests during the summer of 2020 prompted intense activism and advocacy across many school districts.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, some parents and community members organized in opposition to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices and COVID-19 safety measures. As these communities grappled with issues such as mask mandates, police in schools, Critical Race Theory, book bans, and LGBTQ+ policies, they looked to school board members to address policies and practices. Notably, and despite media amplification, most of the activism occurred in only about 10% of school districts, most of which were racially mixed and located in suburban communities.<sup>2</sup>

School boards quickly became the center of national attention as activists realized the power that school boards have to make critical decisions. In 2021, national groups (for example, Moms for Liberty and Parents Defending Education) emerged and focused on flipping school boards toward conservative-leaning majorities,<sup>3</sup> with some success.<sup>4</sup> Recently, some boards have reverted to neutral or left-leaning majorities.<sup>5</sup>

Within this context, in October 2025 the Thomas Fordham Institute published *Who's on Board? School Boards and Political Representation in an Age of Conflict*,<sup>6</sup> by political scientists David M. Houston and Michael Hartney. Their national survey of school board members examined whether, and to what extent, school board members represent their communities and students, what extent they mirror the larger

groups of U.S. citizens and political partisans, and how school board members are experiencing board elections.

## **II. Findings and Conclusions of the Report**

Eight major findings across four sections focus on school board members' 1) political identities, 2) demographic identities, 3) attitudes toward "polarizing" education issues, and 4) perceptions of school board elections. Generally, the report presents these findings without positive or negative conclusions, noting that "Whether it is good or bad for the school board to mirror the electorate is far from a straightforward question."<sup>7</sup>

### **Political Identities**

- School board members' political affiliations and ideologies closely resemble those of the broader U.S. public.<sup>8</sup>
- Democrat, liberal, or moderate school board members represent more students relative to political affiliations in the U.S. public.<sup>9</sup> Yet larger percentages of school board members are Republicans, or conservatives and moderates, than Democrat or liberal.<sup>10</sup>
- Most school board members reflect the partisanship in their districts, especially in more populated districts.

### **Demographic Identities**

- School board members are now majority White (87%), holders of college degrees (81%), and often current or former teachers (25%). Gender discrepancies documented in previous surveys of school board members have largely been erased. However, compared to the U.S. population, Blacks and Hispanics continue to be underrepresented, and Whites, teachers, and college graduates tend to be overrepresented on school boards.<sup>11</sup>

### **Attitudes Toward Selected Education Issues**

- School board members' attitudes align with the U.S. public on 1) teaching about racism, 2) transgender bathroom access, 3) transgender athletic eligibility, 4) teachers' unions, and 5) national school quality; they were less aligned on 6) support for charter schools<sup>12</sup> and 7) positive perceptions of local schools.<sup>13</sup> The report notes that among the general public, more Republican (55%) and Black Americans (54%) support charter schools than Democrats (38%) do, while

slightly more Democrats have positive perceptions of local schools compared to Republicans and Black Americans.

- “Only about half” of board members’ opinions on what the report deemed “recent polarizing issues” reflected their districts’ majority party affiliation.<sup>14</sup> Enrollment-weighted analyses, however, indicate greater alignment,<sup>15</sup> with the report noting that mismatches might be more prevalent in smaller communities.

### **Perceptions of School Board Elections**

- Taken as a whole, board members perceive that school board elections are neither competitive nor partisan, and most also believe that teachers’ unions are not important in their districts’ school board elections. However, when results are disaggregated by district size, board members in larger districts take the opposite view: They find elections both competitive and partisan, and they perceive teachers’ unions as important.<sup>16</sup> Yet most board members also agreed that the pandemic has not changed the competitiveness, partisanship, or role of the teachers’ union in their school boards’ elections.

