The State of American School Governance: Who's in Charge and Does it Matter?

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Abstract

Schools are dramatically consequential for important societal and individual outcomes. They confront substantial challenges in trying to educate a large and diverse population, and unfortunately for many groups of students, fall well short of meeting these challenges. However, national measures of achievement and attainment show consistent improvements over the last several decades. At the same time, state-level governance of schools has evolved considerably, challenging the historical norm of decentralized governance through local school boards. Are these two shifts related? It seems likely, but state-level governance of schools and variation in state approaches to school governance have long been neglected areas of study, both in theoretical and empirical terms. It is my aim in this dissertation to document state-level variance in approaches to school governance, specifically the degree to which it is centralized or decentralized and to assess the impact of those changes on outcomes for students and schools.

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Chapter 1

Schools and Governance in the United States

This is a country where public education was first developed at the grassroots level, and since then, local control is the rallying cry among many, if not most, educators, policymakers and stakeholders who relish the ability to create distinctive school systems that respond to community needs. Julie Mack (2011)

1.1 Introduction

Public schools in the United States evolved in an extremely diverse environment. Ethnicity, language, religious values, and economic incentives necessitated local control and flexibility. Today, K-12 public schools in the United States educate 50 million children, employ eight million faculty and staff, and account for more than 20 percent of most states annual budgets.¹

Social scientists have shown that high quality schools and programs can increase housing prices (Oates, 1969; Haurin and Brasington, 1996; Weimer and Wolkoff, 2001; Kane et al., 2003), reduce crime (Currie, 1980; Lochner and Moretti, 2004), lower welfare dependence (Karoly et al., 1998), and improve political participation, engagement, and efficacy (Verba et al., 1995; Dee, 2004; Milligan et al., 2004; Blais, 2006). President Obama has suggested that maintaining and improving public education are key components of a lasting economic

¹This is the largest component of state spending except for Medicaid, according to the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO). See www.nasbo.org.

recovery, and in the wake of budget shortfalls, the federal government provided an unprecedented 100 billion dollars to ensure that state education spending remained equivalent to 2006 levels.²

The American commitment to education is evidenced in the 50 state constitutions that establish schooling as a governmental responsibility, in the billions of public dollars spent each year on schooling, and in a half-century long odyssey of ambitious reform efforts. But recognition of education's importance, commitment to its funding, and decades of change have not yielded universally positive outcomes. Many public schools fall far short of the quality necessary to provide community benefits, and children already disadvantaged by their socioeconomic status are those most likely to receive a substandard education. Despite increased rates of high school graduation, college attendance, and AP course taking, American students lag far behind those of other industrialized countries in math and science, according to multiple international exams. Perhaps more troubling, achievement gaps between privileged and underprivileged students have persisted, despite expenditures having more than doubled since 1970 (Hanushek, 2003).

In recent decades, efforts to address persisting deficiencies in the educational system seem to have redoubled, and public schools have come to occupy a more prominent position on political agendas (Smith and Miller-Kahn, 2004; Manna, 2006b). Some of this attention has been directed towards educational governance. The assertion that states are assuming evergreater authority is frequently at the center of scholarly work on school reform and has been a feature of scholarship since the early 1980s. But despite its many laudable contributions, there is a substantial piece of information missing from these scholarly conversations. No research has systematically investigated and compared state governance and policy regimes across a range of indicators, over time. There exist no inclusive measures of state-level

²See notes on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 at the United States Department of Education website: www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/implementation.html.

authority to enable historical and cross-sectional comparisons.

This is striking given the frequent assertion that increased state authority constitutes the most significant feature of recent reforms (Conley, 2003; Fusarelli and Cooper, 2009) but reflects a earlier failures of political science to assess state-level variance in institutional structures and political culture systematically (Jewell, 1982). While there has been a tremendous amount of scholarship on state politics since Jewell made his initial argument, the critique remains apt with respect to educational politics and governance. This neglect should not continue, particularly given that education is a policy arena in which states are particularly important.

Political scientists and economists have demonstrated that who is in charge and at what level of government matters. Schools are important institutions in the American democratic system. If states are taking more seriously their constitutional obligations as stewards of public education, then it is important to be explicit about the arenas in which those shifts are taking place, and to leverage variance in order to understand the consequences of change. Measuring changes in school governance, understanding those changes and linking them to a solid theoretical base, and testing hypotheses regarding how those changes have affected students are the fundamental objectives driving this dissertation project.

1.2 Chapter Outlines

Chapter 2 sets the stage for the remainder of the dissertation by describing the historical trajectory of school governance in the United States. It starts from the beginning, outlining the origins of local control in school governance and highlighting regional differences in the emergence of publicly-sponsored mass education. I pay particular attention to the way in which authority over public schools is distributed among — and assumed by — various governmental authorities in the federal system. In this chapter, I focus on the national and

regional contexts, in part to establish a baseline from which to distinguish state-specific education regimes, but also to describe the general environment in which these distinct approaches have arisen.

I emphasize the evolutionary nature of state and federal intervention and problematize both the public myth of local control in educational politics and the notion that recent years have witnessed a dramatic departure from historical norms. The contemporary, statedominant system of school governance is consistent with historical trends. Recent developments advance that trend. There has not been an abrupt departure from an historical norm. Viewing the last 35 years of education policy as revolutionary limits our accumulation of knowledge, regarding both why new policies are adopted and what their consequences are likely to be.

I discuss contemporary concerns about growing state authority and argue that a general lack of theoretical precision has characterized discussions of this topic. While macro-level indicators do suggest that the balance of authority may have permanently shifted away from localities, we have little sense of how this should or does matter. I contend that the lack of attention to measuring changes in school governance, both over time and across states, in combination with the absence of a theoretical framework for understanding changes in school governance, has meant that useful historical and cross-sectional comparisons are few and far between. Without these comparative analyses, we cannot adjudicate between arguments in favor of state intervention versus local autonomy. We must turn our attention away from national narratives and focus on salient state-level differences.

Chapter 3 lays a theoretical foundation for an empirical assessment of state-level change. In this chapter, I join a small but growing group of scholars to fill a major gap in the study of school governance by linking the subject to a theoretical framework. I begin by discussing the ways in which governance might be defined and recommend an inclusive conceptualization focused on institutions, processes, and policy substance. The interaction of these three is particularly important in a federal system where the actions taken at one level are likely to effect the universe of possible actions taken at another.

I then briefly discuss what school governance looks like in the context of education in the United States. The answer is of course daunting. American school governance is complex, so it is no wonder that scholars have focused their attention on particular policies and on the national stage. There are thousands of local governments operating in 50 different state environments, each simultaneously making policy. In such an environment, it is difficult to identify a conceptually and empirically valid strategy for investigating school governance.

This project is focused on a particular, measurable aspect of governance: decentralization. Decentralization and centralization are terms that are regularly featured in public and scholarly conversations around school governance but are rarely linked in an explicit manner to the fiscal federalism literature. I survey this work for two purposes: first, to identify the different dimensions of decentralization processes — political, fiscal, administrative, and market, how they might be measured, and the potential benefits associated with them; second, to back out hypotheses about the likely effects of moving in the opposite direction — towards a more centralized system of school governance. I suggest that many of the prerequisite conditions necessary in order for a decentralized system to produce efficient and equitable policy outcomes are frequently absent in the local school districts of the United States. I discuss in this chapter the expectation that, on balance, centralization of school governance at the state level is likely to be associated with better and more equitable outcomes for students.

chapter 4 references that framework to organize, describe, and measure the evolution of school governance in the 50 U.S states from the early 1970s on. I present data on district numbers, size and fiscal independence; mechanisms of selection for local school board, state boards, and chief state school officers; local, state, and federal shares of K-12 revenues; state adoption of exit exam, textbook selection, and high school credit requirement policies; academic bankruptcy laws which enable states to take over chronically underperforming districts; and choice initiatives including open enrollment, charter schools, and voucher programs. I gather these data from a variety of sources to construct a series of indices that measure the political and fiscal, administrative, and market dimensions of states' educational governance. These indices largely confirm conventional wisdom that states in the South and the West tend to be more centralized, while states in the Midwest and Northeast more decentralized, though gubernatorial authority departs from this pattern; it is strongest in the Northeast. Market decentralization of school governance, though it originated largely in midwestern states has been adopted in some fashion by most states throughout the country and does not appear to covary systematically with the other indices.

As states have adopted a more administratively centralized approach to governing schools, the fragmentation and independence of fiscal and political institutions through which funds are collected and spent has remained largely unchanged. While higher levels of political and fiscal centralization correlate with earlier movement towards administrative centralization, I show that this relationship has weakened in recent years and suggest that this is a product in part of diverging state approaches to school governance. One set of states governs in a centralized fashion, in fiscal and political terms as well as in administrative terms. A second, small group of states, have resisted centralizing on either dimension. And a third set of states is decentralized fiscally and politically, but administratively centralized. This approach seems to be gaining traction as it promises to establish a base level of acceptable quality for teacher quality and student outcomes by directing and monitoring local efforts, while allowing some local flexibility in management of resources.

chapter 5 is devoted to uncovering the consequences of centralizing governance. If centralization of school governance raises the public profile of education, creates or improves accountability (either public or inter-governmental), or simply builds capacity, it may have effects on student outcomes, and those effects may be unevenly distributed; that is, disadvantaged and minority students may benefit disproportionately. I employ the indices developed in chapter 4 to estimate the potential impacts of centralization on two state-level outcomes: total average per pupil revenues and expenditures, and the attainment of a high school diploma.

I report on a series of models in which lagged governance scales are the primary independent variable of interest. I control for time-varying state level factors such as race, poverty, and population size in all models. I include an additional control in models of state educational spending: state partisanship. Models include fixed effects for states and years in order to difference out trends in spending and achievement and therefore limit the models' explanatory leverage to within-state change. I find effects suggesting that administrative centralization of school governance, in which states promulgate academic policies and regulations, drives up educational spending, while increases in gubernatorial authority and political/fiscal centralization have drive educational spending down. The index of fiscal and political centralization is not a significant factor in these models.

I also find evidence to suggest that administrative centralization has led to higher rates of high school graduation and degree attainment within states. This finding is robust across several specifications. These effects are small for the overall population but substantial for at least two disadvantaged groups. Effects are larger for women and for African Americans than for men and Whites, respectively. Together, these effects suggest that administrative centralization may have contributed to more rapid closing of achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged groups in recent years. The effects of fiscal and political centralization are less clear. Several models suggest a positive interaction effect of fiscal and political decentralization with administrative centralization, but the effect does not always cross the threshold of statistical significance.

1.3 Conclusions

The United States Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized and relied on local control when deciding on school issues (Briffault, 2005, p. 25). Institutional fragmentation and a tradition of local autonomy distinguish the American system of school governance from that of many other countries. Decentralization is credited by some with producing the many successful innovations that have enabled schools systems in the United States to rapidly outpace those in other countries during the early part of American history. As this defining feature of school governance is challenged by state and federal leadership, what can we expect to change for students and teachers?

We can only answer this question by leveraging the variance that exists between and within states over time and by more carefully measuring governance in a fashion that includes multiple dimensions and acknowledges the interactions among them. Historical scholarship has long-suggested that the degree of local autonomy varies dramatically from state to state and region to region, with some states often particularly committed to maintaining local control and others more willing to centralize control at the state level for the purpose of standardizing curriculum and distributing resources in an egalitarian fashion. Attending to the development of school governance over the last 35 years, and creating measures that will facilitate comparisons - both of states to one another and of states to themselves will improve our understanding of school governance and our ability to assess its consequences. This dissertation takes the first steps in that direction.

Chapter 2

The Historical Development of School Governance

Despite constitutional and legislative provisions that vest authority for the creation and operation of schools with the various states, and in the face of a curriculum that is heavily influenced by textbook publishers and that is surprisingly uniform throughout the country, the ideology of local school control persists. Harmon Zeigler et al. (1974, p. x)

2.1 Introduction

Education governance in the United States today — and ideologies about appropriate structural arrangements for education governance — echo patterns that emerged in colonial America hundreds of years ago. Before engaging with contemporary debates around how much school governance has changed, and before evaluating how those changes are likely to impact outcomes for students or the nature of school politics, it is instructive to step back and survey the evolution of the local, state, and federal institutions that govern schools. Doing so reveals that what scholars and pundits commonly perceive as a recent sea change in school governance, one that has only manifest in the last several decades, is in fact a continuation of intergovernmental cooperation that began as early as 1785 (Elazar, 1969, pp. 129). Expanding state and federal authority began in earnest during Reconstruction but was motivated and sustained by ideas about nation-building that were rooted in the Revolutionary period.

In fact, while the institutional and regulatory components of the American state as a

whole were slow to form, particularly from a comparative standpoint (Skowronek, 1982), public education proves to be a major exception; in this respect, American political institutions developed in advance of most European states (Green, 1990). In this chapter, therefore, I engage a rigorous body of historical scholarship to argue that the myth of local control, particularly the democratic grass-roots nature of local control, is greatly exaggerated in the public mind and in debates over which governments should be in charge of schools. I emphasize that state and federal intervention in education have been a constant feature of school governance since the founding.

I survey the historical development of school governance for another reason as well. A historical narrative not only exposes major flaws in the traditional narrative of local control, but also is a necessary step for those who seek to understand school governance today. Governmental structures and their relationships to one another - the tensions between local, state, and the national governments as well as regional differences in approaches to governing schools - reflect the social, economic, and geopolitical circumstances that were particularly salient at the time of their formation. As a result of these contingencies, we cannot reasonably set expectations for the impact of change in school governance without first understanding original institutional structures and the circumstances surrounding their emergence. Early institutional characteristics affect the universe of possible configurations in the future, the likelihood of change in the future, and quite possibly the potential for effecting change in policy outcomes through altered patterns of authority (path dependence).

In this chapter, I describe the historical trajectory of school governance in the United States. I pay particular attention to the number of political authorities and the way in which authority over finance, content, and purpose is distributed among - and assumed by - various governmental authorities in the federal system, as well as to the motivating forces behind the evolution of these authority structures. I begin by outlining the origins of local control in school governance, highlighting regional differences in the emergence of publicly-sponsored mass education. I then focus on several important historical periods in the United States, during which education historians agree that authority over schools shifted substantially. While this project is largely concerned with the identification and measurement of institutional differences among the states since 1970, this chapter focuses broadly on the national and regional contexts in which those differences have arisen. It touches on the narrative that dominates understandings of education history in the United States and sets the stage for a systematic analysis of state differences in the modern period to take place in subsequent chapters.

In addition to describing the broad scale historical evolution of school governance, I also highlight contemporary concerns about growing state authority, expressed both by public figures and in educational scholarship. I argue that a general lack of precision has characterized discussions of this topic. Changing macro-level indicators do suggest local control is challenged, and that the balance of authority has shifted, perhaps permanently. State and federal governments have granted themselves considerable authority over many facets of education, from goal-setting to revenue-gathering, though change in some indicators appears to have stagnated over the last 30 years. I contend that the lack of attention to measuring changes in school governance, both over time and across states, the failure to establish historical baselines, and the absence of a theoretical framework for understanding changes in school governance has limited the use of historical and cross-sectional comparisons to analyses of single policies, ignoring the specific distinctiveness of the state educational policy context. This has contributed to the confusion with which scholars have approached this topic. By engaging multiple indicators of progress and by exploiting the variance that exists in time and space, we can begin to learn how distributions of authority may matter for student outcomes.

2.2 The Origins of Public Education and Local Control

Pre-revolutionary American communities were not governed by a coherent central authority, and possessed a deep skepticism towards centralized governments. There existed no state-sponsored system of public education. Instead, socioeconomic status, race, religious affiliation, community beneficence, and geography determined whether or not a child received informal tutoring at home, was educated by a private tutor, attended a formal academy, enrolled in a school for paupers, traveled to Europe to attend a prestigious boarding school, entered into an apprenticeship, or grew into adulthood illiterate (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, Ch. 2). Whereas systems of education in Europe typically arose as a result of governmental interventions, the system that evolved in the United States "owed more to spontaneous forces in civil society than to any central state direction" (Green, 1990, p. 172). Geography was particularly important in the colonial period, insofar as it was related to wealth, parental education, religious denomination, and cultural heritage.

2.2.1 Regional Differences in the Pre-Revolutionary Period

The immigrants who populated the northeastern colonies, what are now Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, were by and large religious, intellectual, and literate. The puritans' concern for literacy and their commitment to intellectualism contributed to the formation of basic reading and writing schools throughout New England. Facilitated by some measure of cultural homogeneity and a widely held belief in the importance of basic literacy and Christian values, primary schooling became quickly established as a community undertaking throughout the region (with the exception of Rhode Island), an undertaking backed in part by legislative commitments from colonial legislatures (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 45). In fact, the New England colonies (and later New York) were some of the first polities in the world to enshrine public education legally (Green, 1990; Pisapia, 2010, p. 34). Urban and Wagoner (2009) write that "By the eve of the American Revolution, adult male literacy in New England was nearly universal" (38). Most historians of education regard this region as the birthplace of the modern American school system (e.g. Spring, 2004, esp. Ch. 3, 4 and 5; Kaestle, 1983, Ch. 9).

Massachusetts and Connecticut passed laws in 1642 and 1650 respectively — over 100 years before independence — requiring master craftsmen and parents to provide apprentices with basic instruction in reading and writing (Cohen, 1973, vol. 1 p. 393 cf Pisapia, 2010; Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 43). Other Massachusetts statutes in 1642 and 1647 introduced property taxes to fund the establishment of schools and to pay the salaries of teachers. Connecticut and New Hampshire enacted similar laws in 1665 and 1680 respectively (Green, 1990, p. 177). Though enforcement of these laws was spotty at best, and though local preferences ultimately dominated both the decision to establish schools and the decision of what to teach in schools these laws represent the earliest state commitments to public schooling and contributed to the rapid expansion of schooling in the region during this time period.

In the middle colonies of what are now New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, schooling was not a particularly well established community responsibility, either legally or culturally, though there existed charity schools for the education of indigent and Indian children. Aside from these charity schools "Dutch, Germans, English, Scots, Swedes, French, Norwegians, Irish, and other immigrants tended to isolate themselves from other groups and to establish church-related schools to preserve their linguistic, religious, and cultural distinctiveness" (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 54).

Immigration to the middle colonies was extremely diverse both in terms of original nationality and religious beliefs. While Anglicans in the region regarded education as more of a private than public matter, members of the Catholic, Quaker, Jewish, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches established parochial schools when their population density was high enough to support them. By the time of the American revolution, these sectarian differences remained salient, and there had emerged an acceptance of this pluralistic approach to education, though secular schools (often for profit) were gradually becoming more common, particularly in the densely populated commercial cities of New York and Philadelphia (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, pp. 54-58).

Circumstances in the Chesapeake and Southern colonies, now the states of Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia differed vastly from the colonies to the North along several dimensions. First, the immigrants to the Southern colonies belonged to a lesser social class than those in the North. Urban and Wagoner (2009, p. 36) describe them as illiterate "beggars and vagabonds". Because a majority of the early immigrants to the lower colonies arrived as unskilled, indentured servants (or in the case of Georgia, debtors who had been imprisoned in England), relatively few families, compared to families of the northeastern or middle colonies, were adequately equipped to provide their students adequate instruction.

As in the middle and northern colonies, religion and cultural heritage were still significant factors affecting community preferences for and ability to provide public schooling, but the effects of social class, language, and religion were likely magnified by another condition of life in the lower colonies: the agricultural basis of the economy. The agricultural economic base meant that communities were more widely dispersed and thus less motivated and less able to establish publicly supported community schools. Population dispersion reinforced class and cultural distinctions as well as prevailing old-world notions that schooling was a private, family affair rather than a public one (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 24).

2.2.2 Education on the Public Agenda in the Early Republic

By the time of the Revolution, divisions between ethnic and religious groups had weakened in all regions, but schooling was still highly variable and tied closely to families' socioeconomic and cultural circumstances. This dramatic variation persisted after independence and the dissolution of the Articles of Confederation. However, it was during the revolution that education emerged as a major concern on the national agenda. Even the more conservative leaders of the revolution worried that such a diverse nation might devolve into anarchy absent some government-led initiative to foster "intelligence, wisdom and virtue amongst the people" (Green, 1990, p. 178). Benjamin Rush of Pennsylvania published an influential essay in which he advocated for the establishment of a uniform system of education so that citizens might be inculcated with republican ideals and patriotism:

Our schools of learning, by producing one general, and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous, and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government... Let our pupil be taught that he does not belong to himself, but that he is public property. Let him be taught to love his family, but let him be taught, at the same time, that he must forsake, and even forget them, when the welfare of his country requires it. He must watch for the state, as if its liberties depended upon his vigilance alone, but he must do this in such a manner as not to defraud his creditors, or neglect his family... While we inculcate these republican duties upon our pupil, we must not neglect, at the same time, to inspire him with republican principles. He must be taught that there can be no durable liberty but in a republic, and that government, like all other sciences, is of a progressive nature. The chains which have bound this science in Europe are happily unloosed in America. Here it is open to investigation and improvement. (Rush and Runes, 1786, cf in Runes 1947)

Yet, despite the rising prominence of education on the national agenda, and despite advocacy on the part of Rush, Thomas Jefferson, and others leaders of the revolution and the early Republic, schools were regarded emphatically by most as a local or private concern and were purposely left out of the United States constitution (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, Ch. 2). Throughout the late 1700s and into the early 1800s, however, the arguments of these leaders motivated governmental intervention. Momentum began to build in favor of public education, though, as before regional differences were substantial.

In the north, more and more localities assumed responsibility for creating and maintaining public schools, though these schools were often open for only a few weeks per year. Rural communities the Northeast and Midwest, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Ohio, and Illinois, had established schools, controlled by localities, funded through property taxes (and to a much lesser extent, state aids) by 1825 (Cubberley, 1919, p. 219, cf Green, 1990, p. 182). Historians have referred to this system, in which schools served and were monitored by very small communities, as the district system.¹

Specialized governing committees were a component of the district system. In early 19th century Massachusetts, as population growth led to a dramatic increase in the responsibilities of local government, special committees were established for the purpose of governing schools in the district system (Callahan, 1975; Danzberger, 1992). These committees, one for each school, controlled the selection of teachers and curriculum (Kaestle, 1983, p. 22) and influenced the formation of similar governance institutions throughout the Midwest and Northeast (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger, 1992). These special committees were the early forerunners of modern school boards and presaged the separation of education and general governance.

Urban communities in the North supported a more varied, and divided, system of education (Kaestle, 1983, p. 56). The system was not supported by government, but rather comprised of a hodgepodge of independent schools and academies, selective boarding schools for the wealthy, and "dame" schools operated by women out of their homes. Church schools and charity schools also emerged to "bring morality and discipline to a growing army of churchless poor" (Green, 1990, p. 183). While the district system in rural areas functioned to maintain linkages between communities, family values, and schools, in urban areas, charity schools were designed to supplant community and family values that were deemed lacking. These charity schools, eventually open to most children, progressively became the dominant

¹Despite the similar phrasing, the school districts in this system were much smaller than the school districts we typically imagine in a contemporary United States. The communities they served were more analogous to neighborhoods; therefore one particular town at this time might have encompassed many districts.

feature of the urban school system in the North.

