

Designating Control

Name

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### Designating Control

Since time in memorial, educational governance in the United States was mainly provided by 90,000 locally elected representatives that were on almost 15,000 school boards (Lynch, 2016). Although states are legally accountable for public education, the governing of schools has been left to local officials. In the 80's, states started to reaffirm their control of education policy. Currently, the federal government has extended its function in education through programs such as Race to the Top and NCLB (No Child Left Behind) (Lynch, 2016). Moreover, modern discourses and disagreements concerning the reauthorization of NCLB prove that continued disintegration of local control might be impending. Backing these changes, some contend that the local control of educational issues is an old practice requiring considerable revisions. However, with the federal and state policy creators' persistence to enhance their participation in education policy, the central debate is whether the public would support the changes.

### State Control

From the historical foundations of the United States, states, on the whole, gave accountability of controlling public education to local officials. A significant shift was experienced in the 80's when states started to regain control of educational concerns (Lynch, 2016). State governments reaffirmed their control over local education policy via heightened teacher requirements, improved centralization of financing, and instructed state curriculum standards

### Federal Control

Up to the 60's, the federal government has an extremely restricted function in education policy. With the passing of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, the

responsibility of the federal government was mainly stipulated by Title I, an initiative for learners from harsh economic neighborhoods. The implementation of No Child Left Behind in 2001 saw the federal government extend both policies and financing for local districts considerably (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012). While the federal government was viewed as a source of additional funding for underprivileged populations, it is currently perceived as a primary regulator of American public school frameworks.

**Local control.** A study reveals that the public demonstrated that it prefers to have their local government have more control on enhancing the local schools (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012). Additionally, the public was requested to give an opinion on whether the local government should have increased or reduced control of local public schools. A large section of the public responded that they required more local control.

***Matching federal, state, and local control.*** Still, in the same study, public opinion has changed radically particularly concerning local and state involvement in educational policy. Fifty-one percent of respondents asserted that the state should have the biggest role in 1973 while 23% in 2002 believed the state should have more control (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012). Divergent from the actual policy adjustments, where the inclination in decision-making has been progressively shifting into the domain of state officials, the public has enhanced its need to have the local government as having the biggest responsibility in choosing the running of schools.

Moreover, the public has determined the level of government that should have the greatest influence in selecting the content provided in local public schools. The percentage of the public choosing the state government as the one that should have more influence in determining the content delivered in local public schools rose from 15% in 1980 to 30% in 2008 (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012).

Whereas increased preference for federal and state control implies a regression in those choosing local control, 46% of respondents in 2008 still preferred their local schools board as the one that should have the greatest influence in determining the content taught. Although this signifies a considerable reduction from the 80's when 68% chose local control, the decline in public opinion did not parallel the rapid and extraordinary modifications to actual governance policies over the same period (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012).

Furthermore, respondents were inclined towards state or federal control when it concerned the establishment of academic standards. Still, when asked about the content offered in the public schools, they emphatically chose local control. This can be explained in that individuals have a strong preference for their local schools. Although people usually give high grades to their local schools, they frequently document considerably lower grades for the larger school system.

This is similar to a study on public contentment with its congressional representative as contrasted with Congress as a whole. This apparently inconsistent outcome might merely demonstrate that the public perceives everyone else's schools require state or federal management (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012). However, it also indicates that the public thinks that local schools should have proper academic standards and would desire those choices to be made locally. Finally, teacher licensing should remain a responsibility of state boards because they produce teachers that are effective in accomplishing improved academic levels (Koonce, 2017).

### **Final Thoughts**

Although policy discourses in education policy might suppose that local control of education is something to be done away with, the public has a perspective that all three levels should be participants in education policy. Frequently, the public demonstrates favor towards

local control of educational issues. Still, there is support for federal and state control in some situations. Like most in education, the public is trying to stabilize the compromises between localism and parity. Instead of viewing one level of government as incredibly powerful, the public supports the idea that different levels are better matched for various roles. Concerning policy resolutions associated with the enhancement of parity across all schools, the public prefers federal and state government. Concerning the daily running of schools, the public states that local officials should take the role. This explanation implies a complex public that tries to stabilize the intricate tension in educational federalism.

The public shows that local authorities are more capable of making and managing decisions concerning daily classroom activities. These results are particularly remarkable provided that the public has continued favoring local control even when national policy debates have questioned local control and ensured actions to reduce local resolution capacity via policy modifications.

Nonetheless, the trends also reveal that with time the public has become increasingly supportive of state and federal government involvement in issues of standards and parity. For instance, when examined about standards, the public showed increased support for federal and state intervention. Financing is also a concern that means systemic equality. However, the public has not regularly been examined regarding its perception of education finance. Still, a 2004 poll showed that only 33% of the public believed the local government was the most effective at ensuring the equitability of financing (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012). This reinforces the notion that when assessed concerning education policy devised to enable parity, the public prefers increased centralization at the federal or state level. This aligns with relevant literature demonstrating that centralization is vital when trying to enable a more equitable educational system.

For those that have supported mayoral control of schools in cities such as New York and Washington, D.C., and for those that have contested the acumen of such measures, an improved comprehension of the reality of district governance and the perception of board members would be vital (Heiss & Meeks, 2010). For federal and state regulators depending in districts to put into practice new laws governing accountability, school restructuring, or standards, an acknowledgment of the limitations and strengths of local boards would be necessary. For supporters demanding district leaders to execute complex budget choices and reconsider the application of technology and personnel, the expectations and notions of board members are impending (Heiss & Meeks, 2010). These members should have the thoughtful, informed attention that their essential function deserves. Lastly, restricting government-licensing regulation is required to guarantee program and candidate quality that can lead to a more favorable learning environment for students.

## References

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