### **Broad Conclusions**

The report concludes that in general, school board members’ views tend to be in alignment with the U.S. public and their local constituencies and that “school board politics in most communities appears to be less heated and riven by partisan conflict than is often portrayed in the media.”<sup>17</sup> Still, school board members align with their constituents on some issues (e.g., the extent to which schools should emphasize racism), more than others (e.g., policies affecting transgender students).<sup>18</sup> Notably, the report calls attention to the finding that Blacks and Hispanics continue to be significantly underrepresented on school boards, even if some two-thirds of students are represented by a member of their race or ethnicity.<sup>19</sup> Beyond that, the report further concludes that

...findings underscore a central tension in contemporary school governance: While boards are relatively well aligned with their constituents on some of the most polarizing, high-profile issues—often overlapping with the deeply entrenched partisan views in their districts—they appear less attuned to matters related to school quality, school choice, and the role of teachers’ unions.<sup>20</sup>

Although the report terms these divergences “potentially pernicious” and suggests they need attention, the report itself makes no specific recommendations for alleviating them. In discussing the publication’s conclusions, it is important to note that the Foreword’s overarching description of findings characterizing boards as “unrepresentative, unresponsive, and unwilling to embrace change” is nowhere stated or

implied in the research report itself, nor is its recommendation for injecting “more politics” into school board elections.<sup>21</sup>

### **III. The Report’s Rationale for Its Findings and Conclusions**

Because findings identified gaps between school board members’ perceptions and those of the U.S. public and their constituents on the issues of school quality, charter schools, and teachers’ unions, the report concludes boards should pay more attention to these issues. Moreover, the report suggests that these issues are pertinent to student learning and academic outcomes.

### **IV. The Report’s Use of Research Literature**

The report cites relatively little research, which is not unusual given it is presenting original survey results. Most of the research it cites is largely drawn from nonacademic outlets, which lack rigorous peer-review processes. The peer-reviewed articles the report draws from are mainly from the field of political science. It also references previous surveys, which provide useful insight into school board changes over time. The lack of reference to research on noncitizen voting,<sup>22</sup> ward versus at-large voting,<sup>23</sup> youth on school boards,<sup>24</sup> and studies presenting concerns over partisan elections<sup>25</sup> is worth noting given the report’s focus on alignment with constituents, voting, political affiliations, and representation. For example, research shows that at-large elections (versus at-ward elections) and elections during non-presidential general election cycles tend to disadvantage candidates of color.<sup>26</sup>

The research on school boards is often siloed by academic discipline and methodology, and the report’s lack of references to education scholarship epitomizes this fragmentation. The report could have called on education research to deepen its discussions about school board representation, responsiveness, and the issue of school choice. For instance, education research illustrates: a) the challenges and affordances of school board representation and equity during and post-elections, highlighting the importance and barriers of racial representation on school boards;<sup>27</sup> b) concerns with school choice, including how charter school boards, appointed school boards (including mayoral and state takeovers), and high-stakes accountability policies negatively shape community responsiveness, transparency, deliberation, and equity;<sup>28</sup> c) the significance of school board responsiveness and how local control can work to improve education;<sup>29</sup> d) alternative evidentiary perspectives on public schools, including how efforts to close neighborhood public schools are met with intense opposition, especially among Black communities;<sup>30</sup> and e) why elected school board members might not support school choice, such as charter schools, given choice

policies have been shown to contribute to less responsive democratic governance structures.<sup>31</sup> This research could have provided important insights for deepening the survey design and better supported an analysis that might contribute to actionable recommendations.

## V. Review of the Report's Methods

Following efforts to identify as many potential school board members as possible, some 61,000 school board members received surveys via email. The 5,346 respondents (8.7% of those surveyed) represented nearly 3,100 districts,<sup>32</sup> an average of fewer than two board members per district. The report notes that while low, this response rate “compares reasonably well with other national surveys of political elites.”<sup>33</sup> The respondents were matched to their school districts for weighting and for estimating the board members’ political alignment with their districts.

However, the report does not provide the “raw” data (i.e., prior to weighting) about the characteristics or districts of survey respondents. Such information would have facilitated evaluation of the robustness of the sample. In addition, while some respondents skipped some of the questions, the report did not provide counts of responses by question or the number of respondents who skipped questions.<sup>34</sup>

Further assessment of the report’s methods follows, in three parts: survey items, weighting approaches used to draw conclusions about school board members nationally, and measures of partisanship.