The development of an educational system in the southern states continued both more slowly and in a more stratified fashion. Whereas enrollments in New York grew from 37 percent in 1800 to 60 percent in 1825 (Kaestle, 1983, p. 24), enrollments in the South stagnated at around 16 percent for the duration between 1800 and 1839 (Fishlow, 1966). The more aristocratic class system and the racial divisions in the slave states, salient features of southern life in both urban and rural areas, mitigated against the formation of a district-style school system and against the broadly subscribed charity schools that achieved popularity in the North. Instead children received such education as their parents could pay for. This ranged from private tutors to apprenticeships in useful trades to pauper schools to sitting for a brief period with roaming schoolmasters (Green, 1990, pp. 183-4).

While local preferences were certainly the dominant force in all manner of school policy during this time period, Green (1990, p. 185) points out that the history of school governance to this point already complicates the traditional affection for local control. The district system of local governance emerged first in states with explicit statutory commitments to maintaining a school system. Rather than being embedded in a grass-roots dialogue and stemming from a preference for participatory democracy, local control existed in the North to a significant extent to reinforce cultural values, or to impose them, and in the South, more than an active tradition of local democratic participation and control, there was resistance towards state or any other governmental intervention in an effort to maintain class divisions. Tyack and James (1986, p. 64) write that:

public hostility to centralization of power, weak federal and state bureaucracies, executive vetoes, splintered administrations, and court review of legislation — to say nothing of legislatures themselves — all combined to attenuate the influence of federal and state governments on the county and local governments.

Further, despite the lack of any institutionalized, uniform systems of public education, and despite resistance to governmental imposition of such a system, both the federal and the state governments were actively encouraging the expansion of educational opportunity.

The federal government began inducing states to establish common school funds during this time period by offering land grants for that purpose as early as 1787 in the Northwest Ordinance.² By 1896, the federal government had granted more than 77 million acres to western and southern states (Tyack and James, 1986, p. 57). Feller (1984, Ch. 3) argues that the federal government was able to shape state and local "developmental priorities" in this manner, and that this was of great import at a time when governmental resources were particularly scarce, and the institutional environment particularly open.

State engagements with and commitments to public education were also evidenced in state constitutions (Elazar, 1969; Lutz, 1988). Even as responsibility and decision-making with regard to primary education continued to be left to families, communities, and often religious authorities during the early years of the Republic, most states chose to include mention of public education in their founding constitutions. Many even began chartering state universities. Despite the many forces mediating against state intervention, Tyack and James (1986) point out that of the 45 state constitutions written and adopted between 1792 and 1912, most included some provision for state oversight, leadership, or funding of a public school system.³ Once enshrined in state constitutions, state boards and superintendents became institutionalized fixtures whose positions oriented them to be advocates for public

²The Northwest Ordinance, passed in 1787, authorized the sale of publicly owned land for the support of education. Article 3 of the law specified "religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." This article of the ordinance built on previous legislation which had resolved first that unsettled lands would belong to the national government and would be utilized for the public good and second that those lands would be auctioned off.

³These leadership positions and oversight bodies included state superintendents, state boards, and county superintendents. Of the 14 states that had joined the Union by 1800, seven had written state responsibility for schooling into their constitutions (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 90). Exceptions included Kentucky in 1792, Tennessee in 1796, Louisiana in 1812, and Illinois in 1818. After the Civil War, Louisiana's 1868 constitution included multiple provisions for public education.

schooling (Green, 1990, p. 186).

2.2.3 Common Schools and Momentum in the Reform Era

There is no major historical event breaking the Early Republic from the Reform Era. Instead, federal and state efforts to encourage the expansion of schooling merely ramped up substantially in the period between 1830 and 1860. The advocacy of state-level reformers combined with the activities of national leaders like President Andrew Jackson to further the progress of public education and to expand state and federal influence on localities.⁴ In this period, between 1830 and 1860, the tug of war between centralizing authority and protecting local autonomy became a more clearly articulated, persistent component of public debates around education.

Discourse on the relative merits of public versus private education spawned a series of state and local debates between those who advocated for the establishment of public schools and those who resisted. A group of reformers promoted a model they termed common schooling and pursued the expansion and centralization of state school systems with the zeal of evangelists. Once again, these reform efforts, and their impacts were concentrated in the Northeast and the Midwest. Horace Mann is perhaps the most famous of the Reform Era figures and has been dubbed the father of the common school movement. A legislator and the first superintendent of schools in the state of Massachusetts, he toured school systems in Europe and the United States to observe and record best practices and organizational approaches. In 1838 he originated a journal about common schools as a means of coalescing support around a set of guiding principles and ideal schooling components. Mann advocated for a broadly inclusive, non-sectarian, free system of education with a longer school year, well-trained teachers, no corporal punishment, and the broader establishment of secondary

⁴During his presidency, Jackson placed 10 million dollars from the federal reserve in state banks to forward the cause of education.

schools. As a component of achieving these goals, Mann worked towards the dissolution of the district system in favor of a more centralized organization of town schools. Because the common school model placed one elementary school in a community and created a tier of secondary schools to draw students from across multiple communities, more formal and centralized governing boards became necessary (Kaestle, 1983).

The common school movement, influenced the organization and administration of schools around the country. Mann's counterparts and colleagues, known at the time as educationists, worked towards similar ends in other states. Many states established a system of local elementary schools, became involved in teacher training, and began to more consistently allocate public funding for local schools. Henry Barnard, for example, advanced the cause of public education in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and later on a national scale as the first U.S Commissioner of Education.⁵ John Pierce served as the first superintendent of state schools and promoted common schools in the state of Michigan. Calvin Stowe (husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe) was instrumental in founding a teachers college in Cincinnati and, like Mann, urged his state to adopt a state system of schooling after touring schools in Prussia.

In North Carolina, state senator Archibald Murphey and UNC president Joseph Caldwell fought successfully for the establishment of a common school system; the legislature adopted a common school law in 1839, first at the discretion of the counties. By 1846, every county had established at least one common school. In the first decade or so after the law passed, funding was irregular, and the schools were not particularly effective. Towards the end of the reform period, Calvin Wiley, the first superintendent of the North Carolina schools, brought order to the common school system of the state. North Carolina is frequently cited as an

⁵Barnard was a member of the state legislature in Connecticut and educated at Yale early in his career, but like Mann had an influence that extended well beyond his home state. He worked for the governor of Rhode Island to lead a reorganization of that school system and was the first commissioner of public schools in the state between 1845 and 1849. He was also superintendent of the Connecticut schools between 1851 and 1855. He was once chancellor of the UW-Madison in addition to being the first U.S Commissioner of Education between 1867 and 1870.

exception to the rule when it comes to describing regional differences in the governance and spread of public schooling — in part due to Wiley's efforts during the Reform Era (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, pp. 145-147).

Leaders of the common school movement were White Protestant men looking to impose Protestant and Republican values and cultural ideals on an increasingly diverse and urbanized public.⁶ They sought to modify and improve the system that had already evolved in these regions — not to create a brand new one. They saw significant problems with a decentralized curriculum, a short school year, dilapidated school-houses, and poorly trained teachers and hoped to solve these problems in part by re-allocating policy-making authority. They hoped that by dissolving the district system in favor of more centrally administered town schools, guaranteeing more consistent public funding, and carving out a role for state governments in the training and certification of teachers, the quality of education might improve (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, Ch. 4).

There was a distinct egalitarian nature to reform arguments that insisted it was the place of government to provide citizens with the opportunity to better themselves. Despite the narrow demographic range and pedagogical orientations of these leaders, this egalitarian orientation combined with an expressed commitment to non-sectarian schooling garnered support from many corners, and leaders were backed by a broad constituency. Members of both the major political parties (Whigs and Democrats) and members of different social classes supported the expansion and centralization of public schooling (Green 1990, 193; Cohen 1973, esp Vol. 2 pp. 1050-1070).

Though the common school reform movement dominated the public education agenda, and though it was rhetorically about expanding access and enabling the common man,

 $^{^{6}}$ At the time, the United States was attempting to assimilate a wave of new European immigrants. See Katz (1987) for a discussion involving the motivations of these leaders and the degree to which the common school movement was democratic - or not. See also Green (1990, pp. 194-199) for a brief discussion of why this egalitarian argument was so successful in an environment where opportunities for mobility were in fact rather limited.

it was ultimately more about governance than about what happened within the schools themselves. In reality, social mobility was quite limited, and enrollments had already been trending upwards prior to the introduction of common school reforms. Kaestle and Vinovskis (1980, p. 113) write that

the initiatives promoted by common school movement were "designed to accomplish a more efficient form of school governance and management, one that would permit the schools to assimilate the great numbers of students they were currently enrolling and the increasing numbers that would come in succeeding years."

Many of the common school movement's most visible leaders were openly enamored of with the centralized Prussian system of schooling. This may have placed them at a rhetorical disadvantage and galvanized opposition, given the skepticism with which many American's viewed centralized government, for which Prussia was notorious. Conservative citizens fought for the maintenance of the neighborhood district system, but in comparison to the common school reformers, they were a disparate group. They were sometimes united by their shared opposition to centralized government, but more often divided by class, religion, and cultural heritage (Cubberley, 1919, p. 163).

It is important to recognize, that there was a back-and-forth, stutter-step quality to policy change in this period. In the case of Massachusetts, reformers succeeded in passing laws to abolish the district system and centralize education only to see the legislation turned back. There, the legislature passed a statute encouraging the voluntary abolition of the district system in 1853. Then a law requiring abolition was passed in 1859 only to be rescinded less than a year later, passed again in 1869, again repealed inside of a year, and finally passed for good in 1883, 30 years after the original legislation encouraging the dissolution of the system (Kaestle, 1983, p. 152, cf Green, 1990, p. 191).

In spite of resistance, centralizing reform efforts achieved some measure of success in remaking the school system. Bolstered by accelerated industrialization, increasing immigration, more distinct ethnic divisions, rapid population growth in the cities, and the Jacksonian era rhetoric around the "common man" the reformers' efforts eventually lead to substantial progress in the institutionalization of public school systems.⁷ The district system that had become popular in the Northeast and Midwest during the early years of the Republic was eventually replaced with a more centralized system of schools that served entire towns, though the frequent, if fragmented opposition, ensured that reforms could only be incremental and authority over schooling remained fragmented. For example, by the turn of the next century, some of these reforms had devolved; most schools had devoted boards.

2.2.4 Common Schools and Reconstruction in the South

With the exception of North Carolina, which passed its first common school law in 1839, the southern states generally dismissed the proposals put forward by common school leaders. Educationists made loud and frequent arguments in favor of publicly supported schools, and some communities autonomously established common school systems. But for the most part, advocates found themselves outnumbered in the South, as the opposition found itself outnumbered in the North (Kaestle, 1983, Ch. 8).

Southern resistance continued to be fueled by a stronger tradition of localism, sharp class distinctions, a thinly spread population, a series of economic calamities and perhaps decisively, the absence of dramatic industrialization and urbanization — trends that were rapidly changing the demographics, educational needs and the cultural environment in the Northeast (Kaestle, 1983, Ch. 8; Urban and Wagoner, 2009, Ch. 5). As a result of recent immigration, the Northeastern states now confronted more linguistic, religious, and cultural

⁷There were also, more commercial forces at work promoting more homogeneous schooling. Thousands of schoolhouses around the country employed the same curricular materials. The first widely disseminated textbook was the New England Primer between 1760-1843. Next came the popular McGuffey reader, published first in 1836, and followed by a set of six that became increasingly difficult with each volume. Historians estimate that more than 120 million copies of these McGuffey readers sold between 1836 and 1960 (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 113). See also Cohen 1973, esp Vol. 1 p. 530 and Vol. 3 pp. 1372-1397 for samples from the New England and McGuffey readers respectively.

diversity. These societal challenges motivated citizens and businesses to acquiesce to taxation for education more readily. It was hoped that schools would promote a more consistent civic culture and a productive economy. The White southern population was more culturally homogeneous in years prior to the civil war than the White population of the North.

Instead of adopting a common school system, by 1860, there were over 2,400 private academies in the South just prior to the breakout of the Civl War (Knight, 1953, vol. 4; Robinson, 1977, pp. 55-6), (though a number of states in the South were making policy changes in the direction of expanded public schooling before the war halted these policy efforts). Common school reformers in the state of Virginia were particularly relentless, establishing community-supported common school systems in ten counties and four cities by 1855, though they were stymied in most parts of the state (Dabney, 1971). In Georgia, despite constitutional provisions that supported public schooling and which dated back to 1777, the state never provided more than a minuscule amount of aid to pauper schools and private academies in the Antebellum years. As in the North, the politics of public schooling were contentious. A common schooling law was passed in 1837 but repealed in 1840, and eventually the state passed legislation to permit counties and localities to tax for schools, but the state refrained from mandating participation (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 145).

The progression of public schooling and state engagement in the South was limited not just by the factors listed above, but also in a fundamental way by the presence of slavery. The egalitarian, democratic ideals that had resonated so strongly with communities in the North held less sway in the public discourse of a place where class distinctions were more readily embraced. In fact, during the Early Republic, a number of integrated academies and schools for Blacks were established (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 148), but in the aftermath of Nat Turner's slave revolt in 1831, a number of state legislatures criminalized the education of slaves.⁸ Southern states were therefore not especially active in guaranteeing expanded access

⁸At least two states enacted policies criminalizing the education of slaves and free Blacks prior to the

to education or in institutionalizing a school system, but they actively passed legislation to limit the population who could legally learn to read and write.⁹

Changes to the structure of education in the southern states began immediately after the conclusion of the war with the establishment of the Freedman's bureau. While its activities in other policy arenas have been highly criticized as ineffective, it achieved some considerable success in building an educational infrastructure in the South. The Bureau supervised and organized the activities of relief societies and missionaries and established more than 4,300 schools by the time it shut down in 1870, though many of these schools were initiated by freed slaves themselves (Franklin, 1969). In fact, as soon as the war began, the Union military, abolitionists, religious groups, and freed slaves began efforts to educate newly liberated slaves. However, it was during Reconstruction that state-sponsored and maintained public school systems became a permanent fixture of the southern educational landscape. The Union forced southern states to build educational capacity and to assume authority for public school systems by requiring that all state constitutions address the matter of public education. Confederate states had to adopt constitutional provisions establishing and maintaining schools at the public expense as a condition of readmission (Foner, 1988).

Education also rose on the national agenda in the aftermath of the Civil War. Efforts to bolster state capacity did not preclude efforts to expand federal authority. Many reformers envisioned a nationalized system of public education as a component of plans for reconciliation. While this vision was never realized – and was rightly regarded as outside the realm of constitutionally legitimate federal action (Diamond, 1976) — Republicans temporarily succeeded in 1867 by passing a law to establish a federal Department of Education with a

revolt — Mississippi in 1823 and Louisiana in 1830 (Cohen, 1973, p 1621, Vol. 3). Virginia and Georgia passed laws prohibiting the education of slaves in 1831, Alabama in 1832, South Carolina in 1834, and North Carolina in 1835. Maryland and Kentucky were the only southern states in which there existed no sanctions for providing instruction to slaves or free Blacks (Green, 1990, p. 200).

⁹None of this is to suggest that Blacks in the North were successfully or carefully included in schooling. They were not, but neither were they formally barred from participation in schooling.

Secretary who had full membership on the President's cabinet (Warren, 1974). The department was downgraded to a bureau in the following year. While its staff had little in the way of formal authority, the bureau was tasked with monitoring schools, gathering data, and publishing reports; it institutionalized and legitimized federal interests in education.

One of the most contentious issues of this time period involved whether or not southern states would be required to guarantee that public schools be integrated. While this debate occurred frequently in Congress, no formal legislation was adopted, and for the most part, policy decisions were made on a state-by-state basis. Louisiana and South Carolina both adopted new constitutions in 1868 that guaranteed all schools would be open to all students of any race. Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina all included equality provisions in their constitutions, but no language guaranteeing that children of different races would have access to the same schools. Texas, Mississippi, and Virginia all enacted legislation to guarantee educational access for all children, but avoided language related to equality or race (Kelly, 1959; Urban and Wagoner, 2009, 165-166).

About a century after Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush and other revolutionary leaders pushed for the development of tax-supported, statewide education systems, they were finally implemented in the South during Reconstruction. The magnitude and significance of the institutional changes that took place during this period cannot be underestimated. Educational infrastructure and legal authority throughout most of the South could have been accurately described as anemic in the period leading up to the Civil War. Afterwards, public education was an entrenched component of state government. Many of these post-Civil War state constitutions endowed the states with considerably more legal authority than their northern counterparts, which had to rely more on legislation in order to accomplish their ends. While the commitment to these institutions and to broad educational access for Blacks was lacking, a public school infrastructure was finally put in place, and it represented a significant shift. Rather than school governance evolving in a community-specific fashion, and therefore independent of the boundaries of other governments as it had in the North, the southern states relied more heavily upon existing municipal and county divisions in the creation of school districts and local boards (Tyack and James, 1986, p. 60). They therefore not only created state institutions with more explicitly authorized powers, but also ensured that school governance would be better integrated with other components of state and local government than was the case in the North.

The fundamental disagreement over the proper relationship between the states and the federal government was left unresolved. Communities had not been convinced of the necessity and importance of public schooling, and had not made the autonomous decision to allocate local funds towards that end. State legislatures had not passed laws supporting common school systems. Instead, these reforms were thrust upon them. While the common school movement entrenched debates over local autonomy and state authority in the northern politics of education, Reconstruction crystallized those same dilemmas and brought another to the fore: state autonomy from federal authority. When the Freedman's Bureau closed its doors and the federal government withdrew the last of its troops from the South in 1877, old exclusionary patterns once again emerged and local resistance to state and federal intrusion and to taxation for education mediated the impacts of these changes.

2.3 Capacity, Equity, and Quality

In the decades following Reconstruction, American society and government changed dramatically and rapidly. These changes affected what took place in schools and how governments related to one another in their administration of school systems. The Progressive Era, spanning roughly 1890-1920, represented the "beginning of a codified, organized, and hierarchical collection of educational institutions" (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 187). State and local governments, confronted with the myriad disruptions presented by fast-paced industrialization and urbanization, worked to standardize practices within their public school systems, to achieve a more rational organizational structure for regulating schools, and to divorce educational policies from traditional partian politics.

Urban reformers pushed to dissolve school-specific boards in favor of more professionalized boards over-seeing larger districts and working through a professional school administrator. While this period left the basic idea of local governance intact, these reforms had the effect of chipping away at local curricular and governmental autonomy, establishing a greater distance between communities and school leadership, and professionalizing both the teaching profession and school administration.

This new political structure established by Progressives remained largely intact, despite dramatic increases in state and the federal capacity to monitor and support schools, despite the adoption of prescriptive school policies through the remainder of 20th century, and even as education rose in prominence on the national agenda. Today, most locally elected, independent school boards maintain control over significant elements of school policy (Briffault, 2005).

After World War II, debates over school policy shifted away from institutional structure and towards issues of equity and quality. In the decades following the Progressive Era, state and the federal governments made heavy investments in building up their fiscal, technical, and administrative capacities, enabling them to enact academic quality controls, monitor and provide support to districts, and establish themselves as legitimate educational authorities. States leaders found it necessary to take progressive reforms to new extremes. State and federal intervention continued to evolve and to be contentious, but by 1970, they were established centers of policy change. Major national events — the Civil Rights movement and the Cold War — prompted federal action, and set priorities for educational policy in many states.
Smith and Miller-Kahn (2004, p. 7) argue that these events, in combination with the general American skepticism towards state power shifted public attitudes and rendered state and federal intervention more desirable:

public hostility to centralization of power, weak federal and state bureaucracies, executive vetoes, splintered administrations, and court review of two explosions of the 1950s and 1960s the launch of Sputnik and the civil rights revolution convinced the majority (not everyone then or now) that the Federal government has interests economic, social justice, and national defense interests in what happens in public schools. Civil rights rulings and laws as well as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 formalized Federal interests, although most school policies remained under the authority of the separate states. In many states the power to control schools drifted or lurched from local to state government, because people believed that centralizing and consolidating school functions would enhance the values of efficiency and standardization.

2.3.1 Excising Politics from Education and Organizing Urban Schools

At the turn of the 19th century, industrialization, which had begun in the Northeast and upper Midwest, accelerated, expanding its reach across the country. Urban and Wagoner (2009) describe the period as one of "high" industrialization; the size and complexity of production were greater, and industry developed in rural areas. Modernization imperatives reached a larger portion of the country. Urbanization also intensified. Between 1860 and 1900, the proportion of the population living in cities doubled from approximately 20 to 40 percent. By 1930, more than 55 percent of Americans were living in urban areas.¹⁰ While many of these new city dwellers were immigrants, a large portion of migration to the cities involved people coming from rural areas in search of greater economic opportunity.

These developments disrupted traditional family structures, fostered a pursuit of modernization and efficiency, and brought with them other major social changes: the emergence of monopolies, visible inequality between a class of ostentatious super-rich and a destitute urban poor, the rise of organized labor, and the dominance of corrupt political machines. In

¹⁰See Table 4: Population: 1790 to 1990, from the 1990 U.S Census.

this turbulent environment, groups of reformers emerged to fight for change in the political system, but their efforts cut in several directions.¹¹

On the one hand, liberal Progressives sought to promote social justice. They fought for increased citizen control of the political system in many states, advocating for grassroots powers including the ability to propose referenda and to recall corrupt officials. This strand of Progressive thought produced the labor movement. In the educational arena, progressives worked to expand access and promote child-centered, holistic pedagogical strategies. But there was also more conservative strain of Progressive thought. This branch of the Progressive movement was extremely influential. These Progressives sought to establish social order through governmental intervention by reorganizing institutions into independent bureaucracies in order to facilitate trained experts in the exercise of rational management. They were extremely influential in reshaping the way that schools were organized and governed, though both groups affected educational practices (Cremin, 1961; Tyack, 1974; Katz, 1975; Spring, 2004, Ch. 10; Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 227).

The Progressive reformers promoted the adoption of 'scientific' pedagogical techniques to bring schools in harmony with the needs of a modern, industrializing society. This included age-grouping of students, the adoption of uniform curricula focused on easily sequenced and testable subjects like math and spelling, the creation of junior high schools, better training for teachers, and new school buildings, among others (Cremin, 1961; Tyack, 1974). To maximize the efficacy of these modernizing reforms, progressives also pursued the consolidation of several schools into one. As the average school district during the 1920s comprised only two schools on average, merging schools typically resulted in merging school districts (Cubberley,

1922).

¹¹The Progressive movement, had a significant effect not only in the Northeast and Midwest, but also in the South. Southern political leadership began to abandon its laissez faire approach to governing on economic and social issues. Industrialization, corruption, and urbanization were challenges affecting communities around the country. See Link 1946 for an early analysis of Progressive reforms in the South.

In their pursuit of efficiency, the Progressives also effected a fundamental re-ordering of the institutional structure and governance of school districts.¹² The combination of increasing demands on school systems and reform efforts led to the development of a centralized bureaucracy in most districts. Schools needed to educate more students, more efficiently. Progressives advocated for the adoption of a corporate model in which board members no longer had significant influence over the day-to-day activities of schools, instead focusing their attentions on policy and delegating managerial responsibilities to a superintendent (Land, 2002). A superintendent of schools acted as a clerk: monitoring principals, compiling data, buying supplies, and making reports to a board or committee that oversaw the district. Often these superintendents lacked the skill to do more than manage a district, but a significant component of Progressive reforms involved shifting greater authority to these, supposedly, less political actors. Professional administrators would assume responsibility for many of the decisions previously made by the large, heavily involved school boards, and in the process they became increasingly professionalized and powerful (Tyack and Hansot, 1986; Spring, 2004).