### Survey Items

For comparisons, items related to salient issues were drawn from the *Education Next Survey of Public Opinion*<sup>35</sup>—without explanation of why charter schools and teachers’ unions were selected as two of eight survey items instead of other issues included in the source (including, for example, Common Core, COVID-19 safety measures, or other school choice approaches such as vouchers).<sup>36</sup> Education issues identified as highly partisan in other surveys include school spending, low-income or universal pre-K, sex education, and prayer in public schools.<sup>37</sup>

The wording of important questions about charter schools and school quality, although consistent with the *Education Next* survey, is problematic when asked of school board members who are elected to govern and support their community’s traditional public schools. First, the question about charter school leads them toward opposition by describing charter schools as “publicly funded schools” that are “not managed by the local school board” and “are exempt from many state regulations.”<sup>38</sup> It asks, in effect, if they would welcome schools to their communities that would

draw money from their public school budgets but have fewer accountability requirements than the schools for which they are responsible. Second, the school quality question is overly broad and ambiguous. It asks board members to grade, as a whole, “the public schools in your community” on a scale of “A, B, C, D, Fail.”

The report also categorizes school board members by political ideologies (conservative, moderate, or liberal), but it does not report, either in the text or the appendix, the text of the survey questions used to derive these findings.

## **Weighting**

The report used two weighting techniques to approximate all school board members, including those who did not respond: district characteristics (nationally representative) and student counts (enrollment-weighted). The weights indicate how many other similar school districts each school board member who responded would represent. The main body of the report included both sets of results for approximately half of the analyses.<sup>39</sup>

**Nationally representative:** In this approach, school districts were grouped with other districts by shared characteristics<sup>40</sup> and then board members were given more or less weight depending on if their districts were under- or overrepresented in the survey compared to all districts nationally. This enabled school board members of smaller and rural districts (the majority of districts) to be represented in proportion to their larger numbers.

**Enrollment-weighted:** This approach counts board members based on how many students their districts enroll, such that board members of larger districts with more students are counted more heavily in the results. This is an important point of comparison, and good to include, because the concentration of students in larger districts means that the districts that served the most students would have been underrepresented had the report relied only on nationally representative weights. In some instances the results from the nationally representative and enrollment weighted findings diverge.

## **Partisanship Measures**

The report matched the school board members’ districts to the results of the 2020 Presidential election to create measures of partisanship and assessed the board members’ alignment with the voters in their districts on six of the eight “high profile” issues in their survey.<sup>41</sup> However, voting data is reported by precinct, and voting precincts and school districts do not always overlap. The report does not explain how precinct-level voting results were converted to school districts.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, approximately 30% of school boards vote within sub-districts or wards, which is also not addressed.<sup>43</sup> The partisanship analysis is underexplained and under-justified,

although the results indicate less political mismatch and conflict than the report's Foreward indicates.<sup>44</sup>

## **VI. Review of the Validity of the Findings and Conclusions**

The survey results provide useful information about school board members' composition and perspectives while accounting for the variation of size and composition of U.S. school districts.

Several findings are unsurprising. First, given that a relatively small minority of school districts experienced conflicts during the December 2022-January 2023 survey period,<sup>45</sup> we would expect board members to be largely aligned with their constituents on cultural issues related to teaching racism and transgender students' access to bathrooms and school activities. Second, it is unsurprising that school board members would diverge from their constituents on charter schools and unions, issues that directly financially impact their districts and responsibilities (especially given the survey's misleading charter school question). Third, it is unsurprising that school board members perceive their local schools more positively than the public because they are likely more knowledgeable with information that the public has less access to.<sup>46</sup> Notably, the survey question on local school quality is ambiguous and broad, asking members to grade "public schools in your community" rather than their districts' schools or on a specific indicator such as academics.<sup>47</sup> Yet the report implies that board members tend to ignore academic achievements by emphasizing charter schools and at-large perceptions of school quality and teachers' unions. It leaps from overly general and/or poorly worded survey questions to unfounded, specific interpretations. Finally, the differences between board members and the public on other issues is also not surprising given the rural/urban divide in national politics.<sup>48</sup>