Reformers pursued this corporate governance model, not just to increase efficiency and effectiveness, but also to combat corruption. They charged, and historical evidence supports, that school-specific boards, which held authority over hiring, firing, building construction, and curriculum choice, were corrupt, ineffective, and beholden to neighborhood interests (Callahan, 1975). Progressives fought to shift control over schools from large-membership, neighborhood- and school-specific governing boards, upwards, to city or town boards that would oversee all of a communities various schools with fewer members (K-12) (Callahan, 1975). Opponents of this centralizing reform argued, as do today's opponents of increased

¹²A number of notable educational events occurred during this time period, several of which involved the formation of interest groups, organizations, and approaches to schooling that persist today. The National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the American Education Research Association (AERA) were founded. Influential books on Educational Psychology, Montessori education, and John Dewey's approach to education were published.

centralization, that decision-making was too far removed from the citizenry, that the democratic process was being compromised, and that the relevance and quality of education were likely to suffer. Indeed, these reforms enabled business elites to dominate local school boards; upper class citizens were represented on central school boards, while working class citizens were not (Counts, 1929 cf in Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 231; Spring, 2004, p. 293). While Progressives in the South ultimately pursued many of the same reforms, fewer school boards in these newer systems had reached a size thought to be ungainly, many districts already shared borders with the municipality or country, and so there were fewer necessary reductions throughout the region (Plank et al., 1996).¹³

In addition to centralizing control over school systems, Progressives also solidified the isolation of school governance institutions. Local school boards had evolved apart from general governance institutions, but were treated in many cities as an integral component of the partisan spoils system. In most states, to improve the governance of schools, activists created separate electoral structures. They fought to remove politics from education by mandating that school board elections be nonpartisan in both the nomination and the election processes (Spring, 2004, p. 291).

A parallel process occurred at the state level, with states creating or augmenting statewide boards of education and state-superintendent positions. Boards and chief state school officers were either independently elected in non-partisan contests, or were insulated from the state executive branch in other ways such as through staggered appointments.¹⁴ Politics was a dirty, corrupt business, and in the eyes of Progressive reformers, and schools required rational, apolitical management and oversight. In large part, the institutional arrangements established during the Progressive Era (roughly the 1880s through the 1920s) persist.

¹³Progressive reform in the South also differed from the movement in the North along another dimension. The systematic disenfranchisement of Blacks through Jim Crow laws was in large part a product of laws proposed and passed by Progressive governors and legislators.

¹⁴This frustrated gubernatorial control.

The changes that took place during this period were not exclusively alterations of the extant institutional structure. State legislatures also started to become more active makers of school policy. One major component of state initiatives responding to societal change was the enactment of compulsory attendance laws. These laws reflected a confluence of both the conservative and the liberal elements of Progressive thought. The first to enact these statutes were states in the Northeast and California.¹⁵ By 1890, 27 states required children of a certain age to attend school, and by 1918, all 48 states then in the Union had mandated compulsory education (Katz, 1976). To a significant extent, the passage of these laws was motivated by desires to keep the unsupervised children of industrial workers off of the streets, to provide them some protection from factory work at an early age, and to keep children from undercutting unionized adult laborers, so partially but not entirely as a result of concern for educational quality or in the name of an informed citizenry (Felt, 1965; Perkinson, 1968, Ch. 3; Katznelson and Weir, 1985, p. 158). Attendance laws were initially viewed as unenforceable in the western states and were little more than words on paper until later in the 1920s and 1930s (Katz, 1976, pp. 19-21). Once enforced, these laws resulted in dramatically increased enrollments, and higher literacy rates in the population.¹⁶

During these years, the federal government also gained strength, establishing itself as the singular authority over currency, citizenship, the military draft, and for the first time engaging in direct taxation (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 185). In the realm of education, it began to more actively monitor the use and sale of federal lands for educational purposes and encouraged the expansion of higher education (primarily agricultural and engineering sciences) through the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. The 1862 law granted lands only to states that had not seceded from the Union, thus further exacerbating extant gaps in the infrastructure between the South and the rest of the nation. State incompetence in

 $^{^{15}}$ See Figure 2.1 for a chronological ordering of state adoption.

¹⁶Some of these laws were adopted as territorial statutes.



Figure 2.1: State Adoption of Compulsory Education Laws: 1852-1929

Data Sources: Richardson (1980), Katz (1976), and Ensign (1921)

administering these early grants helped justify increased federal monitoring and supervision (Pisapia, 2010, p. 42-49).

2.3.2 District Consolidation and Revenue Authority

Through the Great Depression, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Cold War, an overwhelming majority of public school systems in the United States continued to be governed by locally elected, politically independent, non-partisan school boards. The Progressive vision "proved remarkably durable" and has "defined the structure of [school] systems... down to the present" (Plank et al., 1996, p. 64). In fact, in the decades following the Progressive era, most of the bellwether events in 20th century educational history have had more to do with state and federal governments asserting their constitutional authority — either to ensure equal opportunity for economically disadvantaged and minority students or to ensure a minimum level of educational quality — than with explicitly restructuring school governance.¹⁷ But these bellwether moments, among them the landmark 1954 Supreme

¹⁷One might argue that this is only true until the widespread adoption of school choice and accountability in the late 1990s, both of which involve reforms where the legal authority over schools is clearly at issue. Accountability and school choice policy initiatives, and their impact - or lack thereof - on the fundamental structure of school government are discussed in later chapters. For now, I submit that these new laws, far

Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the launch of *Sputnik*, have overshadowed other, more gradual, but equally significant developments.

In 1930, despite the substantial reorganization implemented as a result of Progressive reform efforts, there were still over 100,000 school districts spread out across the country and approximately 200,000 schools in operation. Localities were responsible for more than an 80 percent share of school revenues. States lacked not only the technical capacity to support, monitor, and liaise with this massive number of school districts and their elected leadership but also the financial leverage to justifiably compel or constrain local activities. The contentious process of school and district consolidation, at the end of the Progressive Era, was an unfinished task.

In part, continued consolidation resulted from the efforts of reformers who sought to impose their ideas about scientific management on backwards, inefficient rural communities (Strang, 1987, p. 355). But consolidation was also born of state governmental imperatives. In the wake of the Great Depression, many schools closed; some districts lost large portions of their revenues and could no longer continue educating students.

Rural schools were particularly hard hit. After the crash, farm failures decimated property taxes, the primary source of school revenues, and school closures in combination with higher birthrates than in urban areas, lead to increased demands on the reamining underresourced schools (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 301). State governments around the country intervened and began assuming a larger portion of the responsibility for funding to offset the impacts of the revenues lost (Benson and O'Halloran, 1987). Between 1919 and 1929, there was virtually no change in the percentage of educational revenues for which state governments were responsible. Between 1929 and 1939, the local share of revenues dropped from over 82 to below 68 percent, and the state share rose from less than 17 to greater than 30

from doing away with the traditional structure of governance, instead work within or around it to specify the narrow set of circumstances under which it may be temporarily set aside.



Figure 2.2: Education Revenues By Source: 1919-2009

Data Source: U.S Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics

percent.¹⁸

Administering aid to such a large number of districts was a challenge for states, but it also incentivized engagement with other components of school policy, all of which continued to prompt consolidation efforts. States with many districts struggled to improve educational quality. They could not effectively regulate and monitor school accreditation, teacher certification, and curriculum in such densely populated political environments, and so they took part in forcing small schools and districts to merge (Berry and West, 2008). State revenue authority continued to grow even after the U.S economy recovered, and state education agencies built considerable capacity during this time period. As the requirements of educating students for this new, modern economy became increasingly complex, so did the costs of educating students increase, further spurring increased state investments in the educational system. In the 1940s and 50s, southern states, in which property taxes were simply not sufficient to support local schools, enacted what are now known as "minimum foundation" plans, to guarantee districts a certain level of funding per student (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, p. 337). Throughout the country, as baby boomers entered the school system, and the costs of education rose, states increased their financial commitments again until they reached about 40 percent to help local districts cope with the influx of new students (Corcoran and Evans, 2008).

In rural communities, where schools were often the most important neighborhood institution, consolidation raised the prospect of a significant disruption (Reynolds, 1999). In regions that were particularly heterogeneous, consolidation threatened integration of disparate religious, cultural, or ethnic groups and marginalization for whichever group found itself in the minority. Consolidation met with fierce resistance in many rural communities and was effectively slowed down in more heterogeneous counties (Alesina et al., 2004; Kenny and Schmidt, 1994). In response to the threat of state mandated consolidation, some dis-

¹⁸See Figure 2.2.



Figure 2.3: School Districts in the United States: 1937-2009

Data Source: U.S Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics

tricts and schools merged preemptively, hoping to avoid the need for more drastic changes and to preserve some measure of local autonomy by voluntarily adopting incremental plans to make moderate changes.

States responded to this resistance with a variety of strategies, sometimes with direct mandates that involved the unilateral redrawing of district maps, and in other instances with financial incentives (Berry and West, 2008). Though the number of school districts declined in a relatively uniform fashion on a national level, the reduction in district numbers occurred at different times in different states. Strang (1987, pp. 355-6) describes the process of consolidation in several different states. In Nevada, 177 districts were consolidated into 17 in the span of two years. In California, 3,000 districts declined little by little over 40 years as

the legislature repeatedly failed to agree on consolidation policy. Florida had 67 districts at the beginning of the period, and 67 districts at the end. Strang (1987) suggests that these states are characteristic of three patterns of consolidation, rapid change, steady decline, or little to no change.

By 1970, there were approximately 20,000 school districts, 100,000 operating schools, and states had assumed responsibility for 40 percent of school revenues nationally (Duncombe and Yinger, 2007; Hanushek and Lindseth, 2009, p. 62; Odden and Picus, 2000).¹⁹ Though there remained a great deal of variation in state financial commitments to public schools, most states found themselves with a more legible landscape of school districts and greater financial leverage with which to engage them.

2.3.3 The Federal Government and Equity

Two major events signaled lasting changes in the the federal commitment to equal educational opportunity: the landmark Supreme Court decision of 1954 in *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the 1965 passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) under President Lyndon Johnson. *Brown* advanced the cause of racial equality and desegregation, while ESEA established a commitment to improving schools in under-resourced communities. Whilst the motive behind and results of both *Brown* and ESEA, for minority and economically disadvantaged students, respectively, left something to be desired, the Court's decision and the federal law set important precedents for inclusion and fairness.²⁰ They made equality a central component of national policy conversations, and shaped the federal government's involvement in education during subsequent decades. Both were hardfought battles, years in the making.

¹⁹See Figures 2.2 and 2.3 for illustrations of these trends.

²⁰See Borman and D'Agostino, 1996 for a comprehensive evaluation of ESEA's impacts prior to NCLB. The authors detail the early failures of the law, reasons for difficulties in evaluating it, and demonstrate that federal aid has likely had a small, positive impact on outcomes.

Local and regional organizations participated in protests and engaged in political campaigning for years before the *Brown* decision was handed down, but many were divided on the topic of desegregation. Advocacy groups like the Regional Council of Negro Leadership were interested in issues of economic equality and enfranchisement. They were not as focused on achieving desegregation (Dittmer, 1994). Ending segregation, while desirable in the long term, was not a first priority for many Civil Rights groups. The NAACP, in its pursuit of a desegregated school system, set aside the goal of equity and pursued an end that was not fully supported by some southern Blacks. Many felt it would threaten the jobs and success they had achieved within the segregated system, but the story of segregation in schools gained traction with top government officials and the public (Fairclough, 2004).

The Court's decision was deeply enmeshed in the context of Cold War politics. National security imperatives overtly influenced deliberations and likely played a role in garnering presidential support for the plaintiff. The United States Justice Department filed an amicus curiae brief arguing that state-sponsored racial discrimination provided easy fodder for communist propaganda and cast doubt on the sincerity of America's commitment to democratic ideals. For the federal government, the decision served to protect national security interests, subdue social unrest, and spur the national economy to growth. It was "political pressure" as much or more than "moral suasion" that motivated federal intervention and guided the Court to overturn the doctrine of "separate but equal" (Williams, 2006, p. 43). When the *Brown* decision was announced, it was reported in the American press as a "blow to communism"; abroad it was reported as the victory of justice and truth that are inevitable in a democracy (Dudziak, 2004, pp. 34-5).²¹

Regardless of motivation, the decision had a number of immediate effects on the Civil

 $^{^{21}}$ In addition, Guinier (2004) writes that the federal government was motivated by the hope that such a move would dampen the resentment and anger of Black [WWII] veterans who [had] returned from the war only to be denied equality and by the belief that desegregation would weaken the plantation economy and hasten the transition to a more modern, industrial economy (94).

Rights movement, public discourse, and on federal-state relations. *Brown* contributed to the formation of an environment in which federal aid to schools could be expanded via the ESEA. In overturning "separate but equal", the Court delivered a major blow to a longstanding legal regime that had forced Black Americans to accept poorly funded and often substandard schooling (Dudziak, 2004, p. 33). It brought an end to legal segregation in public life more broadly and animated the Civil Rights movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Carson, 2004, p. 26; Klarman, 1994b, pp. 185-6; Williams, 2006, p. 38).²² Along with the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of that same year, it embedded equity in discussions of federal policy. But the decision also stimulated strong opposition amongst many southern Whites. Klarman (1994a) and Payne (2004), suggest that racial politics in nearly every southern state shifted towards the right in the aftermath of *Brown*. The decision "crystallized southern resistance to racial change which - from at least the time of Harry S. Trumans civil rights proposals in 1948 had been scattered and episodic" (Klarman, 1994a, p. 94).

Because of the ten-year delay between the handing down of the decision in 1954 and the passage of meaningful civil rights legislation by Congress, few scholars overtly link *Brown* to the passage of the ESEA in 1965. However, southern resistance to federally mandated integration contributed to the landmark legislative episodes of the 1960s in two ways. First, the refusal of state governments to acknowledge the highest court in the land could not be tolerated. Ultimately the Court could not, on its own, effect change and enforce compliance. Instead, the executive branch had to intervene, assert federal superiority, and in so doing a precedent for dramatic federal intervention in local and state school systems was established. Second, as Klarman (1994a) points out, *Brown* had the mixed effect of strengthening both

²²The end of legal separation and the beginning of real-life integration were different things. The Federal government's capacity to enforce the Supreme Court's Mandate broadly was limited, and some have argued that Black students were more disadvantaged in integrated schools than they had been in segregated schools. Certainly many Black teachers lost their teaching positions. While "federal policy changes lent credence and psychological sustenance to movement activists..., such victories came slowly after years of intense agitation by Black activists and were followed by reluctant (if not nonexistent) federal enforcement" (Williams, 2006, p. 39).

the opposition to and the support for federal intervention. The newly energized White resistance in the South adopted repressive, brutal measures in an attempt to preserve Jim Crow laws and segregation. This extremist White resistance yielded nationally broadcast images of peaceful protestors repeatedly subjected to violent abuse. These broadcasts converted many northern Whites from passive observers of the Civil Rights movement to supporters of its agenda. This public support facilitated congressional legislation to end Jim Crow and segregation Klarman (1994a, p. 82).

Without these broad environmental shifts, the ESEA might not have made its way through Congress in 1965. In the twenty years prior, advocates for a strong federal role in schools had repeatedly found themselves thwarted by vehement opposition (Kantor, 1991, p. 47). Legislation attempting to expand federal aid to schools failed repeatedly throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. Federal revenues comprised approximately 4 percent of education revenues nationally from 1950 until the adoption of ESEA in 1965, when nearly doubled. One explanation for these repeated failures is the linkage between federal intervention in schools and federal enforcement of desegregation. Federal funds for schools would have to be tied to compliance the Court's 1954 mandate.²³ As the Civil Right movement became stronger, this source of resistance dissipated. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (CRA) contained provisions for prohibiting schools and districts that practiced discrimination from receiving federal aid.²⁴ The congressional elections of 1964 also resulted in a landslide for the Democrats, bringing 48 new Democrats into the House, all of whom voted for the ESEA (Kantor, 1991, p. 63).

A related disagreement also threatened to derail ESEA. At the time of the bill's introduction, Congress remained torn between those who desired to provide general aid to

²³Representative Adam Clayton Powell repeatedly made an amendment to proposed education legislation, preventing federal funds from being channeled to districts in which segregation was practiced. This amendment, sometimes added by those who opposed federal aid to and involvement in schools, was repeatedly credited with causing the bills to fail, since the amendment was thought to unite conservative Republicans and southern Democrats in opposition (Enelow, 1981).

²⁴See Title IV of the act.

school districts and those who preferred targeted assistance. President Johnson's objectives and national public opinion encouraged targeted assistance for poor students. As pressure mounted to provide greater opportunities for the disadvantaged and resistance to desegregation declined, federal intervention in the school systems emerged as an acceptable means of alleviating poverty and addressing civil rights issues. Social scientists and policy-makers believed that providing higher quality educational opportunities would be effective in eradicating poverty and promoting equality. At the same time, improving public schools seemed more politically feasible than other redistributive policies. American policy makers saw improving public schools as a way to mitigate the social outcomes of the market, without directly intervening in the operations of the marketplace (Kantor, 1991, 56; Kantor and Lowe, 1995, p. 4). In a tone similar to that of Brown decision, the policy emphasized the importance of providing the individual the tools to become successful rather treating poverty as a structural problem (Kantor, 1991, p. 55).

The stated purpose of Title 1, the law's most prominent and well-funded component, was to provide educational aid to districts teaching disadvantaged students. While many conservative members of Congress maintained opposition to federal involvement in setting educational standards and preferred general aid as opposed to categorical, they did not want to deprive states of federal assistance. Thus, the debate over whether federal aid for education should be limited to high poverty districts or provided on a more general basis shifted to focus on the funding formula. Eventually, members of Congress agreed to provide categorical grants to districts with a high density of economically disadvantaged students, but those in favor of a watered down funding formula ultimately prevailed, ensuring that a majority of districts would receive federal funding and could spend it as general aid rather than to provide supplemental instruction specifically to disadvantaged students. In the first years after the law's passage, a lack of oversight allowed many districts to spend that aid as general aid (Graham, 1984, cf in McDonnell, 2005, p. 22).

Both the ESEA and the *Brown* decision constituted major breakthroughs for federal involvement in schools. Along with the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, discussed in the following section, Brown and ESEA represented a new level of federal willingness to set priorities for and offer incentives to states in their administration of the public school systems. This mandate from the Supreme Court in *Brown* provided the executive and eventually Congress with the license needed to become more involved in state educational affairs even though at the time federal capacity to intervene was quite weak. ESEA began funneling substantial sums of money to poor districts through the states and in so doing subsidized dramatic growth in the capacity of state education agencies. The decision and the law set in motion a process by which both the federal government's mandate and capacity to intervene grew, and durably framed its role in educational policy in terms of equity. National policies have built on and around this first major federal education law, and state movements pursuing parallel ends were bolstered by federal action. At the same time however, the *Brown* decision generated resistance to federal involvement as well as reticence and even downright refusal to comply with federal mandates in the South. ESEA funneled aid not to states, but to school districts, reinforcing the existing infrastructure of school governance.

2.3.4 Establishing an Interest in Quality

At the same time that equity emerged as the central concern of the federal government, a backlash against the holistic educational strategies associated with the Progressive era gained momentum, though it would not be the dominant motivator of policy until the 1980s. The need for appropriately educated citizens had been a feature of public school reform and policy throughout American history, but these concerns reached a new prominence in national politics as the economy changed after World War II, and the United States entered into the Cold War (Reuben, 1997; Dimock, 1944; Altenbaugh, 2003). A desire to improve the overall

quality of schooling and to guarantee future economic competitiveness helped motivate state efforts to promote district consolidation and supported increases in educational spending from all three levels of government. This emergent concern for quality, and the growing consensus that certain subjects and skills ought to be commonly taught, even reinforced the fight for equity. Not only were better schools an issue of fairness, equal opportunity was key to ensuring that talented students would be able to produce.

As the economy grew and changed, the need for educated, skilled, and literate citizens also grew. This need manifested itself particularly clearly in the aftermath of World War II. Fewer and fewer jobs were available to those with a high school education or less, more and more formal training was required in the labor force, and the geographic mobility of the population was on the upswing (Rury, 2005). Which subjects should be emphasized, how they should be taught, and who should be teaching them were becoming subjects for political debate beyond the local level. This concern for quality contributed to an increasing level of state and federal activity regarding the substance of schooling and the qualifications of teachers. This took on the guise of state-regulated teacher certifications, state textbook adoption (also a means of keeping costs down for localities), and incentives for the provision of specialized courses, among other initiatives (Durrance, 1952).

By far, the most significant event for reshaping public expectations and federal engagement with regard to what schools could and should accomplish was the 1957 Soviet launch of *Sputnik*. Critics of American public schools had been arguing for years that expectations of students were too low, that John Dewey's child-centered theories of education were failing to encourage the brightest students to go as far as they might have.²⁵ Regardless of the real discrepancies between the Soviet and American educational systems, *Sputnik* fueled critical appraisals and a conception that the more advanced space technology reflected a superior

²⁵See, for example, the works of James Bryant Conant (Conant, 1955, 1959) and writings by Benjamin Fine (Fine, 1947).

educational system (Kaestle and Smith, 1982). This tilted the balance of an on-going debate among political leaders during the 1950s. While the Civil Rights movement was on the upswing, educational leaders in another arena advanced different visions of public education: Should schools concentrate on academic rigor? Or should they focus on preparing students for the many roles of adulthood?

Shifting the balance in favor of a more academically oriented school system and framing the debate around international competitiveness provided legislators the legitimacy they needed to redirect educational priorities. In 1959, the NDEA was passed. The law provided aid for science, foreign languages, and math at all levels of education. The amount of money allocated was not substantial in todays' terms. In fact, the federal share of education revenues hardly budged in response, but the law was the first federal foray into education that spanned from primary through higher education. It helped set a precedent for targeted federal assistance, presaged the outcome of the 1964 congressional debate over general versus categorical aid, and had the effect of raising concerns about curriculum and standards.

This mode of thinking about education policy — what everyone should know — was subsumed on the public agenda by the Civil Rights movement and the louder rhetoric about basic access and skills (Kaestle and Smith, 1982), but it persisted in influencing state reform during the 1970s and resurfaced with gusto in the 1980s, when the *A Nation at Risk* report was published.

2.4 Diminished Local Control, Assertive States?

It should be clear, from the above discussion, that the federal and state governments have become powerful actors in the field of educational policy and that they have long been interested in promoting broader access to and the development of high quality public school systems. By 1970, state and federal policies had a direct bearing on decisions made by localities. The version of ESEA passed in 1965 appears weak when compared with the most recently authorized version, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). As the ESEA has become more complex, with each authorization, the capacity of the state governments to monitor and assist with implementation has grown in concert with federal policy (Manna 2006b; Fusarelli and Cooper 2009).

In the late 1970s, political leaders began to advocate for the establishment and testing — across all of a state's schools — of minimum competencies, the most basic skills a student might need in order to be a contributing member of society (Haney and Madaus, 1978). This movement spurred numerous states to establish minimum competency exams for high school students. In 1983, the *A Nation at Risk* report found that schools in the United States were failing to produce graduates who could compete in an international economy and prompted an estimated 275 state and federal commissions, all culminating in a 1989 Education Summit of all the nation's governors, hosted by then-President George H.W. Bush (Conley, 2003). The more recent accountability policies of the 1990s and 2000s, including the adoption of detailed state content and grade-level standards have their roots in the findings of this report. More and more states also began administering teacher certification tests, and raising expectations for performance on these tests, and as of 2008, forty-five states had established graduation requirements.

Also beginning in the 1970s, a series of court cases, targeted at state governments, sought to improve funding equity and educational quality within states, across localities (Thro, 1990; Heise, 1995). There were 22 major equity decisions handed down through state courts by 1985 (West and Peterson, 2007). State have place limits on property taxes and promulgated categorical funding programs in efforts to redistribute educational revenues more equitably.

The states and the federal government have continued to move forward, promulgating policies in the hopes of building capacity and shaping local priorities to create better schools. But it should also be clear that these changes are consistent with long-term trends in the historical development of school governance. Kaestle and Smith (1982, p. 384) describe this evolution not as aberrant, but rather as a central component of educational history in the United States.

One of the central dynamics of American educational history is the long-range trend from local and parental schooling arrangements to increasing government funding and centralized control. The trend does not represent simply a benign process of modernization and improvement. Centralization has exacted costs and elicited fierce opposition.

Yet, as Kaestle and Smith (1982) state, the historical trend towards more centralized government is not necessarily a benign one and certainly not one that has evolved through consensus.²⁶ Evaluations of education policy, whether state or federal, begin by acknowledging the fundamentally decentralized nature of school governance. The autonomy of the local school district is readily and frequently cited as the defining element of school policy in the United States. In 1974 Zeigler et al. (1974, p. x) wrote that, "if they are to gain approval, proposals for reorganization or for new methods of finance must meet the test of maintaining local control in the minds of the majority of voters." Three decades later, Briffault (2005, p. 54) echoes Zeigler's sentiments: "In practice, in most states local school boards enjoy considerable power over the day-to-day operation and management of their schools, and this local school district autonomy has at times been recognized — and rewarded — by state and federal courts." He calls this "the 'Black letter' rule of local school district subordination to the state and the practice... of local school district autonomy." There is of course some truth in these statements; the system of school governance is decentralized, particularly when viewed from an international context.

At the same time, the persistence of the mythic ideal of local control, and the insistence on emphasizing this defining feature of the American school system, means that state and federal

 $^{^{26}}$ Kirst strongly believes that local school boards are the best means of governing public schools and the most likely way to encourage improvement. He sees centralization as problematic (Kirst, 2004). See also Cuban (2004) in the same volume. He also expresses concern over centralized governance.

initiatives are constantly viewed as somehow breaking with the past, despite all evidence to the contrary. In the 1980s, some scholars of school governance and many prominent political leaders wrote and spoke about a new and important shift away from local control and towards increased state control of schools. Since then, statements about the rising prominence of state intrusion have frequently served as the jumping off point for news reports, articles and books on American educational history, as well as for evaluations of particular policies.

In 1982, for example, Wirt and Kirst (p. 196) argued that "local control as a value and operational fact has declined to the vanishing point." In that same year, Cohen (1982) wrote an article for the Harvard Education Review about the ways in which 'expanding state' authority was affecting educational governance. In 1984, then-Secretary of Education T.H. Bell told in interviewer "We're seeing a fundamental shift in the role of the states, as compared to local entities, with respect to education," (Fiske, 1984, p. 1). As states have continued to initiate policy changes, these general statements on the increased authority of states have continued. In 1987, Fuhrman (p. 141) referred to local control as now "a myth — a fantasy rather than a fact" and went on to say that "although states delegate the provision of education to local school districts, the autonomy of local school boards is severely constrained'.' In 2003, Conley (p. 1) begins his book on school governance by referring to a "revolution" in school governance:

That revolution is the reshaping of power and authority relationships at all levels of the educational governance and policy system. Although this revolution began perhaps 30 years ago, its pace and intensity accelerated during the 1990s. During this time, almost every state has been evolving from a local control model of governance and finance, where districts generate and control a significant portion of their operating revenues and instructional programs locally to a state system of finance, specified standards and content knowledge, and statewide tests and assessments. During this period, the state and federal role in education policy has becoming increasingly activist, and, when viewed from a local perspective, intrusive.

While most scholarly work acknowledges that there are different degrees of aggressiveness



Figure 2.4: Education Revenues By Source: 1970-2008

Data Source: U.S Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics

among the states, this variance has remained largely unexplored. States are described as increasingly powerful actors (Conley, 2003), and school boards are described as institutions under siege (Howell, 2005), with only a few scholars attending to the different ways in which state political contexts have shaped responses to federal pressure. Work that does contextualize reforms in a broader state context focuses only on small set of states (e.g. McDermott, 2007).

Likewise, many authors have explored the consequences of a particular policy intervention — the impact of high school exit-exam requirements (e.g. Bishop and Mane, 2001) or of an accountability regime (e.g. Dee and Jacob, 2009) or of district and school consolidation (e.g. Berry and West, 2008) — but there is little to help place these policies in a larger context. Are high school exit exams operating in isolation in a particular state or are they simply one regulation piled on top of others? Are some states highly centralized, prolific policy makers? How do structure and policy interact?²⁷

Further, several of the indicators, regularly referenced by scholarship are indicative of increased state authority, have actually appeared to stagnate over the last 30 years. If a substantial portion of governance authority rests with gathering and disseminating revenues, than school-finance is perhaps the best studied arena of governance change in American education, and one of the most frequently cited pieces of evidence that states are assuming greater authority over education has been their increasing responsibility for gathering revenue. Figure 2.2 above illustrates the dramatic rise in state funding authority between 1920 and 1970. However, Figure 2.4, which presents revenues only from 1970 onward, actually suggests very modest aggregate fluctuations in state and local shares of revenue since 1980. Despite the property tax revolts that took place in these decades, in the aggregate states were actually responsible for a smaller percentage of revenues in 2005 than in 1985, 46 percent as opposed to 49 percent.²⁸

Similarly, the decreased fiscal independence of districts from other local and state governments is another oft-cited indicator of diminished local autonomy. School districts across the country are classified by the Census of Governments as independent or dependent. Dependent school districts "lack sufficient autonomy to be counted as separate governments and are classified as a dependent agency of some other government a county, municipality, township, or state government," while independent districts are both administratively and fiscally independent. This essentially means that the districts are able to raise money independently, without having to first obtain the permission of a higher authority. Of the

 $^{^{27}}$ To the best of my knowledge, there are very few papers that explicitly deal with these questions — whether or not states are centralized or decentralized in their governance of schools — or in other words, the degree to which local control is present, and how these structural factors shape other policy decisions or affect outcomes for students. See Manna and Harwood (2011) and Loeb and Strunk (2006).

 $^{^{28}}$ See Figlio (1997) for a description and analysis of the tax revolt and its impact on school finance.



Figure 2.5: Percent of Districts Fiscally Dependent: 1972-2008

Data Source: U.S Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics



Figure 2.6: School Districts in the United States: 1970-2009

Data Source: U.S Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics

more than 16,000 school districts in the United States during the 1972-1973 school year, 18 percent of school districts included in the Census were classified as fiscally dependent. By 1990 fewer than 10 percent of districts were classified as independent, and the percentage has remained flat around that percentage through 2008. This trajectory, depicted in Figure 2.5, are actually at odds with the prevailing notion of increased state authority.

In a sense, this is consistent with where most policy activity seems to be taking place in recent decades. States are increasingly concerned with regulating student performance as opposed to attempting to control processes and mechanisms for decision making. This is certainly the argument advanced by Elmore et al. (1996). It makes sense then that some of these traditional indicators of state control may not be shifting as rapidly as they once were. And yet, through school choice reforms many states are actively engaged in creating new ways of governing schools that depart dramatically from historical norms. In Figure 2.3, there is a steep decline in the number of school districts. That decline continues, albeit at a slower rate between 1970 and 2009, the more recent period presented in 2.6, but this is only true when traditional school districts are the unit of analysis. When charter school districts are included on the figure, the trend shifts, and it would not appear that consolidation has halted and might even be reversing slightly.

Mayoral control of urban districts has also been cited as evidence of increased state power as state legislatures enact the transfer of authority out of dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs in the district (Wong et al., 2007). Except for instances of state takeovers and transitions to mayoral control, scholars have less often attended to legislative reforms that speak directly to the powers and duties of school boards, leaving a question mark on how directly states have addressed the question of local authority. One of the most prominent governance reforms of recent decades the establishment of charter schools can either rely on or circumvent traditional local boards.²⁹

2.5 Conclusions

In the pages above, I have demonstrated that state capacity and commensurate authority have grown steadily over time. The narrative above describe a political universe in which states have been perpetually interested in establishing and managing a public school system towards various ends, but persistently more successful at shaping the activities of a local district or a classroom teacher.

I have also demonstrated that state governance of schools, and indeed the public schools themselves, evolved in very different geographic contexts and on a very different schedule

 $^{^{29}}$ See Spillane (1996) for an example of a scholar anxious about state intervention and the potential for mismatch between local preferences and state policies.

throughout American history. Schools in the Northeast and Midwest were established much more quickly than schools in the South, which received a dramatic kickstart in the decades following the Civil War. Public school systems in the West, established and organized throughout the 1800s, were able to learn from earlier state constitutions and organizational structures in the East and Midwest. Equal opportunity was a founding principal of school systems in the Northeast, quite the opposite in the South.

I have noted also that even while state capacity and authority have increased steadily, local control is typically acknowledged as the norm in the United States, meaning that states and the federal government are repeatedly framed as interlopers, regardless of empirical realities or historical trends. Yet, a number of key indicators of state-level centralization have stagnated, even as scholars suggest that school governance and state power have been augmented in a revolutionary manner over the last 35 year. So, what are we to make of these discrepancies? What is the true balance of power between localities and states?

I submit that the nationally focused narrative, while important, is not the most important story to be told in the field of school governance. If states have become more important policy actors in the realm of education, which clearly seems to be the case, then we must begin to recognize the ways in which their institutions of school governance and their policy cultures differ from one another.³⁰ We are simultaneously in a position where we can no longer assume that local control is in tact, and can no longer treat state dominance in education policy as aberrant. We must leverage the variance in state approaches in order to grasp how these changes have evolved and we must bring theory to bear on these questions, not only of how to measure and study governance — what it means to be centralized or decentralized, but also for parsing out consequences of different governance regimes. We must do this, because

 $^{^{30}}$ A recent piece by Manna and Harwood in *State Politics and Policy* argue that most scholarship on education governance focuses either on the national context, or very narrowly on the local context, typically urban school governance. At the same time that they have reached ascendancy, states are ignored by most scholarship.

citizens and policy makers continue to believe that who is in charge matters (See First and Walberg 1992, Miller 2008, Ravitch 2007).

I explore theoretical approaches to conceptualizing school governance in the following chapter. Some work has attempted to apply theory to explain the evolution of school governance and the possible consequences shifting patterns of authority are likely to have. But this work is limited in its reach given the tendency for focus on one reform or a family of reforms (e.g. Strang, 1987). These evaluations are not invalid, but they ignore a potentially important component of state policy environments, which is how the sum total of policies and institutional structure combine to create a more or less centralized system. Working through how to measure and compare state policy regimes using this literature facilitates the generation of hypotheses about potential impacts on student outcomes.

Chapter 3

Surveying the De/Centralized Landscape: Fiscal Federalism and School Governance

"Work on state governance of K-12 education does exist, yet most has been descriptive and has not engaged broader theoretical discussions about institutions, politics, and policy." Paul Manna and Harwood (2011, p. 485)

3.1 Introduction

The landscape of education governance has continued to shift in recent decades. While most observers agree that increased state-level authority is the most significant element of these recent changes, few scholars have been able to put a point on the nature of new school governance. Nor have there been clearly expressed hypotheses about the consequences of this newly active state leadership. Instead, scholars have heeded calls to "bring the state back in" but have focused on "the state" writ large, where the state includes all governmental institutions in a particular country (see Evans et al., 1985; James, 1991; and Fusarelli, 2009, p. 249). Federal governance, federal-state relations, and local governance, both the traditional leadership of school boards and more recent innovations like mayoral control and

school choice, have received the most sustained and thorough attention from researchers.¹ In the same way that theory cannot productively exist absent empirical evaluations, neither will empirical evaluations be productive absent a well-conceived theoretical foundation (King et al. 1995, p. 476; King et al. 1994). Without applying this same theoretically informed, scholarly attention to newly prominent state-level political dynamics and institutional structures, we are likely to fail in our attempts to understand and evaluate new regimes of educational governance.

States possess the political will and technical capacity to mitigate against or augment the goals of federal policy (Dahill-Brown and Lavery, 2012, forthcoming; Vergari, 2012) as well as the legal authority to establish mayoral control and encourage (or block) school choice. State policies can influence and shape the adoption of federal initiatives — bottom-up diffusion as in the case of No Child Left Behind's accountability provisions (McDonnell, 2005). Clearly, many states, their courts, legislatures, governors, state boards of education (SBEs), state education agencies (SEAs), and chief state school officers (CSSOs), view seriously their role in policy leadership and regularly exercise constitutional authority, or seek to expand that authority, over the public schools and local districts. But it is also apparent that other states are more reticent to promulgate policies that will constrain local decision-making. In this project, I am not primarily concerned with explaining the general increase in state willingness

¹For work relating a theoretical framework to the federal politics of school governance (and to federalstate relations in the realm of education policy), see Borman (2005), Manna (2006b), Davies (2006), Debray (2006), Kaestle and Lodewick (2007) and McGuinn (2006). See Wong (2010) for a review essay covering several of these works on federal school governance. For theoretical assessments of traditional school board leadership — how and why it succeeds in some instances and fails in others, how it is representative in some settings and exclusionary in others, see Howell (2005), Danzberger (1992), Land (2002) and Berkman and Plutzer (2005). For theoretically rich work investigating mayoral control in local governance, see Wong et al. (2007), Viteritti (2009), and Henig and Rich (2004). Wong et al. in particular advances a theory of 'integrated' governance. For the initial theoretical rationale for governance through school choice, see Chubb and Moe (1990). For an updated survey of theoretical perspectives on school choice reforms, see Berends (2009).

to assert authority over schools.² Instead, I am primarily concerned with a task that I view as analytically prior. When we say that school governance is now in the hands of state governments and that the traditional model of local control has effectively ended, what do we mean? Which states conform to that narrative, and which depart from it?

Therefore, in what follows, it is my primary aim to define governance and to explore a theoretical framework that facilitates analytical comparison of state education governance regimes, as well as generates hypotheses about the likely effects of altered governance. By first defining governance in broad terms and then applying this definition to identify the relevant features of the education system in the United States, and by using theory in order to identify the salient dimensions of governance, we can operationalize and measure this abstract concept. In so doing, we grant ourselves the ability to conduct both historical and cross-sectional comparisons. In other words, by better specifying conceptual definitions and hypotheses, we can better specify concrete expectations and compare a present state to its past self and states to one another. Doing so provides the causal leverage to test hypotheses regarding how governance affects educational outcomes. I define governance below in broad terms that include both formal institutional and substantive policy-based components.

I draw on a specific literature in this chapter, fiscal federalism, in order to accomplish my second and third tasks: identifying the salient aspects of governance and generating hypotheses about the consequences of change. This body of work to which I turn my attention lies at the intersection of political science and economics and recommends focusing on a particular dimension of governance: the degree to which it is centralized or decentralized. In the simplest terms, is policy-making authority concentrated at the highest levels of government among an elite few (centralized), or is it widely dispersed amongst a broad number of actors who are closer to the intended policy-targets (decentralized)? This literature is particularly appropriate for the context of education in the United States in that it echoes

 $^{^{2}}$ That is a useful endeavor, and I will touch on potential avenues of exploration in Chapter 4

the way observers have spoken about new school governance — as moving away from a locally controlled system towards an increasingly state-dominant, federally-supported system, and it presents useful typologies of decentralization to help focus on political, fiscal, administrative, and market mechanisms for affecting policy outcomes.³ In this chapter, I briefly discuss each of these dimensions and the potential benefits of decentralized governance as they relate to aspects of United States system of school governance.⁴

I then discuss the potential ways in which the benefits of decentralized governance become less likely. While there is a strong consensus that large, diverse societies must provide for local flexibility, fiscal federalists emphasize that decentralized governance is effective only under a certain set of conditions. I discuss these conditions and note that many appear to be absent in local districts. Based on the absence of many of these factors, I conclude by suggesting that increased state-level centralization may have positive effects on student outcomes and may reduce inequalities, though the likely effects on efficiency are less clear.

3.2 Components of Governance

As I noted in Chapter 2, with few exceptions (Manna and Harwood, 2011; Loeb and Strunk, 2006), the small body of work that does attempt to understand better variation in statelevel governance of schools has focused either on conducting single-case studies of states regarded as policy leaders (Fusarelli and Cooper, 2009; McDermott, 2007), on describing the federal role in galvanizing the growth in state educational capacity (Manna, 2006b) or on describing the political dynamics involved with adopting or evaluating a single policy or subset of policies (Bishop and Mane, 2001).

Accountability reforms, which seek to ensure that schools are held responsible for perfor-

³Despite the colloquial term for referencing this literature, fiscal federalists are not solely concerned with matters of fiscal policy, nor are they expressly concern with federations. See Oates (1999).

⁴Operationalizing these dimensions, state-level variance and change, and the inter-relationships among them takes place in Chapter 4.

mance outcomes rather than implementation processes (inputs), may be the most thoroughly analyzed component of new school governance. They have received a considerable degree of attention from scholars, though the density of work focusing on the federal accountability politics of No Child Left Behind has eclipsed earlier work on autonomously adopted statelevel accountability regimes (Ladd, 1996; Fuhrman and Goertz, 2001; Carnoy and Loeb, 2002; Manna, 2006a; West et al., 2007).

Yet, while accountability reforms constitute a major constellation of reforms, they are the not only means by which state governance has shifted in recent decades and are a continuation of trends towards better specifying goals and standards for students and teachers. The ubiquity of accountability policies and the degree to which they rely on student testing has rendered them a natural subject for intense scrutiny, but this focus has mitigated against connecting accountability reform to other significant shifts. I submit that the lack of work comparing state systems to one another stems in large part from the difficulties associated with identifying a conceptual framework with which to study education governance, a concept which is rarely defined but nonetheless regularly referenced.

The conceptual difficulty presented by defining governance is not unique. Governance is defined by Viteritti as the "institutional arrangement that assigns power to public officials and defines the mechanisms for holding them accountable" (2009, 1). But most treat the subject with a slightly broader brush. Governance is difficult to pin down, because it is more than just the formal institutions and legal arrangements that shape public participation and allocate authority. In fact, entire literatures devoted to the subject of defining governance exist in the fields of international relations, public administration, European studies, and public policy.⁵

Neither is the task of defining governance the sole province of academia. International non-governmental organizations, predominantly the World Bank, have played a significant

⁵See Kjaer 2004 for a discussion of the ways in which each of these subfields treats the subject.

role in building a conceptual definition of governance. The World Bank has defined governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources of development." Thus, it is not simply the institutional arrangement that assigns power to public officials; it is also the way in which that power is utilized. It is the act of governing. The Bank goes further to identify three additional components of governance: the formal institutional arrangements defining the legitimate political regime, the process that takes place during the exercise of governmental authority, and the capacity of the government to design and implement policy (IBRD, 1994, xiv).⁶

Young (2006, p. 845) emphasizes that the actual scope of government action, what governments actually do and how present they are in the daily lives of their citizens, also constitutes an important component of governance and one that is changeable and contested:

The domain or range of issues over which governments can exercise authority is a variable. Actual governments differ widely in these terms, ranging from minimalist arrangements in which the government is limited to maintaining law and order internally and providing for the common defense against external threats, to maximalist arrangements in which the government owns the means of production and possesses authority to intervene deeply in the lives of individual citizens In most places and during more eras, the boundaries of the authority of governments are contested, with some groups calling for an expansion of the authority of government and others advocating increased restrictions on the authority of government. (845)

It is useful to understand generally the scope of what governance means, that there are formal and less formal components, and that processes and content are integral features of any regime. I define governance in this most inclusive sense, as comprising the formal institutions in which public officials reside and authority is vested; the processes by which policies are made, the public engaged, and leaders held accountable; and the substantive character of the legislation and regulations that are adopted. In short, governance means the institutions, processes, and policies that combine to address public problems, and as Young

⁶The latter two are domains in which the bank attempts to spur improvements.

emphasizes, it is differentiated, evolving, and contested.

But what does this look like in the realm of education in the United States? What are the institutions, processes, and policies of school governance? When one adopts such an inclusive definition of governance, the answer is: many. Because of the complex power-sharing arrangements that have evolved over the last two hundred years, a conceptual definition of governance is only a small step in the direction of a better theoretical understanding of education governance. Federal, state, and local institutions house K-12 educational leadership, meaning that there are three vertically related, horizontally fragmented levels of active, legitimate institutional authority involved in American school governance:

- Federal a central authority that is split into three branches, each responsible not just for education but for the full gamut of national policies, complemented by a bureaucratic agency focused entirely on education;
- State 50 different authorities at the state level that are again split into three branches responsible for the full range of state policies, complemented by a bureaucratic agency as well as elected or appointed leaders focused entirely on education;
- 3. Local Thousands of different governments at the local level, most of which are focused entirely on education (and are autonomous from other local governments), some of which are focused only on education but working in formal cooperation with general-purpose local governments, some of which are general-purpose local governments working on education in concert with another local government, and finally general-purpose local governments functioning in absence of a specialized authority.

At all three levels, one can find elected leaders who might be held accountable for the policies they make through traditional electoral processes (Congress, state legislatures, SBEs, and local school boards), though the specific way in which local elections are organized varies both within and between states. These leaders are also accountable - more or less - to one another: localities to states, states to the federal government, SBEs and SEAs to governors and legislatures. One also finds at each level bureaucrats who implement and reshape policy.⁷ In theory these bureaucrats are directly accountable to the elected leadership and to supervisors for school operations and student outcomes and are often tasked with evaluating the performance of other agencies (U.S Department of Education, SEAs, and district superintendents). Further, all three levels of leadership engage in goal-setting, monitoring, finance, curriculum, and teacher training and can therefore have substantial influence on what happens in classrooms.

For several reasons, the most significant of these levels may well be the state. First, governance at the federal level is limited. The federal government ultimately possesses no constitutional authority to intervene in the public school systems, aside from its responsibility to enforce the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment. Through it its funding efforts, targeted at particular subpopulations — minority, migrant, economically disadvantaged, bilingual, English as a second language (ESL), and special needs students — the federal government has translated a small percentage of overall spending on education (approximately 10 percent in a given years) into policies that affect all students and teachers. So federal influence may vary based on the size of these populations, but in general, federal education governance is going to vary in time and with the willingness of states. The impact of the federal governance is moderated heavily by state institutions, processes, and policies.

Second, governance at the local level is also heavily dependent on the institutional environment and policy framework created by the states. Even though localities have been granted considerable discretion throughout history, few state constitutions provide protection against state interference.⁸ If local governance is the predominant means of making

⁷These acronyms are defined at the beginning of the chapter on page 58.

⁸Colorado constitutes a notable exception in which the state's constitution explicitly limits its ability to impose educational mandates of any sort on local districts. For example, the state cannot legally establish
school policy, then it is because the state in which that district is located, allows it. When local districts have high levels of capacity, the development of infrastructure and expertise has likely been highly subsidized by the states. Finally, the bulk of policy-innovation occurs at the state level, and this is therefore the level at which there is likely to be the most variance in education governance (Stone et al., 2001; Viteritti, 2005).