The report implicitly assumes that school board members' individual policy positions drive school board decisions. Research on state legislatures<sup>49</sup> and school board members<sup>50</sup> suggest that this assumption may be unwarranted. For example, when school boards hire superintendents, they often prioritize interpersonal skills and competence over partisan policy positions. Moreover, while the report suggests board members need to be more attentive to some concerns of their constituents', evidence from another contemporaneous survey of school superintendents indicates that district leaders are responsive to community members' concerns.<sup>51</sup> And, while school board members are characterized as being unresponsive to parents' desires for charter schools, that implied criticism ignores research that challenges the simplistic notion that charter schools are always superior to public schools.<sup>52</sup>

## **VII. Usefulness of the Report for Guidance of Policy and Practice**

Survey research of school board members is limited, and thus, this report provides a decent snapshot of school board composition, political orientation, and perceptions. Yet the main body of the report lacks explicit recommendations based on the findings. Only the Foreword offers recommendations—but many of these rest on claims neither found in the report itself nor substantiated by existing research, and are framed in highly partisan language. Moreover, the report ignores some existing school board research that could have potentially contributed to more relevant survey questions and implications. Policymakers may find the report interesting, but it provides little guidance for action, and all readers should dismiss the Foreword's anti-school board, pro-charter school screed as misrepresenting the research report itself.

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- 8 School board members: 47% Republicans, 41% Democrats, 12% Independents compared to the U.S. Public: 43% Republicans, 45% Democrats, and 12% Independents.
- 9 School board members were asked in separate questions to report their party affiliations and

political ideologies (conservative, moderate, or liberal). School board members by percentage of students represented: 55% Democrat, 35% liberal, or 40% moderate compared to U.S. Public: 43% Democrat, 35% liberal, or 36% moderate.

Houston, D.M. & Hartney, M.T. (2025, October). *Who's on board? School boards and political representation in an age of conflict* (p. 16). Retrieved December 18, 2025, from <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/whos-board-school-boards-and-political-representation-age-conflict>

- 10 Percentages of alignment between Board members and U.S. adults: **School board members:** 37% Conservatives and 39% Moderate compared to 36% and 36% of the **U.S. adults** respectively.

Houston, D.M. & Hartney, M.T. (2025, October). *Who's on board? School boards and political representation in an age of conflict* (p. 15). Retrieved December 18, 2025, from <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/whos-board-school-boards-and-political-representation-age-conflict>

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- 12 School board support for charter schools: 29% versus 45% U.S. public.

- 13 School board positive perceptions of local schools were 75% versus 51% U.S. public.

- 14 Percentages that reflect similar views between school board members and the dominant party in their respective districts on the following issues: 1) charter schools (43%); 2) book restrictions (51%); 3) teachings about racism (48%); 4) transgender bathroom access (68%); 5) transgender athletic eligibility (70%); and 6) teachers' unions (53%).

Houston, D.M. & Hartney, M.T. (2025, October). *Who's on board? School boards and political representation in an age of conflict* (p. 25). Retrieved December 18, 2025, from <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/whos-board-school-boards-and-political-representation-age-conflict>

- 15 Percentages weighted by student enrollment in districts, showed greater alignment among the views between school board members and the dominant party in their respective districts on the following issues: 1) charter schools (54%), 2) book restrictions (66%), 3) teachings about racism (61%), 4) transgender bathroom access (69%), 5) transgender athletic eligibility (68%), and 6) teachers' unions (57%).

Houston, D.M. & Hartney, M.T. (2025, October). *Who's on board? School boards and political representation in an age of conflict* (p. 26). Retrieved December 18, 2025, from <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/whos-board-school-boards-and-political-representation-age-conflict>

- 16 School boards members in districts over 5,000 students versus under 5,000: elections as competitive (62% vs 37%), vigorously contested (50% vs 14%), partisan politics has important (61% vs 33%) or become more important (58% vs 31%), and teachers union has not important (53% vs 32%) or become more important (16% vs 9%).