3.3 Dimensions of De/Centralization

In this complex, fragmented system of school governance, it is no wonder that scholars have focused their attention on particular policies and on the national stage of school politics. With thousands of local governments operating in 50 different state environments, each simultaneously making policy, finding a conceptually and empirically valid strategy for investigating school governance poses a challenge even once the relevant institutions, processes, and policies have been identified. What about these components is significant for shaping policy outcomes? There is a body of work that offers a promising framework.

For several decades now, economists, political scientists, and development scholars writing on the topic of fiscal federalism have debated the most fundamental questions of governance in a multi-level system: When should policy-making authority rest with the central government as opposed to the local government? When should it be shared? What allocation of policymaking authority among the many governments in a federal system will optimally maximize efficiency, equity, and democratic engagement in the provision of public and semi-public goods? These questions have persisted for nearly half a century, not only because they are basic and consequential for policy outcomes and societal well-being, but also because they are challenging to answer; there is no one best solution that applies across national contexts (Dafflon, 2006; Eaton et al., 2010).

high school graduation requirements.

At the core of this body of work is a particular conceptual dimension of governance: de/centralization. In other words, the degree to which authority is widely dispersed among a broad number of institutions and actors who are close to the action on the ground, versus being concentrated in the top governmental authority amongst an elite few. The denser the policy environment, the less latitude exists for those at the bottom, the more centralized the system. Decentralization or centralization are used interchangeably in this literature to describe both process and condition, a byproduct of the early normative bent of the literature (Lauglo, 1995). I strive to be explicit here about when I am referring to the process of decentralization as opposed to the state of being decentralized, and vice versa. But most important is the understanding that there is a continuum between centralized and decentralized governance, and that states (and countries) may move back and forth along this continuum.

Scholarship on the process of decentralization and its different types is particularly plentiful and dominates the discussion below, given that decentralizing reforms have dominated scholarly attention and the attention of international development agencies for the last several decades (e.g. Conyers, 1983; Litvack et al., 1998; Bird and Vaillancourt, 2008). This focus is likely because of the many potential benefits of decentralized governance and a growing consensus that centralized government is not flexible enough to meet the complex needs of a modern society. The classical theory of fiscal federalism suggests that decentralizing governance can facilitate the more efficient provision of public goods, democratic decisionmaking, limited governmental intervention, and increased mobilization of economic resources as a result of inter-jurisdictional competition, lowered information costs, and better opportunities for electoral accountability (Hayek, 1948; Tiebout, 1956; Oates, 1972; Brennan and Buchanan, 1980; Bardhan, 2002; Wibbels, 2006).

But how are these benefits achieved, and what of centralization? Though work describing the process of centralization is not plentiful, a great deal can be inferred about what a centralized system might look like by examining the process of decentralization. Lauglo (1995, p. 6) for example, responding to this literature, offers a description of what centralized governance could look like in an educational context:

Centralised authority means concentrating in a central or top authority decision making on a wide range of matters, leaving only tightly programmed implementation to lower levels in the organisation. Thus, with regard to education, a ministry could make decisions in considerable detail as to aims and objectives, the structure and localisation of provision, curricula and teaching materials to be used, prescribed methods, appointments of staff and their job descriptions, admission of students, assessment and certification, finance and budgets and inspections/evaluations to monitor performance.

However, defining governance (institutions, processes, and substantive policy) and considering the components of governance in terms of how centralized and decentralized they are (how many different levels of institutions, leaders, processes, and policies there are, which are closer to the people and which have the final say in policy-making) does not provide sufficient guidance to conceptualize and measure changes in school governance. Lauglo's description includes institutions, processes, and policies, but is little more than a laundry list. He points to several potential indicators and an up-down continuum of authority but this does not help to organize an analysis of the many moving parts in the American system of school governance. A little more conceptual precision helps to identify the most salient measures.

Development scholarship offers some useful guidance for understanding the various ways in which school governance might be centralized or decentralized and points to mechanisms by which the various benefits of decentralization can be realized (Ebel and Yilmaz, 2002; Schneider, 2003; Eaton et al., 2010). In particular, this work identifies several different conceptual dimensions along which a government might decentralize, where decentralization implies a "transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to intermediate and local governments or quasi-independent government organizations and/or the private sector."⁹ This definition suggests several broad types of decentralization processes — or several different ways in which a system might be decentralized: political, fiscal, administrative, and market. It follows, that centralization would imply the transfer of authority and responsibility along these dimensions from local governments, agencies, or the private sector to the central government.

These types of decentralization help to provide an organizational framework for thinking about the institutions, processes, and policy substance that comprise school governance. Specific systems will likely manifest elements from more than one dimension of decentralization, nonetheless these conceptual domains serve as useful heuristics for identifying important aspects of governance, for operationalizing change, for considering the mechanisms by which decentralized governance might produce more efficient outcomes. These dimensions or types of decentralization also suggest how the many hypothesized benefits of decentralization might be realized.¹⁰

In what follows, I discuss each type, or dimension, of decentralization and focus on its potential benefits. For each, I briefly note the ways in which United States school governance might be broadly classified on that rubric.¹¹ Once these types and their potential benefits are sufficiently detailed, I turn back to the economic literature to clarify the conditions likely

¹¹The in depth discussion of state-level measures and variance is reserved for Chapter 4.

⁹See http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/what.htm and Ahmad and Brosio (2006, pp. 1-29).

¹⁰Through the years, scholars associated with the World Bank have defined these different types of decentralization in slightly variant terms. For example, Bird and Vaillancourt (2008) identifies deconcentration as a type of fiscal decentralization, while the World Bank website and (Prud'homme, 1995, p. 2) identify deconcentration as a type of administrative decentralization. I follow Schneider (2003), but do not view this as having any great consequences for the discussion below. As I mention, these typologies are heuristics. In fact, a great deal of academic work in fiscal federalism ignores the typologies employed by development scholars and practitioners - either because it is focused on proving a formal theory in which only one or two elements of a system can vary, or because it is focused on a particular empirical case and a particular set of reforms that fall readily under one domain or another. Inman and Rubinfeld (1997) does adopt a similar framework. Other literatures tackle similar questions, but utilize different terminology. See Hooghe and Marks (2003) for a discussion of these other approaches. Because I am interested in describing the full scope of change in states' school governance, I find these typologies to be more useful than the formal specifications. Schneider (2003) estimates a series of factor analyses and finds support for this typology.

to moderate the impacts of decentralization.

3.3.1 Political Representation and Accountability

Political decentralization means granting authority either to citizens or to elected representatives at lower levels of government. A politically decentralized mode of governance therefore is one that places at least some of the power of public decision-making in the hands of localities, allowing them to elect their own leaders and implement their own programs, while a politically centralized governance arrangement endows fewer institutions, possibly just a single elected body with decision-making authority. Number of governments and elected representatives are therefore potential measures.

Achieving this particular kind of decentralization often requires the adoption of major constitutional or statutory changes to formal institutions and policy-making processes and is often possible only when a country is at a point of transition and is re-writing its foundational documents (King 1984, p. 79, cf Dafflon 2006, p. 273). Regardless of whether one is pursuing a more or less decentralized system, explicitly altering these institutional features of governance is perhaps the most difficult type of de/centralization, though it may or may not be the most substantial in terms of reallocating power. The dramatic decline in the number of school districts at the behest of state governments during the first half of the 20th century is remarkable from this standpoint.

In theory, decentralized political governance promises a slew of potential benefits. By bringing decision-making closer to the citizenry, it could encourage increased participation and engagement, thus rendering policy-making both more democratic and more efficient. Allocative efficiency may increase as the public goods provided should better match the expressed preferences of residents (Tiebout, 1956; Oates, 1972). Information costs are reduced, and policy-makers are better able to access and utilize the local knowledge of citizens. Also, since citizens are closer to and can more easily monitor local leaders, decentralized political



Figure 3.1: Percent of United States School Boards with Elected Leadership: 1972-2010

Data Source: ELSEGIS, 1972-1985; NSBA, 2002 and 2010; ECS, 2004.

governance promises to improve the electoral accountability of leadership and to reduce the likelihood of corruption or rent-seeking behavior (Buchanan et al., 1980; Seabright, 1996; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000; Khemani, 2001; Persson and Tabellini, 2002; Lockwood, 2006; Shah, 2006).

An extreme version of political decentralization, thought to magnify many of these benefits are mono-functional jurisdictions in which elected leaders are responsible for making decisions about and delivering only one particular service or subset of services. This facilitates the drawing of jurisdictional boundaries based solely on the likely spatial impact of the particular policy, narrows the scope of a leaders' job, and renders more clearly to voters who is responsible for particular policy outcomes — as opposed to forcing voters to evaluate elected officials based on the full array of policies (Olson, 1969; Eichenberger and Frey, 2006). As I have noted earlier, in these political terms, school governance in the United States can be considered decentralized on the whole, particularly in comparison to other countries, though certainly not relative to its pre-1950 incarnation.¹² Not only are there 50 different states containing more than 14,000 school districts throughout the country, most of which are mono-functional jurisdictions, but over 90 percent of the school boards that govern them include only independently elected members. The remaining boards are composed either entirely of appointed members or of some mix of appointed and elected representatives. This breakdown has remained fairly constant for the last 35 years, as can be seen in Figure 3.1.¹³ The National School Board Association (NSBA) reports that there are over 90,000 individual school board members. Election processes for these individuals are also historically decentralized in much of the country. Many local districts either set the date of their own elections, or school board elections take place on a different date from general elections. There is little state or federal monitoring of candidacies or turnout in school board elections.

In light of these national parameters, it is no wonder that the ideal of local control remains so persistent in the study of school governance. Though many facets of school governance may be changing, this particular institutional element appears to have been quite stable from 1970 onward.¹⁴ There are a lot of governments whose entire focus remains public education. School board elections and representatives constitute the modal elections and elected leaders in the United States, respectively. And actually disbanding a school board and divesting citizens of their democratically elected leaders has proven to be contentious and rare, though

 $^{^{12}}$ See Carnoy et al. (2007) for a discussion of the relative degree of centralized school governance.

¹³The data sources noted in this paragraph and for this figure include the Elementary and Secondary Education General Information Survey of local school districts, 1972-1985, available from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (www.icpsr.umich.edu); representative surveys conducted by Hess (2002) and Hess and Meeks (2010) for the National School Board Association (www.nsba.org); and the Education Commission of the States, 2004, www.ecs.org. Numbers are interpolated on the figure for the missing years 1986-2001 and 2003-2009. The U.S ED survey that replaced the ELSEGIS ceased to include questions about school board election processes. Though the period between 1986 and 2001 represents a significant period of time to be interpolating an indicator, the apparent lack of change in the percentage of school boards selected through electoral processes is reassuring.

¹⁴This was noted in Figure 2.6.

it has occurred in some high profile, large urban districts. In 2009, Governor Jim Doyle of Wisconsin attempted to replace the Milwaukee Board of School Directors with mayoral control and met with fierce resistance from local leaders, including the NAACP. A similar plan, which preserved the Washington D.C. school board as an advisory body in the Mayor's office was enacted in 2007 but remains a topic of fierce debate and is regarded as a potential explanation for Mayor Adrien Fenty being voted out of office in the Democratic primary in 2010. The dissolution of school boards in favor of more centralized mayoral control has been turned back and reversed in several cities (Henig and Rich, 2004).

All of these political indicators of decentralization, size and number of districts, elected versus appointed leadership, separate versus integrated elections, vary substantially based on the state's particular constitutional and political history.

3.3.2 Fiscal Authority

The existence of multiple elected representatives and political bodies is not, however, particularly meaningful without the commensurate ability to make important policy decisions. In particular, if local leaders are to be influential, and if accountability is to be meaningful, local institutions must be empowered to spend and tax Schneider (2003). Fiscal decentralization involves the transfer of expenditure and revenue responsibility for a public service to a lower level government or agency. Decentralized expenditure authority facilitates the tailoring of service-delivery to particular communities and might simply involve granting to local agencies greater discretion with centrally provided funds. Or decentralized expenditure authority might be combined with decentralized revenue authority. The central government might transfer responsibility for pulling in revenue to the local government, or the central and local governments might attempt to strike a balance between central transfers and local revenues.

Local revenue responsibility in particular lies at the core of economic arguments in favor of

decentralizing reforms. The benefits of fiscal decentralization of revenue authority stem from a variety of mechanisms, each of which are in theory most likely to produce better societal outcomes when electoral accountability is also present. Fiscal decentralization of revenue authority places lower-level governments in horizontal competition with one another. This competition manifests in several ways. First, individual residents can, in theory, relocate to jurisdictions where the bundle of public goods provided to them is optimal, meaning that localities are in competition for residents. This is known as Tiebout sorting or 'voting with one's feet. It may be particularly beneficial in heterogeneous countries and is thought to have a stabilizing effect in new polities, helping to diffuse tensions between groups with divergent traditions by allowing localities the autonomy to differentiate.

Second, localities engage in horizontal competition for mobile sources of tax revenue: businesses seeking the best combination of infrastructure, a competent workforce, and the minimal necessary tax-burden. This combination of competitive incentives should induce leaders to provide the best set of services at the lowest cost possible. Some empirical work has suggested that fiscally independent localities do in fact provide public services at lower cost than central governments (Campbell et al., 1991).

Yet, competition is not the sole factor driving efficiency gains from decentralized funding systems. Ultimately, the independent authority to raise revenues, the necessity of working with a limited set of resources (as opposed to having access to a central government's common resources), the subsequent recognition that there is a direct relationship between goods provided and revenues gathered (a perception that might dissipate in the case of transfers from a central government), and the potential for suffering the consequences of mismanagement are powerful incentives that motivate more efficient management of public resources and restraint in public spending (see Oates 1972). These expectations regarding better matching and more efficient provision of public goods underly a number of major reforms to social policy in the United States over the last several decades (Soss et al., 2001).

Reassignment of funding responsibilities, whether up or down, may represent a more attainable reform strategy than altering political structures. For example, a central government could grant a local government or agency the authority to raise revenues for a specific service or subset of services more readily than it might create new agencies. Likewise, it might be more straightforward for a central government to consolidate control over finance rather than altering the extant institutional structure (i.e. dissolving a local jurisdiction and dismissing its elected leadership). A central government might assert itself by imposing constraints on local fundraising authority, by regulating expenditures, or by assuming a larger portion of the responsibility for funding.

In United States school governance, fiscal centralization seems to have accompanied political centralization in the early part of the century. But while the American system remains obviously politically decentralized, the story is much less clear in fiscal terms. State control is more evident with regard to finance. Both revenue and expenditure authority are shared. States are responsible for nearly 50 percent of revenues in most years and have promulgated both categorial programs that guide the nature of local spending and revenue limits that constrain local districts' ability to increase tax rates (Figlio, 1997). In 2008, 49 states allocated funding through categorical programs, though some only reported a few while others reported more than 50, and 21 states limited local property tax rates (Hightower et al., 2010). However, on some metrics, fiscal authority has remained fairly steady since 1970. Both the percentage of districts that might be classified as fiscally independent from state and local governments, and the percentage of education revenues for which localities are responsible have exhibited little change in the last few decades.¹⁵

¹⁵Again, see Chapter 2, Figures 2.4 and 2.5

3.3.3 Administrative Autonomy

Political and fiscal decentralization can also be intertwined with or subsumed under a third type of decentralizing process. Administrative decentralization involves transferring responsibility for providing a public service to a lower level government or agency but reserves constitutional authority for major policy-making with a higher-level institution (Rondinelli et al., 1984). If political decentralization is fundamentally about expanding the pool of participants involved in policy-making, then administrative decentralization is fundamentally about expanding the scope of decisions made by lower level authorities (and vice versa for centralizing processes working in the opposite direction). In essence, administrative decentralization seeks to reap the potential efficiencies of localized decision-making — greater information about local circumstances and better tailoring of a service to a particular community — without granting full legal autonomy to local governments. In an administratively decentralized system, therefore, there should exist a clear hierarchy in intergovernmental relationships and a bounded degree of local autonomy. In a hierarchical system, decentralizing governance might also facilitate more equitable distribution of resources by institutionalizing advocates for potentially marginalized populations (Bird, 1994).¹⁶

Unless combined with political decentralization, administrative decentralization replaces (instead of supplements) electoral accountability with intergovernmental accountability. In its weakest iteration, referred to as *deconcentration*, local offices of a central agency are simply mandated to implement a centrally determined policy and are essentially bureaucratic extensions of the central government. A stronger version of administrative decentralization termed *delegation* grants some discretion to localities to facilitate the adaptation of centrally determined policy. The mandate in deconcentration is replaced with an intergovernmental

¹⁶Rural and urban school districts for example are likely to have different interests, but their elected representatives and superintendents are positioned to to advocate at the state level on their behalf. Similarly, in Chapter 2, I reported that the creation of state-level leadership positions to govern schools had the effect of advancing the development of public school systems by institutionalizing advocates for education.

contractual relationship. The local agency remains semi-autonomous - distinct from, but accountable to the central government or delegating agency. The strongest version would transfer the management and often fiscal responsibility of a particular public service from the central government to a lower level government. The process of granting substantial autonomy to lower levels of government (and therefore to a larger number of leaders) is known as *devolution* (Schneider 2003, p. 38; Bird and Vaillancourt 2008).¹⁷

The United States system of school governance certainly exhibits features of an administratively decentralized system. These are likely to be most evident in state-local relationships. There is not a constitutionally-determined hierarchy between the states and the federal government (in educational matters), but fiscal transfers have established at least a limited one. Traditional state-level electoral accountability is now supplemented by reporting requirements to the federal government. At the state level, given constitutional authority over school systems, school governance has been administratively decentralized for most of American history, but as I discussed in Chapter 2, many argue that the hierarchical nature of the relationship between states and localities has only recently become apparent as have states have engaged more actively in regulating curricular content, teacher certification, and so forth. It is this hierarchical relationship between assertive states and localities with limited autonomy, that lies at the core of controversies over state authority.

In combination, limits on local taxation, categorical aid, state standards, teacher certification requirements, and more, alter the functional, if not the technical legal, nature of the relationship between states and localities. At the very least, new policies have thrown into stark relief the subordinate nature of local districts, placed more obvious constraints on the range of matters that local leaders can consider, and called into question whether or not the

¹⁷Neither administrative decentralization or political decentralization can be truly maximized absent one another. Devolution is not likely to occur without the existence of elected leaders. Conversely, locally electoral accountability will not be particularly meaningful if representative do not have sufficient autonomy to make important policy decisions. Viewing these concepts separately, however, is nonetheless useful in order to distinguish between the potential benefits that may arise from representation as opposed to autonomy.

United States system of school governance is truly decentralized. Other recent legislation, in which states spell out conditions and procedures for the takeover of schools and districts reinforce further the hierarchical, and perhaps more frequently coercive, relationship between states and local districts.

When considered in this light, it seems that, more than shifting from a decentralized to a centralized system of governance, United States may have simply moved towards a different kind of decentralized system. Local level governments are plentiful, but no longer as autonomous as they once were, and local-level electoral accountability is now supplemented by stronger oversight from the state.

3.3.4 Market Mechanisms and Privatization

Each of the three types of decentralization discussed above are types of intergovernmental decentralization; they involve shifting authority between levels of government. There is another type of decentralization process, one frequently employed by states and localities across multiple policy arenas: market decentralization. Market decentralization means relinquishing exclusive governmental control of a service: privatizing its provision through a public-private partnership; contracting with a private, non-profit, or voluntary organization to provide a service; or deregulating the service to allow for private participation and competition in service provision. Market decentralization extends the arguments of intergovernmental decentralization, or perhaps represents their purest articulation. Competition, managerial flexibility, and the ability of the public to quickly and immediately reward or punish providers, in combination with oversight from (accountability to) a governmental authority should mitigate towards greater allocative efficiency and better served "clients" or citizens (Bennett, 1990).

Because it attempts to achieve more efficient provision of a public service by removing that service from the public sector, some analysts leave market decentralization out of decentralization typologies and focus only on reforms that explicitly restructure government (e.g. Schneider 2003). But this family of reforms is simply another type of process through which we attempt to improve social welfare by redefining who is in charge of how policies are made and services delivered. Ultimate responsibility still rests with public leaders to monitor these partnerships, but, in theory, market mechanisms should improve the quality of information with which they make decisions about public resources. At the extreme, market decentralization may eventually challenge the legitimacy of a public function, but as this promises to reshape governance, such processes must therefore be included as a component of this study.

This rationale has clearly influenced education policy innovations in recent decades. Since the late 1980s, vouchers, magnet schools, charter schools, and open enrollment policies have introduced public-private partnerships, the outsourcing of public schools to non-profit and for-profit entities, the deregulation of public schooling, and competition between local schools and local districts as mechanisms for improving student outcomes or for promoting efficiency in spending (See Friedman 1955; Levin et al. 1990; Chubb and Moe 1990; Witte 2001; Howell et al. 2006; Levin 2004; Berends 2009). Each of these initiatives is enabled or not in state statutes and can contain provisions that work through or around local districts. Districts are thus granted some flexibility in implementation of open-enrollment or charter schools, or the local board's authority may be circumvented. Some states have enacted all of these policies; others have enacted none. At least two major federal initiatives have supported choice: open enrollment policies in the event of an assigned public school performing poorly and charter schools — the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 and the Race to the Top grant competition of 2009, respectively.

According to a recent report, the percentage of school-age children attending their assigned public schools declined between 1993 and 2007 from 79.9 to 73.2, while the percent of students attending public choice schools (charters or regular publics via open enrollment) increased from 11.0 to 15.5 (Planty et al., 2009).¹⁸ Given that a small proportion of students are participating government-supported school choice programs, the United States system may not be highly decentralized along this dimension, but this is clearly a facet of school governance that is currently in flux.

Vouchers and tax-credits hold forth the promise of obtaining an equal or better (individuallevel) educational outcome at a lowered cost. To the extent that the public tax burden for K-12 education has more than doubled in real dollars since the 1980s, the appeal of some market reforms is not surprising.¹⁹ This increase is present when one considers total revenues or average per-student revenues, displayed in Figure 3.2.²⁰ However, not all school-choice reforms have, as their expressed goal, increased efficiency in the form of lowering costs per student. Open-enrollment policies and charter schools, for example, do not necessarily lower the cost of public education, though they can be adapted in that direction, but they do (in theory) break the monopoly of neighborhood public schools by forcing them to compete for

¹⁸The percentage of school-age children attending a private school also increased from 9.1 to 11.3. This report and others like it can be accessed at the website of the National Center for Education Statistics: http://nces.ed.gov/.

¹⁹The steady increase in spending per pupil, in combination with the fact that the United States ranked first among OECD countries for K-12 education spending as a percent of GDP in 2005 has led many to express concern over inefficiencies in the public school system. But a significant portion of these increases can be explained by greater inclusion of once-neglected populations (special needs, English language learners, etc.), auxiliary services, and increased expectation - and success - among pupils (Springer et al., 2008).

 $^{^{20}}$ Total United States revenues for education are displayed in Figure A.1. Data for both Figures 3.2 and A.1 are obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics. For school years starting in the fall of 1970-85, revenue and enrollment estimates are obtained from annual reports entitled Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education. These reports are available in pdf format from the Education Resources Information Center, housed within the United States Department of Education at www.eric.ed.gov. For school years starting in the fall of 1986-2008, revenue and enrollment estimates are obtained from the Common Core of Data. These data can be queried and downloaded at nces.ed.gov/ccd. Both sets of data were reported to the federal government by the states. Because revenue and enrollment numbers for the state of VA during the 1986 and 1987 school years are missing from the Common Core. these are obtained from an NCES table reporting public education revenues between 1970 and 2006 - that draws on the same datasets. The explanation for the discrepancy between the data and the tables is unclear, but the trends for VA and the United States are unaffected. There are also two significant shifts in data collection that slightly affect the trend. Starting in the 1980 school year, state education agency revenues are excluded from the NCES estimate of total revenues. Beginning in 1988 school year, data collection procedures changed slightly as well - though all number reflect as near as possible information from the full universe of public school revenues, not a sample.



Figure 3.2: Average Per Student Education Revenues: 1970-2008

Data Sources: National Center for Education Statistics Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education, 1970-85 and Common Core of Data, 1986-2008. See also Figure A.1.

students, and the public money that follows the student. These policies, though they employ market mechanisms, can have very public objectives in that holding costs down is not be the number one concern (see Wilson 1989; Peters and Pierre 2003, p. 6). The objectives are instead to spur innovation and drive up quality.

3.4 Realizing the Benefits of Decentralization

To reiterate the previous section, decentralized governance, whether it be political, fiscal, administrative, or market in nature can lead to the more efficient provision of public goods (lowered costs per unit), higher quality outcomes, democratic decision-making, limited governmental intervention, and increased mobilization of resources as a result of competition, lowered information costs, and better opportunities for electoral and intergovernmental accountability. In short, social welfare is more likely to be maximized in a decentralized system. This does not mean that such benefits always manifest or that decentralization is always an appropriate strategy for reform.²¹ Prud'homme (1995, p. 1) writes that "decentralization measures are like some potent medicines: they must be taken at the right time, in the right dose, and for the right illness to have the desired salutary effect."

We need only consider the market reforms that have swept education to illustrate that the positive benefits of decentralization are not universal. The efficacy of voucher programs and charter schools is far from apparent. At best, voucher schools produce similar student achievement outcomes to public schools at a slightly lower cost, though it is far from clear that this would hold were such programs expanded (Howell et al., 2006; Witte et al., 2012). Similarly, most evaluations of charter schools produce mixed findings. Some charters produce worse, some produce similar, and some produce slightly better student outcomes compared to those of traditional public schools (Gleason et al., 2010; Witte et al., 2012).²²

There is a strong consensus among both positivist scholars and development practitioners that modern governance must be flexible and decentralized in some fashion, but it has become increasingly clear over the last fifteen years that there are specific circumstances under which these benefits can be realized. In short, the efficacy of decentralization is moderated by a variety of political, societal, and economic factors (e.g. Bird 1994; Prud'homme 1995; Dixit and Londregan 1998; Wibbels 2005, 2006; Bird and Vaillancourt 2008; Fan et al. 2009). In practice, the degree to which a particular system is or can be decentralized is contingent on

 $^{^{21}}$ Nor does this provide guidance when these various objectives - efficiency, quality, participation, etc - are at odds with one another, and we must choose which to maximize.

²²One might argue that neither voucher programs nor charter schools have been maximally implemented. The few voucher programs that have been adopted are typically small and targeted at specific populations of students. In the case of charter schools, the accountability that was supposed to follow innovation has failed to manifest. Critics of successful charter school evaluations argue that models are not replicable in the wider public school system and point to large amounts of private donations to successful charters. The mixed outcomes of both of these reforms simply reinforce the arguments discussed below, which are that the benefits of decentralized governance can be realized only under particular circumstances.

its own idiosyncratic history and geography.

Indeed, though the originators of fiscal federalist scholarship certainly had normative ends, and may have overestimated the benevolence (and underestimated the self-interest) of public officials, they only demonstrated that decentralization would be effective for specific kinds public goods in which spillover between districts, either in positive or negative terms, would be minimal, and they emphasized the need for an active central government in some arenas (Tiebout, 1956; Musgrave, 1959; Arrow et al., 1970). The literature as a whole has also tended to focus on issues of efficiency and to neglect equity concerns.²³ In what follows, I flesh out some of the circumstances under which decentralized governance is likely to maximize social welfare, including the nature of the public goods provided in such a fashion. I discuss the relationship between equity and decentralized governance. When these insights are applied to the context of United States school governance, a concerning picture emerges.

3.4.1 Spillovers and Decentralized Governance

The early scholars of fiscal federalism did not advocate for and would not have supported decentralization across all types of public function regardless of historical context. The conventional wisdom that redistributive policies, macroeconomic stabilization policies, and programs for which geography wasn't significant might better be centralized started early (Oates, 1972). Instead, policies should be assigned to different levels based on Olson's (1969) equivalence principle: the geographic impact of the policy should coincide with the boundaries of the jurisdiction tasked with funding and providing a particular public good. In theory, therefore, specific governments should be formed to match the geography of each public good, but this is impractical. Forming and maintaining governments is not a costless endeavor (Donahue, 1997).

 $^{^{23}}$ For example, in the 2006 Handbook of Fiscal Federalism (Ahmad and Brosio, 2006), efficiency is referenced 46 times. Inequality is referenced four times throughout the more than 500 pages of the volume.

K-12 schooling does not constitute a public good in the traditional sense that it is nonrivalrous and non-excludable.²⁴ There are ways in which education is both rivalrous and excludable; private benefits are substantial. However, schools also produce a series of valuable public goods in the form of shared civic culture, improved health, reduced crime, and a more productive tax base, among others (Levin, 1987). In short, the government has a compelling interest in establishing and maintaining public schools.²⁵ As I have described above, the governance of public schools typically occurs in small geographic areas, which may or may not coincide with the boundaries of other local governments and which often operate independently from other local governments. School governance in the United States comes close to the ideal of a specific government for a particular public objective targeted at a narrow geographic jurisdiction. In the sense that parents with means will pay a premium to locate their children in a good public school district, there is even evidence that sorting occurs and that some communities use these premiums as a means of maintaining optimal size (Kane et al., 2005).

Yet, in order for this decentralized model to outperform a more centralized one over the long term, there should be minimal spill-over effects between school districts. They should neither reap the benefits nor pay the consequences of performance in other jurisdictions. The many societal benefits of education and the potential costs of constrained access to good education are well documented (Haveman and Wolfe, 1984; Hanushek et al., 2002; Lochner and Moretti, 2004).²⁶ The poorly educated are likely to draw more heavily on social services, more likely to suffer health problems, and more likely to end up in jail where states and the federal government are likely to foot the bill.

 $^{^{24}}$ Samuelson formally, and now famously, defined the nature of public goods as those that are both nonexcludable and non-rivalrous in the sense that "each individual's consumption of such a good leads to no subtraction from any other individual's consumption of that good" (387, 1954; see also Samuelson, 1955).

 $^{^{25}\}mathrm{See}$ also the work mentioned in Chapter 1.

 $^{^{26}}$ See also Brewer and McEwan (2010) for a comprehensive volume discussing the private and social benefits of education.

Percent of Population	1980	1990	2000	2010
Living in State of Birth	63.9	61.8	60.0	58.8
Living in Other State	28.9	29.0	27.7	27.0
Foreign Born (or Puerto Rico)	7.2	9.3	12.3	12.9
N (millions)	226	248	281	309

Table 3.1: Residential Mobility between States: 1980-2010

Data Source: United States Decennial Census (1980-2000) and American Community Survey (2010)

Also, Given the inter- and intra- state mobility of the American population, this particular argument in favor of decentralized governance seems unlikely to hold. Twenty-seven percent of the United States population lives in state other than that in which they were born.²⁷ Were such data available, it is highly likely that an even smaller percentage of the population would remain through adulthood in the same school district they attended as children. Decentralized governance of schools might still be appropriate, in that preference matching shouldn't be worse, but the advantage provided by equivalence can no longer be claimed. Spill-over effects justify compensatory grants or equalization aid from central governments but compromise other benefits of decentralized governance. Decentralized taxation does mitigate towards smaller government, but subsidies provided to local governments by central governments steer spending in the opposite direction (Rodden, 2002).

3.4.2 Policy Uniformity and Preference Heterogeneity

One of the most important advances of recent, positivist work in the field of fiscal federalism has been to make explicit the assumptions that underlie arguments in favor of decentralized governance (Wibbels, 2006). When these assumptions do not hold, the various mechanisms of political, fiscal, administrative and market decentralization will not function adequately. One major assumption imposed in most models that estimate the tradeoff between centralized

²⁷See Table 3.1.

and decentralized authority is that policies made by central government cannot vary.

The efficacy of the Tiebout model — or rather the dramatic gains that stand to be attained through decentralized governance — hinge in part on two factors: first that community preferences for education are heterogeneous and second that more centralized systems are incapable of producing non-uniform policies.

Indeed, while different communities may have varying visions of how instruction should occur, and while highly politicized issues like evolution or sex-education occasionally become the subject of intense controversy, it is difficult to imagine that there are any communities in which providing a high quality education would be eschewed. The consistent public willingness to support increased educational expenditures suggests as much. As I noted in Chapter 2, K-12 public education looks remarkably similar across the country given the multitude of governmental authorities (Urban and Wagoner, 2009).²⁸ When such coherence exists, Bardhan (2002, p. 190) notes that centralized governance can often better exploit economies of scale

in the construction of overhead facilities [and that] in primary education, while the local government may run the day-to-day functioning of schools, the uppertier government can have the economies of scale in designing curricula and prescribing and enforcing minimum quality standards.

Further, many federal and state educational policies display considerable latitude, adjusting requirements for smaller jurisdictions and institutionalizing waiver procedures, suggesting that higher level governments are not bound to make one-size-fits-all policies (Dafflon, 2006, p. 282).

²⁸See also the Common Core State Standards Initiatives (www.corestandards.org). As of the spring of 2012, all but five states had voluntarily come together to write and adopt a set of educational objectives in core subjects like math, reading, and science that will by applied and adapted across the country. The project suggests a remarkable coherence in goals and vision. Not only does it support the relative homogeneity of preference I mention here, it also buttresses the notion described above, that there are substantial spillover effects - and that these are recognized by states. It is also suggests of inter-state yardstick competition, mentioned briefly below (Besley and Case, 1995).

3.4.3 Mobility, Information, and Accountability

At the micro-level of individual and organizational decision-making, both people and firms must manifest two important characteristics in order for electoral accountability and allocative efficiency to be maximized. They must be *both* informed and mobile.²⁹ If citizens are not fully informed, then they will not be able to hold elected leaders accountable for policy outcomes, or to make decisions about where to locate. If local leaders do not actually possess better information about the preferences and needs of their communities and the technical expertise to implement programs or if their chief objectives are not improved social welfare, then the policies they make and services they provide will not necessarily be a better match than those provided by a central government. And if either individuals or firms are not highly mobile, they will not be able to respond productively to the differential bundles of goods and services provided and inter-jurisdictional competition may not manifest.

These assumptions often prove much too stringent, and the consequences can be substantial (Bardhan, 2002, pp. 187-8). When mobility and information assumptions are violated, the benefits of decentralized versus centralized governance do not simply shift to zero. When information is lacking, local accountability is weak, and mobility is low, decentralized governance may be more subject to capture by interest groups, will produce little in the way of incentives towards innovative policy-making, and corruption may become more likely as a result of the low-visibility of leadership.

The mobility assumption in particular falls apart rather quickly in United States K-12 education. A substantial literature demonstrates that school quality has a significant effect on housing prices and on the locational decisions made by families (Weimer and Wolkoff, 2001). But the families empowered to make these choices constitute a fairly narrow set.

²⁹This kind of mobility is distinct from the spillovers discussed above. Spillovers can result from the mobility of individuals, but the kind of individual mobility necessary in order for Tiebout sorting to be effect, assumes, in fact, that there are few spillovers. Citizens and firms *must* move in order to reap the benefits or avoid the costs of living in a particular jurisdiction.

Moving is costly, and those without resources remain more or less unable to take advantages of the potential benefits of switching school districts Bayer et al. (2004). Racial and economic residential segregation remains high in the United States, suggesting further that mobility is limited for specific groups (Wilson, 1990; Iceland et al., 2002). These limits on mobility likely have an impact on the quality of schooling students receive, if for no other reason than student peers have significant effects on one anothers' outcomes (Rivkin, 2001).

If mobility is limited to a subset of the population for whom high premiums are not a deterrent and who are in search of high quality public schools, then inter-jurisdictional competition may not mitigate towards more efficient provision of goods. Instead, jurisdictions might engage in *yardstick competition*, attempting to keep pace with one another and driving up public spending, and discrepancies between districts that cannot afford to compete.³⁰ Besley and Case (1995) show that yardstick competition between districts can improve voter welfare by providing voters in districts with referents, but this requires voters to be informed about the behavior of leaders in their own district and in surrounding districts.

The information environment with regard to education has been poor. Until the accountability movement, citizens had little in the way of standardized metrics on which to compare schools to one another, and over the past 30 years, Americans have been consistently uncritical of their local school systems. Approximately 50 percent of the public would assign local school systems a grade of A or B. Over 80 percent would assign their local schools a grade of A, B, or C.³¹ These numbers rise when narrowed to represent just parents of children in the public schools and contract when the public is asked to grade the performance of the nation's schools as a whole, about which they are more critical.

The impetus for locally elected leaders to create innovative policy is therefore minimal. This fact is reflected in both electoral participation and turnover rates for school board

 $^{^{30}}$ Baicker (2005) finds that increased spending in one state drives up spending in neighboring states. States engage in competition with one another and not necessarily the kind that keeps costs down.

³¹See Figure 3.3 below and Table B.



Figure 3.3: Perception of Local and National Public Schools: 1981-2011

Data Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Towards the Public Schools, 1981-2011. See Appendix B.

members, which strongly suggest that local-level accountability for school leaders is broken and has been for a long period of time. In 1974, after a comprehensive survey of local governance, Zeigler et al. (1974) found that turnout rates were low and that school board members often ran unopposed. In 43 percent of districts surveyed, no incumbent had been voted out of office in recent memory (59). The authors concluded that the progressive reformers,

who set about to remove educational governance from the political arena, succeeded only too well. Not only has the intended result of reform been achieved, but an unintended consequence has also resulted. Board members have been effectively insulated from the voting public. (xi)

In 2002 and 2010, surveys sponsored by the National School Board Association (NSBA) reported a near identical set of findings.³² In 2002, turnout rates of 20 percent or less were common (Hess, 2002, p. 33). State school board associations also regularly report low turnout rates; in 2006, the New York State School Board Association reported a 14.6 percent turnout rate statewide.³³ In both 2002 and 2010, the NSBA surveys indicates that incumbent school board members are rarely challenged and rarely voted out when they do face an opponent. In 46.8 percent of districts, no incumbent had been voted out of office in the previous five years (Hess and Meeks, 2010).

In such circumstances, when turnout is low and the governmental institution is monofunctional, many worry that capture of policy-making institutions by narrowly focused interest groups and elites is more likely than in a centralized system where leaders may be more visible and where a single interest group is less able to influence the outcome of an election (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000). A relatively small group can sway the outcome of school board elections. Howell and Moe (2005) suggests that teachers unions in particular are likely

³²Visit www.nsba.org to download these reports.

³³Press release from October of 2010, available at the organization's website nyssba.org as of May 16th, 2012. State association reports are typically based on surveys of membership or of superintendents, as most states have not regularly collected data on school board elections.

to have disproportionate influence in local elections and cautions that their interests are not necessarily those of students' or the public. The NSBA surveys show less than 10 percent of most school board members are or have been members of a teachers union, but concerns over union influence persist. Anzia (2011) finds that districts with off-cycle school board elections (in which turnout is substantially lower) pay teachers more. The consequences of capture may be particularly problematic when patterns of participation are heavily influenced by economic inequality.

There is also reason to be concerned about the technical capacity of local leadership to make modern school policy. While board members are generally better educated than the citizens they represent, the technical demands of K-12 education have increased dramatically. Locally elected leaders may not be best equipped to make decisions about an increasingly complex task and frequently report that they do not feel they have received adequate training to fulfill their duties (Hess and Meeks, 2010). As the technical requirements of a policy require increasingly sophisticated expertise, the information asymmetry between central and local leaders regarding *how* to accomplish a specific end may shift in favor of central governments with greater resources and capacity (Bird, 1994; Bardhan, 2002).

3.4.4 Democratic Institutions and Multiple Authorities

At the macro-level, models frequently assume that there exist strong democratic institutions and a clear delineation of responsibility for policy, and that distinctions are apparent to the electorate. Accountability is also compromised when institutional factors interfere with participation or create differential patterns of participation across populations. When authority is not clearly divided between levels, governments may combine to poorly provide public services (Peterson, 1995; Volden, 2005). In essence, when there are mismatches between the level of political decentralization and administrative or fiscal autonomy, leaders will engage in credit-claiming and blame-avoidance, both of which make it less likely that the electorate will be able to hold them accountable.

I established above that accountability is very weak in local school governance. The failure of local democratic institutions to encourage turnout and competition are likely substantial components of this problem. First, most school board elections are at-large as opposed to sub-district. This was true in 1974 and in 2002, 73 percent and 56.7 percent, respectively (Zeigler et al., 1974; Hess, 2002). It is well established in the political science literature on American government that these elections suppress the descriptive representation of minority candidates (Anzia, 2011).³⁴ Recent research suggests that these representational differences translate into different policy outcomes by institutionalizing bias in school boards. Meier et al. (2005) find that at-large systems create a double bias by mitigating against the election of minorities and then by limiting their influence once in office. At-large systems mitigate against the hiring of minority administrators and teachers, who have positive influences on minority student outcomes. When these teachers are present:

Minority students are less likely to be tracked into low status classes, more likely to be assigned to advanced and gifted classes, less likely to be disproportionately disciplined, more likely to pass standardized tests, more likely to not drop out and to graduate from high school, and more likely to score higher on college board exams when they are exposed to minority teachers... The biases of election structure, therefore, are likely to reverberate through the entire education system and create additional biases in terms of gaining access to quality education. (767)

Second, most school board elections are non-partisan, which removes heuristic cues from the electoral environment and raises the costs of participation for citizens. In 2010, only 11.3 percent of superintendents reported that party affiliation was on ballots (Hess and Meeks, 2010). Third, the timing of school board elections is not predictable; voters cannot easily anticipate when elections take place. In 2010, 53 percent of elections took place at the same time as national or state elections, 20.9 percent sometimes coincided with state or national

 $^{^{34}}$ In an interesting development advocacy groups in California have begun launching legal suits against districts who elect their representatives in this fashion (Garrick, 2012).

elections, and 26.1 percent reported that elections never took place in conjunction with state and local elections (Hess, 2002). In 2002, the NSBA survey was slightly more detailed: 46.5 percent of district elections coincided with state or national elections; 34.7 percent of elections were never held on the same day as state or national elections; 34.2 percent of elections always coincided with mayoral or city council elections; and 35.7 percent never coincided with other local elections. Off-cycle elections depress turnout (Berry and Gersen, 2010).

Finally, it may be that there are simply too many governments. While it is relatively straightforward to identify the best authority structure for providing one particular public good, it is less clear how to proceed when we consider that there are multiple locally provided public goods (Dafflon, 2006, p. 282). Distinct authorities for separate goods entail significant costs to citizens attempting to monitor and participate in too many decision-making processes. Just as decentralization can reduce information costs for citizens by bringing leadership close, centralization can provide significant benefits in terms of reducing information and participation costs. Accountability will be compromised when there are too many distinct jurisdictions and too many processes for citizens to track. School boards at the local level operate parallel to municipal governments and other mono-functional authorities like water management, and in addition to state and federal authorities. There are too many elected leaders for the public to effectively monitor, even though the mono-functional nature of school board leadership was intended to render that process simple. The benefits of having leadership closer to you are diminished when there are too many leaders

Piled on top of these constraints is the conundrum presented by the shared governance between localities, states, and the federal government. Even for those who are paying attention, it is not at all clear who is responsible for which outcomes even to scholars who have paid close attention to the subject. Conley titles his 2003 study of the subject *Who's in Charge?*; Epstein subtitles his 2004 study *The Tangled Web of School Governance Policy*; and Grissom and Herrington refer to the recent evolution of school governance as a struggle for "coherence and control" (2012). Governors, legislators, state agencies, and local school boards can all claim credit for successes and avoid responsibility for policy failures in such a convoluted system.

3.4.5 Decentralization and Equity

As I stated earlier, the study of decentralization as it relates to inequality has been neglected to a substantial extent by the positive literature on fiscal federalism. There is nonetheless a broadly held notion that decentralized governance is less appropriate for redistributive policies and depresses the development of the welfare state. This commonly accepted intuition is present in multiple literatures, though it is rarely subjected to rigorous empirical analysis (Beramendi, 2007, pp. 783-4). Oates asserts that fiscal federalists have always envisioned an active roll for the central government "in establishing an equitable distribution of income (2005, p. 351).

But just as decentralization is not always likely to produce substantial benefits, neither is it always going to exacerbate inequality. As with other potential effects, the question is when and how this will manifest in particular contexts and whether not a higher level of inequality is acceptable, given the other positive outcomes that might be obtained through decentralized governance. Bardhan (2002, p. 188) suggests that instead of lusting after minimalist government, "the poor and the minorities, oppressed by the local power groups, may be looking to the central state for protection and relief." Beramendi (2007) cautions that the redistributive effects of decentralization are contingent on pre-existing structures of inequality, that decentralized infrastructure and finance are more likely to emerge in societies where territorial inequality is high but that once in place, these institutions reinforce what is already present. The analytical challenge is to separate institutional effects from pre-existing conditions. There is substantial reason to think that a decentralized system of school governance is likely to reinforce territorial inequality in the United States. Residential segregation across the country remains high. Because inequality is distributed primarily *between* school districts as opposed to *within* them, local school boards will have little incentive to redress inequality, even though the many costs of under-educating these groups will be be born by the larger society (Clotfelter, 1999; Reardon and Yun, 2001; Hochschild, 2005). Most policies targeted at improving educational achievement and attainment among under-privileged populations have been initiated by the federal and state governments.³⁵

Further, each of the potential ways in which decentralization might break for school governance seems more likely to be problematic for minority and under-resourced communities. They will be more likely to have lower mobility and will be less able to engage in competition with neighboring districts (in terms of school quality or specialization). At the individual level, participation is depressed by lack of resources and education, and at the macro-level, institutional features create barriers to participation, both in voting and in leadership. The accountability of leadership to these groups may be disproportionately low.