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- 32 The sample was generated from an initial database of 80,000 school board members who were matched to school district information. This resulted in a possible pool of 61,299 school board members.
- 33 See note 24 on p. 43. For comparison, Kertzer & Renson (2022) report an average response rate of 15% in their review of studies of American political elites. Kertzer, J.D., & Renshon, J. (2022). Experiments and surveys on political elites. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 25, 529-550. Retrieved January 15, 2026 from <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051120-013649>
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- However, it is not clear that school board members, who are generally lay members of the public, should be considered "political elites." In general, in the field of elite studies, the term "political elites" is used to refer to those in control of national or international political institutions.
- Khan, S. (2012). The sociology of elites. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38, 361-77. Retrieved March 13, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145542>
- See also Blissett, R.S., & Alsbury, T.L. (2018). Disentangling the personal agenda: Identity and school board members' perceptions of problems and solutions. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 17(4), 454-486. Retrieved March 13, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2017.1326142>. Blissett and Alsbury (2018) report on a broader range of background characteristics of a 2009 sample of school board members. More than half reported making less than \$100,000 per year.
- 34 See, for example, Ford, M.R. & Ihrke, D.M. (2017). Board conflict and public performance on urban and non-urban boards: Evidence from a national sample of school board members. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 39(1), 108-121. Retrieved January 30, 2026 from <https://doi.org/10.1111/juaf.12315>. While the authors do not weight the responses, they compare the characteristics of the respondents' districts with those of all public school districts.
- 35 Houston, D., Peterson, P., & West, M. (2023, Winter). Partisan rifts widen, perceptions of school quality decline: Results of the 2022 *Education Next* survey of public opinion. *Education Next*, 23(1). Retrieved December 19, 2025, from <https://www.educationnext.org/partisan-rifts-widen-perceptions-school-quality-decline-results-2022-education-next-survey-public-opinion/>
- 36 Education Savings Accounts and other forms of private school choice have been the subject of multiple state ballot initiatives and have consistently been rejected by voters. Retrieved March 13, 2026, from <https://www.educationnext.org/voters-reject-vouchers-again-defeat-private-school-choice-measures/>
- 37 Houston, D., Peterson, P., & West, M. (2023, Winter). partisan rifts widen, perceptions of school quality decline: Results of the 2022 *Education Next* survey of public opinion. *Education Next*, 23(1). Retrieved December 19, 2025, from <https://www.educationnext.org/partisan-rifts-widen-perceptions-school-quality-decline-results-2022-education-next-survey-public-opinion/>
- Jochim, A., Diliberti, M.K., Schwartz, H., Destler, K. & Hill, P. (2023, January). *Navigating political tensions over schooling: Findings from the Fall 2022 American School District Panel*

survey. Center for Reinventing Public Education/RAND. Retrieved December 23, 2025, from [https://crpe.org/wp-content/uploads/ASDP-\\_Navigating-Political-Brief\\_v6.pdf](https://crpe.org/wp-content/uploads/ASDP-_Navigating-Political-Brief_v6.pdf)

See also Horowitz, J.M. (2022, October 26). *Parents differ sharply by party over what their K-12 children should learn in school*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved December 23, 2025, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2022/10/26/parents-differ-sharply-by-party-over-what-their-k-12-children-should-learn-in-school/>

- 38 The charter school survey question is not reported in the main text but in the Appendix, which asks: “Many states permit the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but are not managed by the local school board. These schools are expected to meet promised objectives, but are exempt from many state regulations. Do you support or oppose the formation of charter schools?” (p. 34).