3.5 Conclusions

In light of the discussion above, it is easy to see both the appeal and the potential pitfalls of decentralized governance. Donahue (1997, p. 73) explains that "The idea of improving America's public sector by shifting resources and authority to lower levels of government has tremendous intuitive appeal, particularly when so many citizens view government as alien, unaccountable, and inefficient." Yet, it is increasingly clear that decentralized governance is

³⁵Given the high levels of segregation, race scholars offer additional reasons to be wary of decentralized educational governance in the United States They argue that the civil rights movement forced racism underground, and that because it is no longer socially acceptable to express feelings of racism, racist sentiments are instead expressed as an affinity for the traditional American values of rugged individualism, limited government, and an opposition to social programs that are perceived to provide disproportionate assistance or to black Americans (Gilens, 1996; Kinder and Sanders, 1996).

not a cure-all. Simply protecting or granting local districts the ability to tax and spend will not in and of itself generate higher levels of social welfare. Scholars increasingly recognize that the answers to these important questions about allocation of power in a multi-level system are likely to vary based on social and historical contexts and policy arena.³⁶

In general, education presents something of a conundrum to fiscal federalists. It is a classic instance in which the goals of efficiency, quality, and equality may be in conflict with one another (Ahmad et al., 1997). Dafflon (2006) suggests that there is no available economic model that is able to resolve these conflicting objectives. Instead various levels must engage in bargaining in which pros and cons of various arrangements are made explicit, and often the best solution will be a hybrid one. He writes that

If the many potential benefits of decentralization hinge on electoral accountability, policy innovation, fiscal responsibility, or competition, the nation's children are unlikely to be better off in a decentralized system than in one that is more centrally controlled, regardless of the local school boards' vaunted status as a foundational institutions of participatory American democracy. Disadvantaged children may in fact be worse off.

What expectations can we extrapolate regarding the likely effects of newly empowered states from these many observations? What might increasing state centralization of school governance mean for the efficiency of school operations, for the quality of student outcomes, or for inequality in the distribution of school outcomes? Given the dramatic improvements in educational outcomes that have manifest in the last several decades, I suspect that increasing centralization has been positive in many ways.³⁷

The presence of substantial spillovers, apparently homogeneous preferences, and the increasing technical complexity of public education suggest suggest that a more central govern-

³⁶For example, scholars have achieved some consensus in recognizing that environmental regulation cannot be effectively decentralized. See Dalmazzone (2006).

³⁷More students are graduating from high school now than 35 years ago, and those who graduate are better prepared for college. Students complete more math, science, and language arts credits than just 20 years ago, do their homework more regularly and more frequently take AP courses (Kane, 2003).

ment may be better able to provide public education more efficiently by exploiting economies of scale in terms of infrastructure, teacher certification and training, and curriculum production. Preserving a decentralized political structure and relying on central transfers may drive up expenditures though this may also yield better outcomes. States should have greater equivalence in terms of internalizing the effects of under-providing education and so should be better incentivized to establish broad access to high quality schools in addition to having a greater capacity to do so.

Limited competition between districts, low mobility among the poor, poor local-level electoral accountability, high levels of residential segregation also suggest that local jurisdictions may not be adequately incentivized to provide high quality schooling or to make innovative policy. At the very least state governments need to supplement local electoral processes with intergovernmental accountability and information. States are likely better situated to identify minimum quality benchmarks. Further, these factors suggest that centralized governance maybe be more likely to support positive outcomes for disadvantaged and minority students.

Education governance in the United States provides a special case for fiscal federalists in that there exists a variety of governance models with jurisdictions of varying sizes, varying responsibilities, and which are evolving, all located in the same national context. It is also a special case in the sense that there is an opportunity for a research program embedded in the fiscal federalism framework to enrich public debates. Given that state and local leaders have explicitly engaged one another in discussions over which level is best suited to make school policy; a research program embedded in the empirical context of the states, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of fiscal federalism might enrich these public debates.³⁸

³⁸During the 1990s and 2000s for example, governors have made multiple attempts to consolidate state control over education in California, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Washington, and Vermont, at least (Conley 2003, p. 127; Ringquist et al. 2009). With the help of state legislatures, several governors have succeeded in explicitly altering the institutional arrangements of educational governance, vesting themselves, their successors, or their appointees with new authority. Many

Rarely are there opportunities for a productive dialogue between policy-makers in the developed world and the academic evaluations of federalist governance; often the jurisdictional size, processes, and responsibilities of government are long-established and not particularly mutable (Dafflon, 2006, p. 271).³⁹ Because institutional characteristics and policy-making responsibilities are often fixed, comparable empirical cases in which there is sufficient overtime and cross-sectional variation to facilitate causal inference — regarding these dimensions of governance — are somewhat rare. In the following chapter I draw on a variety of data to describe this evolution, interrelationships between dimensions of de/centralization, and identify the dramatic variance that exists among the states.

have failed in the face of staunch local opposition - or other state leaders' commitment to local autonomy. In each case, governors and advocates of local control argue that they are better situated to make school policy.

³⁹In the developing world, however, circumstances differ substantially. International organizations like the World Bank have frequently recommended, and in some cases imposed, decentralizing reforms on third-world and transitioning states. While these recommendations are based on some of the academic work discussed in this chapter, it is far not clear that decentralization has proven a successful development strategy. Wibbels (2005) documents destablizing effects of decentralized governance and intergovernmental bargaining. See Prud'homme (1995) and McLure (1995) for a debate on the subject and Bird and Vaillancourt (2008) for a survey of scholarship on the process of decentralization in developing contexts. Many of the potential pitfalls of decentralization are not limited to the developing contexts and are discussed as they related to school governance below.

Chapter 4

Measuring Centralization of School Governance at the State Level

"Those who frequently take measure of educational matters are aware that the ground is shifting, but many citizens and even policy makers do not have a clear grasp of the extent to which that is the case. And even among those who sense that important changes are taking place, there is uncertainty about their extent, permanence, and implications for things that really matter." Jeffrey Henig (2007, p. x)

4.1 Introduction

In the quote above, Jeff Henig expresses succinctly the limitations of scholarship on school governance. Many are aware that school governance in the United States is evolving, and yet, there are few, if any, who have grasped how it is changing or the extent to which it is changing, and, most importantly, if how we choose to govern our schools is likely to have a significant effect on outcomes that we care about. It is well documented that the national political environment has increasingly favored stronger state involvement in educational matters. No Child Left Behind (NCLB), like its previous incarnations, created an incentive structure that forced states to build capacity, tasking them with more closely monitoring curricula, student outcomes, and teacher certification. Yet, reflecting their different institutional and

political traditions, states responded to the incentives in that legislation with different levels of enthusiasm.

In this chapter, I describe and measure variance in state approaches to school governance from 1970 on — both before and after NCLB's passage. Despite the central role of states in reshaping federal initiatives and their ability to subvert or support local governance, statelevel variance in school governance has, by and large remained a neglected topic. No research has systematically investigated and compared state governance and policy regimes across a range of indicators, over time. There exist no inclusive measures of state-level authority to enable historical and cross-sectional comparisons. This is a product, not only of of the theoretical and operational challenges I detail in Chapter 3, but also of the inherent difficulty involved with conducting a detailed historical survey of all 50 states. My aim in this chapter is to develop and present descriptive measures that will help to contextualize future policy research and facilitate inferences regarding the relative merits of state and local control, of centralized and decentralized approaches to governance.

Below, I present a series of indicators, gathered from a variety of sources including reports and surveys conducted by the United States Department of Education (US ED) and its National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Education Commission for the States (ECS), the United States Census of Governments (COG), *Education Week*, legal documents, academic articles, state education agencies, and newspaper reports. Many of these indicators are available from 1972 onward. All are available beginning in 1974.¹

The analysis is organized according to the dimensions of centralization identified in Chapter 3: political, fiscal, administrative, and market. These four types of decentralization offer a different way to consider the three components of governance. A system is politically decentralized when there are many formal institutions making policy, when processes are

¹The ECS is an organization created by the state through an interstate compact. The Commission is tasked with improving education policy, and has monitored policy, governance, and innovation in the 50 states since 1965. The organization was responsible for administering the NAEP assessments until 1982.

democratic and inclusive, and when the scope of policy made by these local governments is broad. A system is fiscally decentralized when there are many local institutions and when these institutions have the independent authority to tax and allocate revenues. Fiscal decentralization might be mitigated when process requirements prevent localities from acting independently or when constraints are placed on the substantive focus of public expenditures. A system is administratively decentralized when there are many formal institutions, acting under the authority of a central agency.

Indicators of political de/centralization include the number of districts present in a state, the average size of these districts (in terms of student enrollment), mechanisms of local school board selection and also mechanisms of selection for State Boards of Education (SBE) and Chief State School Officers (CSSO). Indicators of fiscal de/centralization are more limited, but include state shares of K-12 educational revenues and the fiscal independence of dependence of local districts. To the extent that operationalized measures of political and fiscal indicators co-vary, I collapse them into one index, though I separately present two indicators of integration with general governance at the state level.²

To measure administrative centralization, I focus on policies targeted at educational content and instructional quality that are likely to constrain or at the very least redirect local decision-making as well as require state monitoring and support. Indicators include whether or not a state engages in textbook selection, requires teachers to pass a test in order to achieve certification, carnegie credits required of students in order to receive a high school diploma, and finally whether or not the state has implemented a high school exit exam. I collapse this set of indicators into an index.

To measure market decentralization, I track state adoption of intra- and inter-district open-enrollment policies, charter school laws, the prevalence of charter schools in a state,

²Whether or not local leaders are elected is strongly related to whether or not districts are fiscally independent from other local governments. District size and state share of educational revenues also covary with these indicators. I discuss this in greater detail below.
and voucher programs. I track each of these indicators through time and collapse them into a series of indices. In general, these indices reflect the scholarly consensus amongst scholars of educational history that states in the South and the West are more centralized that states in the Northeast and Midwest.

Finally, I investigate interrelationships between the indices. Thus far, a states' level of market decentralization does not seem related with the other dimensions of a states' approach to governance, though market decentralization seems slightly more likely in states where state-level educational leaders are elected in a partian fashion and conversely somewhat less likely in states where gubernatorial leadership of education is stronger.

The correlation between the political/fiscal index of centralization and the administrative index of centralization rose during the late 1970s and early 1980s, suggesting that these states were more likely to adopt policies related to academic content. While the correlation remains strong, the relationship between these dimensions has since weakened. With few exceptions, states have not altered substantially their level of political and fiscal centralization. As a result, states appear to fall into three categories. One small set of states remain politically and fiscally decentralized and seem committed to local autonomy. These states have resisted adopting policies that would create an administratively centralized relationship between states and localities. Another, larger set of states has promulgated policies governing curricula and teacher quality but remain decentralized politically and fiscally. And lastly, states that were already centralized in political and fiscal terms have established administrative policies that reflect these pre-existing institutional structures. I conclude by suggesting that these three state approaches to school governance may serve as a useful starting point for future work.

4.2 Politics and Finance: Fragmentation and Independence

A system is politically decentralized when there are many formal institutions making policy, when processes are democratic and inclusive, and when the scope of policy made by these local governments is broad. A system is fiscally decentralized when there are many local institutions and when these institutions have the independent authority to tax and allocate revenues. Fiscal decentralization might be mitigated when process requirements prevent localities from acting independently or when constraints are placed on the substantive focus of public expenditures. These two dimensions of centralization are strongly related to one another in the context of state systems of school governance, and so I treat them together in this section.

Political decentralization is present in the most basic sense when there are a large number of formal institutions: a high level of institutional fragmentation. In the context of American educational governance, this is predominantly indicated by the number of school districts present at a given time. As I noted in Chapter 2 and 3, a massive consolidation effort between 1920 and 1970 reduced the number of districts in the nation from over 100,000 to under 20,000. According data from the Elementary and Secondary Education General Information Survey (ELSEGIS, ED, 1972), there were 16,543 regular school districts as of 1972. Thirty-seven years later, in 2009, there had been a reduction in the total number of school districts in the country by 16 percent, to bring the total number of regular districts down to just under 14,000 (according to the Common Core of Data, henceforth CCD, ED, 1981).

This widely observed change, buttresses (though not dramatically) the general claim of increased centralization of school governance but obscures substantial variation, visible in Figure $4.1.^3$ Variance is notable both across regions and among states. In 1972, over

³See also Table C.1 in the Appendix for state and regional district totals.

6,000 school districts were in the Midwest, and predictably, the largest share of continuing consolidation efforts took place there. All together, states in the Northeast actually added 118 districts. Alaska nearly doubled its number of school districts, while Nebraska decreased its number of regularly functioning districts by over 1,000. Between 1972 and 2009, thirteen of 50 states added districts, five maintained their number of districts, and 16 consolidated by 10 percent or less.

The degree to which changes in the base number of school districts affected the level of state centralization is, however, contingent on the population size of the state. In Nebraska, average district enrollments increased from 251 to 1163. In West Virginia, which began and ended the period with 55 districts, the average enrollment actually declined from 7,454 to 5,139 as a result of a decrease in the state's population. The average number of students per district is therefore likely to be a better indicator of political centralization as it is a measure that better facilitates cross-state comparisons. In general, states in the South experienced the least change as measured by the number of school districts, but the across-state average district size increased from just under 9,000 to just over 10,000 as a result of population growth. On average the largest districts are found in the West and in the South, while the smallest are found in the Northeast. This remains true across all years of the data. ⁴ Even among those states with the greatest decline in district numbers, Nebraska and North Dakota, for example, the average number of students per district remained quite low as compared to the average district size among other states.

⁴See Table C.2 in Appendix A and Figure C.2. The rank ordering of the regions in terms of district size: West, South, Northeast, Midwest, changes when the number of enrolled students and the number of districts in the region are totaled and employed to determine an average. See Appendix Figure C.1.



Figure 4.1: Percent Change in Number of School Districts by State: 1972-2009

Data Sources: NCES and US ED

More and smaller districts typically means increased political decentralization, because there are likely to be a correspondingly large number of elected leaders representing smaller groups of constituents. However, election is not the only means by which one joins a school board. Local school board members can also be appointed, in which case they are not necessarily accountable to constituents but rather to the elected leader or group that appointed them.

In this regard, there has been very little change across the states. A substantial majority of school board members were elected in 1972, and this remains the case in 2009. In 1972, 33 states provided exclusively for elected local school boards; in 2009, 32 states provided exclusively for elected boards. However, even in states that allow for appointed board members, it is not common for more than a small number of urban boards to be appointed. In Table C.3 of Appendix B, several states that are coded as having both elected and appointed school board members only provide for the appointment of one or two school boards in the entire state. In California for example, only the Los Angeles County school board is appointed. Virginia was the last state in the nation to allow elected school boards, starting in 1992, after the ACLU filed a lawsuit against the state in 1987. State law allows localities to vote to adopt an elected school board (though the boards in the state have rather limited authority). After the law was passed, more than 80 percent of local districts voted to install an elected board over one appointed by the supervising local government.⁵ Most states with some elected boards can be located in the South or the Northeast. In the South, this is often related to dependence on counties. In the Northeast, this usually reflects a special provision made for a large urban area: New Haven in Connecticut, Boston in Massachusetts, Philadelphia in Pennsylvania.⁶

⁵The ELSEGIS Public School District Universe Survey obtained annual data on the mode of school board member selection through 1980. When the CCD began in 1981, it also surveyed local districts for this information but ceased tracking school board member selection in 2009.

⁶Whether or not a state's school board elections take place on-cycle, with other major state and federal elections is also a factor in the degree to which not just the institutions are centralized, but also the degree



Figure 4.2: Across State Average District Size, 1972-2009

Data Sources: NCES and US ED

Appointment of local board members not only increases centralization by decreasing the number of elected officials, it also signals the limited authority and scope of the appointed body. Local board leaders, when they are appointed, tend to be selected by a supervising local government with corresponding geographical boundaries, a county or city board or a mayor (though in the case of extreme underperformance in a large district, governors may also play a role in appointing local board members). Appointment signals that districts are not autonomous governments but rather dependent on and accountable to the locality. This more politically centralized mode of selecting local school leaders usually coincides with a fiscal dependence. Appointed school boards must typically rely on their supervising local government for raising revenues, and in some cases must also submit budgets for review and approval. In the states, at the local level, centralization is not just a question of fragmentation, but also of political and fiscal independence.

The COG (Census, 1992) identifies an institution as independent if is has substantial fiscal powers to determine its own budget, to levy taxes, and to carry a debt burden. When another agency exercises final control over the school district's tax rate or budget, the organization is not considered independent, even when there is an elected local school board. I gather data on this aspect of centralization from the ELSEGIS Local Public District Surveys from 1972-1980, from the CCD 1981-1985, and from the COG from 1992-2008. These district-level data allow me to compute the percent of districts in each state that are dependent or independent for a given year.⁷ I classify states as independent or dependent systems in Table C.4 of Appendix B, for both 1972 and 2008.

States do not typically have mixed systems. In states where fewer than 99.5 percent of

to which the process of participation is centralized. Regrettably, this is not a component of governance I am able to track over time as yet. Local school boards are chosen off of the November election cycle in 33 states.

⁷Between 1985 and 1991, I interpolate the percent of school districts classified as dependent or independent unless I was able to locate a news report indicating the year that the state restructured its system. Change in in this institutional feature of school governance is rather limited. As with method of school board selection, the CCD after 1985 does not survey districts for this information.

districts fall into one category, I report the percent of districts that conform to the system norm. State systems are classified below as dependent or independent. This is defined as the number of districts within the state that the state reports are fiscally dependent on some other entity whether it be state, county, or municipal government. The majority of school districts in Alaska, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia are classified as dependent, either on the state, on a municipality, a town or township, or a county government. All public schools in Hawaii are governed by one state-dependent school system. County-dependent systems are dominant in Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

While there has been very little change in this dimension, the shifts that have occurred do not conform to the expectation of increased centralization. Instead, they suggest increased fiscal authority for local districts. Between 1972 and 2008 the California system shifted from predominantly dependent to over 90 percent independent, with only 50 or so county-dependent school systems in most recent years (the Los Angeles County school system foremost among them); the Mississippi, South Carolina, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico systems all shifted from dependent to independent.

All together, six states in the otherwise more politically centralized South and West changed the legal status of local districts to facilitate greater fiscal autonomy. In 1972, 34 systems could have been classified as independent. In 2008, 40 state systems could be classified as fiscally independent.

Fiscal independence, however, does not mean sole responsibility for educational revenues. Decentralization in the states is not only a function of local independence, but also of revenue authority. While state systems more commonly allow for independent school districts, one of the most frequently cited pieces of evidence that states are assuming greater authority over education has been their increasing responsibility for gathering revenue. However, I noted in Chapter 2 that in the national aggregate, the state share of educational revenues has fluctuated modestly around 45 percent total K-12 revenues since 1980. States were actually responsible for a smaller percentage of revenues in 2005 than in 1985, 46 percent as opposed to 49 percent. However, state share of school revenues varies substantially across the states and regions, both at the beginning and end of this study.⁸

In 1972, the state share of education revenues ranged between 8 percent in New Hampshire, 14 percent in Nebraska, and 19 percent in Oregon up to 66 percent in Alaska, 69 percent in Delaware, and 87 percent in Hawaii. In 2008, the state share of K-12 education revenues had narrowed to between 28 percent in Illinois and 86 percent in Vermont. Twentythree states were responsible for the largest share of school revenues in 1988 as compared to 28 in 2008, suggesting an increase in centralization of this aspect of school governance, but also some continuity. While most states increased their proportional responsibility for K-12 education, only five increased their contribution enough to be the largest revenue provider. The state share of educational revenues in New Hampshire for example increased by nearly 30 percentage points between 1972 and 2008, but this large increase only brought the state share of school revenues up to 37 percent. See a state-by-state breakdown of local, state, and federal revenue shares in Table C.5 of Appendix B and the percentage point change in state shares displayed in Figure 4.3.

⁸I compute the state share of educational revenues from the CCD survey of local district finances between 1986 and 2008. For the 1972-1985 years, revenue data at the state level are obtained from a series of reports published by US ED entitled Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education.



Data Sources: NCES and US ED



Figure 4.4: Average State Share of Revenue Sources by Region, 1972-2008

Data Sources: NCES and US ED

Differences in state responsibility for K-12 education revenues are particularly visible across regions in Figure 4.4. In 1972, the across-state average state-share of school revenues was already over 50 percent. Though the average state share across the South increased to over 50 percent in the 1980s, it has since declined back to hover around 50 percent. This is likely in part a result of some southern states, like Florida and Louisiana, actually devolving fiscal responsibility for schooling back to local governments. In the West, the average state share of education revenues increased from approximately 45 percent to consistently above 55 percent, exceeding the average share in Southern states from 1987 on. States in the Midwest and the Northeast contribute a smaller proportion of education revenues on average than states in the South and West, but have increased their average contributions substantially since the early 1970s. The largest percentage point change in the Northeast occurred in Vermont in 1997 after the state legislature completely centralized educational funding.

Throughout the 50 states, between 1974 and 2008, the average district size in a state is positively correlated with state the government's share of K-12 educational revenues (.395) and with the percentage of districts in a state that are classified as fiscally dependent (.321). Higher rates of fiscal dependence are also correlated with the incidence of appointed local school leadership. I draw on these four measures, average district size, state share of K-12 revenues, fiscal dependence, and the presence of appointed local school boards to construct an index reflecting the level of political and fiscal centralization in state systems of school governance.

In addition to their covariance, however, there are several factors to consider before collapsing multiple measures into a single index. Each of these measures, with the exception of appointed leadership, is expressed as a continuous variable. First, how should they be weighted? Should one be considered more heavily than the others, or should they be treated equally? There is little in the way of theoretical guidance for this task, though I determine that one of the four measures should be weighted less than the others. As I note above, fiscal independence and appointed leadership overlap to a substantial degree. Because appointed leadership does not exist without district level fiscal dependence on a local, county, or state institution, and simply represents a higher degree of dependence, one that extends to political representation, I choose to weight the indicator of appointed leadership less than the other three measures, and those three measures equally. Because this variable is an indicator, rather than a continuous measure like the other three, it is less sensitive, even though it is informative. This strategy prevents the measure from being overly deterministic in the index.

Second, how should the variables be transformed in order to be comparable to and linearly combined with one another? The first step is to transform variables into a similar scale.

Because fiscal dependence and state revenue shares are expressed as percentages, they are continuous, and are both constrained to range between 0 and 100 percent.⁹ Average district size (assessed in terms of student enrollment) however, while comparable across states, cannot be interpreted easily relative to these other two measures. It ranges over the course of the data between 1974 and 2008 from a minimum of 258 (NE, 1974) to a maximum of 189,887 (HI, 1997) students. There are, however, no states, except for Hawaii, with more than 40,000 students per district, on average. Any method of transforming this variable to a 0-100 scale is likely to require that an artificial ceiling be imposed on average district size and that Hawaii be simply assigned the maximum value of 100.

Further, there is also the question of how dramatically to alter the distribution of the measure. A linear transformation of the variable that simply divides the average enrollment by 400, would produce a range of values between 64.5 (NE, 1974), and 99.9 (FL, 2005) with Hawaii assigned a value of 100. However, district size is heavily skewed; the average district size in the majority of states falls well below 10,000 students. Previous work suggests that the cost-efficiencies to be gained from increased district size taper off around 5,000 (Duncombe and Yinger, 2007), meaning that so closely preserving the original distribution is likely to miss-represent the substantive significance of increases or decreases at the lower end of the measure. Taking the square-root of average district enrollment and dividing this number by 2 provides a district-size measure ranging between 7.9 (NE, 7.9) and 99.9 (FL, 2005) and shifts the distribution slightly so that changes at the lower end of the scale appear more substantial and those at the upper end somewhat less so.¹⁰ Once the three continuous variables are similarly scaled, they can be reduced to range from 0-1 and thus match the indicator for the presence or not of appointed school board leadership.

⁹In theory, both variables can range between 0 and 100. The observed minimum and maximum for fiscal dependence are, in fact, 0 and 100 percent, respectively. Both values are present across several states and multiple years. The observed minimum and maximum for state share of K-12 revenues are 5.0 (NH, 1984) and 90.3 (HI, 1991) percent, respectively.