Houston, D.M. & Hartney, M.T. (2025, October). *Who’s on board? School boards and political representation in an age of conflict* (p. 34). Retrieved December 10, 2025, from <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/whos-board-school-boards-and-political-representation-age-conflict>

- 39 There are 10 figures in the report. Six report the nationally representative results and three report the enrollment-weighted results. One figure depicts both.
- 40 The authors used four district characteristics for the nationally representative weighting: number of students enrolled, percent white students, percent of children living in poverty, and population density. School districts were divided into groups of three on each of the four variables and matched with other districts across the country with the same rankings across all four variables.
- 41 School board members’ responses were considered Republican-aligned if they opposed teaching about racism, transgender students’ access to bathroom facilities and athletic eligibility, and teachers’ unions, and supported book bans and charter schools. Board members matched their districts if they provided a Republican-aligned response in a district where Trump received more than 50% of the vote, a Democratic-aligned response in a district where Trump received less than 50% of the vote, or a neutral response in a district where Trump received between 40% and 60% of the vote. The report does not explain why the parameters for determining that the board member’s response was neutral in relation to their district’s voters was between 40 and 60% votes for Trump.
- 42 See, for example, Clark County, Nevada, which has a county-wide school district and multiple voting precincts within the county. Clark County Election Department (n.d.) Clark County Precincts (Metro Area). Retrieved December 30, 2025, from <https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/home/showpublisheddocument/10382/637843390779600000>
- 43 According to an analysis by Ballotpedia, 71% of school board elections are at-large. Ballotpedia (2022, August 24). *Analysis of school district and board member characteristics, 2022*. Retrieved December 30, 2025, from [https://ballotpedia.org/Analysis\\_of\\_school\\_district\\_and\\_board\\_member\\_characteristics,\\_2022#Methodology](https://ballotpedia.org/Analysis_of_school_district_and_board_member_characteristics,_2022#Methodology)
- 44 The lack of explanation about how school districts were matched to voting data is surprising given the detailed description of the two weighting strategies in the report.
- 45 A Ballotpedia analysis documented political challenges related to race or critical race theory during school board elections in 1086 districts between 2021 and 2023. If there are approximately

13,000 school districts, then fewer than 10% of districts experienced such conflict. While conflicts are certainly divisive in those districts, they may also be less common than news reporting might suggest.

Ballotpedia (n.d.) *Conflicts in school board elections about race in education/critical race theory, 2021-2023*. Retrieved January 17, 2026, from [https://ballotpedia.org/Conflicts\\_in\\_school\\_board\\_elections\\_about\\_race\\_in\\_education/critical\\_race\\_theory,\\_2021-2023](https://ballotpedia.org/Conflicts_in_school_board_elections_about_race_in_education/critical_race_theory,_2021-2023).

A Center for Reinventing Public Education/RAND survey of superintendents suggests that these conflicts are more likely to occur in majority-white districts than more diverse districts.

Jochim, A., Diliberti, M.K., Schwartz, H., Destler, K. & Hill, P. (2023, January). *Navigating political tensions over schooling: Findings from the Fall 2022 American School District Panel survey*. Center for Reinventing Public Education/RAND. Retrieved December 23, 2025, from [https://crpe.org/wp-content/uploads/ASDP-\\_Navigating-Political-Brief\\_v6.pdf](https://crpe.org/wp-content/uploads/ASDP-_Navigating-Political-Brief_v6.pdf)

46 School board members should have more detailed knowledge about schools they are governing than the general public – learning about and visiting schools is part of their responsibilities. In contrast, the general public largely has access to narrower indicators tied to state accountability results.

47 For example, in the National School Boards Association (2001) survey, 97% of the board members reported that student achievement was a significant or moderate concern.

Hess, F.M. (2002). *School boards at the dawn of the 21st century: Conditions and challenges of district governance*. Alexandria, VA: National School Boards Association. Retrieved February 1, 2026, from [https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/20060228\\_SchoolBoards.pdf](https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/20060228_SchoolBoards.pdf)

48 Pew Research Center (2024, April 9). *Changing partisan coalitions in a politically divided nation*. Retrieved February 15, 2026, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/04/09/changing-partisan-coalitions-in-a-politically-divided-nation/>

49 Caughey, D., Xu, Y., & Warshaw, C. (2017). Incremental democracy: The policy effects of partisan control of state government. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(4), 1342-1358. Retrieved March 13, 2026, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/692669>

50 Mellon, G. (2025). Competence over partisanship: Party affiliation does not affect the selection of school district superintendents. *American Sociological Review*, 90(4), 561-593. Retrieved March 13, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224251346993>

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