¹⁰See Figures C.3 and C.4 in the Appendix.

Third, and finally, should the measures be converted to Z scores over the time period of the study, to reflect relative centralization of the states, or should the measures be combined absent this transformation so that the range of possible values will be the same in 1974 as it was in 2008? The answer to this question depends on whether the analyst seeks to document relative centralization of the states or absolute centralization and also on whether or not there is potential for updating the index with new data each year. Because the primary concern of this project is to investigate concerns that the absolute level of centralization has increased dramatically in recent decades and because the index could readily be updated on an annual basis, I avoid transforming the measures discussed above.

To combine these four measures, all transformed to rang between 0 and 1, into an index that represents state levels of political and fiscal centralization and which also ranges from 0 to 1, I multiply the converted values of average district size, the state share of K-12 revenues, the percent of districts fiscally dependent on another state by .3 and sum them together. I then multiply the value for appointed local school boards (0 or 100) by .1 and add that to the previous value. This produces an index, ranging from very decentralized .072 (NE, 1978) to very centralized .871 (HI, 1991), with a mean of .345 and a standard deviation of .177 across all 1,750 state-years between 1974 and 2008.

State	1974	2008
Alabama	0.398	0.385
Alaska	0.558	0.568
Arizona	0.502	0.260
Arkansas	0.199	0.233
California	0.472	0.411
Colorado	0.207	0.234
Connecticut	0.463	0.511
Delaware	0.413	0.407
Florida	0.390	0.400
Georgia	0.352	0.273
Hawaii	0.864	0.846
Idaho	0.172	0.275
Illinois	0.282	0.257
Indiana	0.328	0.311
Iowa	0.159	0.193
Kansas	0.172	0.233
Kentucky	0.249	0.265
Louisiana	0.342	0.292
Maine	0.582	0.371
Maryland	0.823	0.812
Massachusetts	0.482	0.540
Michigan	0.205	0.249
Minnesota	0.234	0.271
Mississippi	0.537	0.352
Missouri	0.173	0.165
Montana	0.168	0.173
Nebraska	0.090	0.156
Nevada	0.541	0.331
New Hampshire	0.087	0.178
New Jersey	0.267	0.325
New Mexico	0.570	0.302
New York	0.324	0.333
North Carolina	0.717	0.760
North Dakota	0.152	0.145
Ohio	0.254	0.324
Oklahoma	0.193	0.211
Oregon	0.234	0.305

Table 4.1: Political/Fiscal Centralization, 1974 and 2008

State	1974	2008	
Pennsylvania	0.356	0.305	
Rhode Island	0.610	0.578	
South Carolina	0.624	0.381	
South Dakota	0.078	0.142	
Tennessee	0.667	0.614	
Texas	0.216	0.230	
Utah	0.302	0.335	
Vermont	0.118	0.287	
Virginia	0.637	0.573	
Washington	0.230	0.269	
West Virginia	0.285	0.285	
Wisconsin	0.210	0.203	
Wyoming	0.158	0.233	
Across State Averages			
Midwest	0.195	0.221	
Northeast	0.366	0.381	
South	0.440	0.405	
West	0.375	0.344	
United States	0.351	0.340	

In general, there has been very little change in the level of political and fiscal centralization, suggesting that state institutional structures may have reached an equilibrium in most states. In 1974, the 50-state average level of political/fiscal centralization was .351 with a standard deviation of .201 in that year. In 2008, the 50-state average level of political/fiscal centralization was .340 with a standard deviation of .167 in that year, suggesting a slight, overall decline in the level of centralization as well as a decline in the variance across states. The 50-state average change between 1974 and 2008 along the index was .010, with a standard deviation of 0.094. Hawaii, Maryland, and North Carolina are the mot centralized states in both time periods. Nebraska, New Hampshire, and South Dakota stand out at the most decentralized states in both time periods.

In regional terms, there was a slight increase in the level of political and fiscal centraliza-



Figure 4.5: Average Fiscal and Political Centralization by Region, 1974-2008

tion in the Northeast¹¹ and Midwest, and decreases on average in the South and the West. None of these changes alter the regional ordering in which the South is the most centralized, followed by the states in the West, the Northeast, and the Midwest.

Sixteen states exhibited change of less than .02 along this dimension between 1974 and 2008.¹² Another 14 states became more decentralized, New Mexico, South Carolina, Maine, Mississippi, and Nevada most dramatically with a decrease in centralization of .18 or more (twice the standard deviation).¹³ And 20 states became more centralized, New Hampshire,

¹¹This was driven in large part by a dramatic shift in educational revenue authority in Vermont.

¹²Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin

¹³The decline in centralization ranged between -.025 and -.079 in California, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia

Oregon, Idaho and Vermont to the largest degree with increases of more than .090 or more on the index.¹⁴ The index both confirms conventional wisdom regarding the differential levels of de/centralization across states, and problematizes the notion that centralization is rising across the board. Instead, states appear to be moving in both directions along this continuum. State by state measures for 1974 and 2008 are presented in Table 4.1.¹⁵

There are, however two additional political institutions that should be considered in an analysis of states' school governance. These are the state board of education (SBE) and the chief state school officer (CSSO) who helms the state's education agency (SEA). All but a very few states have constitutional or statutory provisions providing for these two institutions, with the expressed intent that they direct school policy and oversee the school system in the state. What varies most notably across the states is the mechanism by which these potentially influential leaders are chosen. The means of selection may effect the autonomy of these actors, their relationships with the legislature and the governor (who control the purse strings in all states), and their incentives to innovate.

SBE members can be elected in partian or nonpartian statewide elections, appointed by the governor or the legislature (or a joint effort between the two), or historically could earn a position on the board through their election to another state office. CSSOs can be elected in partian or non-partian elections or appointed by the SBE, the governor, or the state legislature.¹⁶

For SBE members, gubernatorial appointment is by far the most common mode of selection; 32 state boards were chosen in this fashion in both 1972 an 2008. Of the 13 elected

¹⁴Also Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

¹⁵This index is presented starting in 1974 rather than in 1972 since the administrative index does not begin until 1974.

¹⁶This variance was first observed and documented in 1973 by Harris who documented the size of SBEs and modes of selection for both boards and CSSOs, including partial partial partial partial involved elections. These models were updated by Burnes 1983, Wiley 1983, Sanchez and Hall 1987 and regular reports from the Education Commission of the States during the 1990s and 2000s. I use these papers and reports to track the mode of selection for SBEs and CSSOs

SBEs, 7 were partian contests, while 6 were chosen via nonpartian ballot. Of the 10 elected SBEs in 2008, 8 were chosen in partian contests.¹⁷ The SBE was eliminated in Minnesota during 1999 in favor of increased gubnernatorial control, and the SBE in New Mexico was stripped of all but its advisory capacity in 2003. Otherwise, there have been few major alterations to selection of SBEs. For CSSOs, the story is rather different. There is substantially less continuity between the two time periods, displayed in Table C.7 in Appendix C. The number of CSSOs who were elected between 1972 and 2008 declined from 19 to 14, while the number of CSSOs appointed by a governor increased from 6 to 12.

Two facets of these selection processes may be salient for students of school governance and centralization. First, governors have been widely recognized as newly prominent policy leaders in education. Many have written about governors' efforts to exert informal influence on education and to obtain formal authority over state school systems, possibly as a result of increasing public accountability for state educational outcomes (e.g. Ringquist et al. 2009; Conley 2003; Zinth 2011). Much of the credit for the last several decades of active reform is often accorded to the increased attention governors have paid to education policy since the early 1990s and to their increased collective advocacy, often through groups like the National Governors Association (NGA). Governors were major actors in standards based reform efforts and the adoption of accountability systems (Manna and Harwood, 2011). To the degree that governors have more control over school governance in a state, school governance will be more centralized, less cut off from other state institutions, and adoption of progressive and innovative policies may be more likely. Second, the lack of partianship in local board contests is regularly cited as one of the factors explaining low-turnout during elections. Absent the informational cues provided by the major political parties, voters opt out. Though partisanship may not centralize policy-making in the same way that gubernatorial authority should, it may centralize the political process and raise the public profile of educational

¹⁷See Table C.6 in Appendix C.

issues.

For that reason, I generate two additional political indices. The first measures gubernatorial authority over school governance. States are assigned the maximum value of 1 if the governor is responsible for appointing both the SBE and the CSSO (or if the governor appoints the CSSO and there is no functional SBE). States in which the governor appoints the SBE and the SBE in turn appoints the CSSO are assigned a value of .75. States are assigned a value of .5 if the governor appoints either the SBE or the CSSO but not the other. States in which the governor shares appointment of the SBE with another body are assigned a value of .25, and lastly states in which the governor appoints neither the CSSO nor any part of the SBE are assigned a value of 0 on the index. Partisanship is similarly measured. States in which both the CSSO and the SBE are elected in partisan contexts receive a 1. States in which either the CSSO or the SBE are elected in a partisan context receive a .5, and states in which neither are elected are scored with a 0 on the index of partisan engagement with state-level school governance. While both of these are indicators of state-level centralization, they are negatively correlated with one another and should not be collapsed into a single measure of centralization of state-level school governance institutions.

Contrary to conventional stories about centralized school governance in the South and the West, gubernatorial authority over educational institutions appears strongest in the Northeast. Gubernatorial authority has grown more in Southern states than in other regions and is weakest in the Western states. Centralization in terms of partisan state-level elections is more prevalent in the South and the West, is completely absent in the Northeast, and is rare in the Midwest. With the exception of the decline in the presence of partisan elections in the South (as a result of transferring appointment authority to governors), there appears to be very little change in the partisan measure.



Figure 4.6: Regional Average Partisan and Gubernatorial Centralization, 1972-2008

4.3 Administrative Centralization: Quality and Content

Ultimately, it is reforms focused on academic quality and content that have drawn the most attention towards how schools are governed and spurred conversations about the appropriate level for making important decisions regarding curriculum. As states proliferate academic regulations, they create a denser policy space within which local boards are constrained to make decisions about academic content and staff. This may be positive in that it could appropriately direct and support the efforts of local boards, or it could be negative in terms of limiting innovation.

This is the administrative component of centralizing school governance. States may pursue increasing levels of regulation in concert with or in absence of political and fiscal centralization. The proliferation of state high school exit exams, teacher certification requirements, along with state selection of textbooks, increasing credit requirements for high school graduation, and legislation to facilitating state takeover of academically underperforming districts have all been cited as evidence of increased state influence. As above, I briefly discuss each of these measures in turn and transform them into a simple summative index of state influence.

In the late 1970s, policy actors began to advocate for the establishment and testing of minimum competencies — the most basic skills a student might need in order to be a contributing member of society — across all of a states schools (Haney and Madaus, 1978). This burgeoning movement, concerned initially with equality and eventually with quality, spurred numerous states to establish minimum competency exams for high school students. States with exit exams withhold diplomas or offer lesser diplomas to students who cannot pass them. In the 1974-75 school year, New York was the only state to administer some form of high school exit exam.¹⁸ As of the 2008-09 school year, exams were in place in 26

¹⁸Regents exams have been a component of the New York state public school system since the 1860s.

states. In keeping with the earlier discussion, states in the South and the West were the early adopters of exit exam policies. The timing of state adoption and the number of states currently utilizing an exit exam are displayed in Figure 4.7. For a few states, exit exams are in place but are not high stakes exams for students. The state of Hawaii recently did aways with its long-standing high stakes exit exam requirement based on evidence that the requirement was harming graduation rates.¹⁹

Many states also began administering teacher certification tests in this same time frame. These exams test either general pedagogical knowledge or specific content knowledge in the teachers area of specialty. Some states require only one exam, while others require both for licensure. In 1974, only one state, North Carolina, administered teacher certification exams (though many local districts and teacher education programs had already opted to require them). By the 2008 school year, 47 states had adopted a testing requirement. Iowa, Montana, and Wyoming are the states without testing requirements for initial teacher certification.²⁰

This policy has achieve near universal adoption, with only a few states resisting the trend. A timeline for state adoption is displayed below. Once again, states in the South and the West were the earliest adopters of these policies, while states in the Midwest tended to move more slowly.

Textbook selection should be interpreted as a strong indicator of centralization. Textbook policies have been around at least since the 1950s (Durrance 1952). States that assume authority for textbook selection have considerable power to control the content delivered by teachers in local districts, though the economies of scale afforded by bulk purchasing is an added benefit. Typically the state department of education, a specially designated

¹⁹In most years, these exit exam data come from a database constructed by John Robert Warren at the University of Minnesotas Population Center(Grodsky et al., 2009). I supplement them with data from ECS as well as legislative and news reports on specific states. A table listing states with high school exit exam requirements in 2011 can be found in Table C.9 of Appendix D.

²⁰The adoption of teacher certification requirements have been tracked periodically by NCES and by ECS and reported in the annual *Digest of Education Statistics*. Gaps in reporting during which state's adopted a test were supplemented with news reports, legislative documents, and inquiries to SEAss.



Figure 4.7: Exit Exam Adoption and Implementation: 1972-2011

Sources: (Grodsky et al., 2009), ECS, news reports, and SEAs

Note: Some states have eliminated their exit exam requirements, or not-yet implemented a legislated policy, hence the discrepancy between the number of states and the timeline. The line does not include D.C.



Figure 4.8: Teacher Testing for Certification

Sources: NCES and ECS

textbook commission, or subcommittee of the state board of education examines textbooks and publishes a list of acceptable books. Some states also provide textbooks to local districts without cost. Between 1974 and 2008, the number of states engaging in textbook selection dropped from 22 to 21 with Arizona discontinuing the practice and no additional states adopting the policy.²¹

Credit requirements for graduation from high school have also been regularly cited as evidence of increased state authority.²² Forty states had enacted minimum credit requirements for high school graduation by 1974 with an average credit requirement of just under 15. As of 2008, 45 states had established graduation requirements of some sort with an average requirement of 18 credits.²³ During this time, at least a few states reduced their graduation requirements, while another, Pennsylvania adopted and repealed minimum credit requirements in order to facilitate local decision-making. Several states have persisted either with no statewide minimum graduation requirement or with a rather short list of required credits. For many years, Iowa only required that students complete 1.5 credits of a course in government. In Colorado, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, all states with large numbers of districts, local school boards continue to set high school graduation requirements. In states with few mandated requirements, statutes may encourage localities to require more of their high school students, but laws stipulate flexibility for local boards.²⁴ Further, in North Dakota and Nebraska, until recently, a certain number of credits were required to earn a high school diploma, but the state allows localities to determine the composition of those

²¹A list of states engaging in textbook selection can be viewed in Table C.10 of Appendix D.

²²Data on credit requirements are compiled from a variety of sources starting with a report published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1974. ECS reports and NCES reports published on a semi-annual basis in subsequent years and supplemented with news reports and SEA inquiries and interpolation if all else failed.

²³Both Michigan and Iowa have enacted minimum credit requirements that took effect in 2011. Both laws were passed in 2006 and first affected the graduating class of 2011. Graduation standards in Michigan increase againslightlyfor the graduating class of 2016.

²⁴For example, Wisconsin state statutes encourage boards to adopt additional requirements.



Figure 4.9: Average Graduation Credit Requirements

Data Sources: NASSP, ECS, and NCES

 $credits.^{25}$

See Table C.8 in Appendix D for a listing of the total number of required credits in 1974 and in 2008. See Figure 4.9 for the across-state average number of credits required to graduate by region. As with many of the fiscal indicators, the overall number of credits required to graduate in the South and the West has been consistently higher than the number required in the other regions of the country. There is also greater volatility in the Northeast and the Midwest as requirements seem more subject to being repealed once they have been

 $^{^{25}}$ In May of 2009, the North Dakota legislature amended its statutes to increase the number of credits required for graduation from 21 to 22 and to specify that those 22 credits need include a specified number of language arts, math, and science units. The law is effective for the graduating class of 2010 and increases requirements for the graduation class of 2012 to 24 credits.



Figure 4.10: District Takeover Authority

Sources: News reports, statutes, and ECS

adopted.

Finally, evidence of the increased power of states is also said to lie in a wave of laws allowing for the takeover academically distressed districts. Takeover of school districts is not necessarily a new phenomenon. The federal government took over school districts in the 1960s in order to enforce desegregation, but the passage of statutes designed either to empower the state department of education, the SBE, the CSSO, or a delegate of the state (a mayor) to takeover a district for reasons of academic underperformance are relatively recent innovations. In 1988, just 5 states possessed the authority to enact a takeover. Of these, the state of New Jersey was the first to actually takeover a district. By 2008, 29 states (excluding Hawaii, which needs no such statute) had passed laws that created a process for the takeover of a district in the event of fiscal mismanagement or chronic academic failure. Of these, 19 states had utilized that statutory authority to takeover at least one district.²⁶ Currently, 31 states and Hawaii have the authority to take over a district. The timing of state adoption can be viewed in Figure 4.10 and a list of states by region can be viewed in Table C.11 in Appendix D. Several states in the South, Texas, South Carolina, and Kentucky, were among the first to enact legislation facilitating a district takeover. However, the pattern of regional adoption is much less clear for this measure than others. New Mexico, Iowa, Massachusetts, and New Jersey were also among the early adopters.

To create an index measuring state-levels of administrative centralization, I confront the same questions as with the political and fiscal index. How should each of these measures be weighted in order to be combined with one another into an informative index? Again there is little theoretical guidance to this point, and so I weight all measures equally, with one exception: states' high school graduation requirements. The presence of any credit requirement represents a fundamental shift away from none. At the same time, the number and specificity of the requirements must also be addressed. A 12 credit requirement is likely to be much less of a constraint on a local decision-making than a 24 credit requirement. I therefore include both the presence and the strength of these requirements, meaning that this policy is slightly more influential in the index than the other four policies, since it is treated essentially as two distinct measures.

Also as before, it is most prudent to convert each measure to a 0-1 scale, since the final index will be expressed in those terms. Four measures can already be expressed most simply

 $^{^{26}}$ In the early part of this series, These data are gathered from an investigation of state statutes and news articles. In later years, ECS began tracking state takeover authority. See (Ziebarth, 2002). According to my investigation of state statutes, no state had the power to take over a district in 1974, but I was unable to verify this for New Mexico. The earliest record of the law being on the books in that state is 1987.

as present (1) or not (0): whether or not the state engages in textbook selection, requires testing for teacher certification, has established some credit requirements for high school graduation, and whether or not states have the existing legal authority to take over school districts. Data on the other two measures allows for a slightly more nuanced treatment in the index. Whether or not the state requires an exit exam of high school students is one component of the policy; whether or not the exit exam is high-stakes for students is another component. For this variable, a state with no exit exam is assigned a 0, while states with low-stakes exit exams are assigned a value of .5, and those with high-stakes exit exam are assigned a value of 1. Similarly, credits required for high school graduation range from 0 up to 24; therefore dividing the number of credits required by 24 reduces the measure to a 0/1scale, but preserves distinctions between the states. The indicator for exit exam is adjusted by whether or not the exit exam is high-stakes for students, and the indicator for high school credits is adjusted for the number of credits required of graduates (out of 24). The values of all of these measures, ranging from 0 to 1, are summed together and divided by 6.

This produces an index, ranging from very decentralized, 0, to very centralized, 1, with a mean of .529 and a standard deviation of .259 across all 1,750 state-years between 1974 and 2008. Combined, these measures are suggestive of state authority with regard to academic policy including teacher selection, curricular content, and academic expectations.

In contrast with the political fiscal index, there has been a great deal more movement along this dimension of centralization than along the political and fiscal dimension. The 50-state mean moves from .311 in 1974 with a standard deviation of .172 to .691 with a standard deviation of .243 in 2008. This suggests both an overall increase in the average level of administrative centralization as well as an increase in the variance across the states.

On this dimension, the conventional wisdom is confirmed. All but one state became more centralized over the time period in question.²⁷ The most populous states in the country:

²⁷Wyoming promulgated none of the policies discussed and actually reduced the state-determined grad-



Figure 4.11: Average Administrative Centralization by Region, 1974-2008

California (+.757), Florida (+.395), New York (+.458), and Texas (+.542) have made some of the most dramatic strides towards centralizing administrative authority over schools. In 1974, the most administratively centralized state in the country was North Carolina. By 2008, four states, including New Mexico, South Carolina, Alabama, and Texas, achieved the maximum possible score on the measure. An additional eight states scored higher than .900 on the measure. See Table 4.2 for state scores on the index. The states that remained most decentralized were Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Iowa, and Nebraska.

Regional differences are dramatic. The across-state average of administrative centralization was highest for southern states in 1974 and remained highest by a substantial margin. uation requirements for its students. Northeastern states progressed along this dimension, outstripping states in the Midwest by 1980, which remained the most decentralized. See Figure 4.11 for across-state regional average scores over time.

State	1974	2008
Alabama	0.472	1.000
Alaska	0.278	0.813
Arizona	0.444	0.806
Arkansas	0.444	0.903
California	0.167	0.924
Colorado	0.000	0.167
Connecticut	0.000	0.639
Delaware	0.292	0.653
Florida	0.438	0.833
Georgia	0.458	0.826
Hawaii	0.458	0.653
Idaho	0.451	979
Illinois	0.278	0.625
Indiana	0.444	0.806
Iowa	0.000	0.167
Kansas	0.285	0.479
Kentucky	0.458	0.819
Louisiana	0.472	0.826
Maine	0.278	0.611
Maryland	0.292	0.813
Massachusetts	0.000	0.500
Michigan	0.000	0.333
Minnesota	0.271	0.649
Mississippi	0.444	972
Missouri	0.306	0.653
Montana	0.278	0.306
Nebraska	0.000	0.167
Nevada	0.465	0.990
New Hampshire	0.278	0.472
New Jersey	0.000	0.819
New Mexico	0.458	1.000

Table 4.2: Administrative, 1974 and 2008

State	1974	2008	
New York	0.361	0.819	
North Carolina	0.611	0.972	
North Dakota	0.285	0.472	
Ohio	285	0.806	
Oklahoma	0.458	0.910	
Oregon	0.479	0.653	
Pennsylvania	0.000	0.333	
Rhode Island	0.278	0.639	
South Carolina	0.458	1.000	
South Dakota	0.278	0.653	
Tennessee	0.458	0.972	
Texas	0.458	1.000	
Utah	0.438	0.667	
Vermont	0.278	0.472	
Virginia	0.493	0.819	
Washington	0.278	0.632	
West Virginia	0.451	0.833	
Wisconsin	0.000	0.424	
Wyoming	0.292	0.257	
Across State Averages			
Midwest	0.203	0.520	
Northeast	0.164	0.590	
South	0.447	0.885	
West	0.345	0.680	
United States	0.311	0.691	

4.4 Market Decentralization: Schools and Choice

In the last two decades, at the same time that administrative decentralization has increased in the states, a new set of reforms attempting to leverage competition in order to improve the quality of public schools by spurring innovation, and possibly reducing costs in the process, have emerged. So while political and fiscal centralization may have remained largely unchanged, and administrative centralization may have increased, market decentralization has also, likely, increased. I track state adoption of three, prominent reforms: open-enrollment policies, charter schools, and public vouchers for private schools using news and ECS reports and data from NCES. I collapse these into an index measuring market decentralization.

Open-enrollment policies facilitate parental choice among public schools. These policies pre-date charter school policies and voucher programs, and have achieved the most widespread adoption across the states. As of 2011, 47 states had statutes supporting some kind of open-enrollment policy. The first explicit open-enrollment policy was adopted in Minnesota in 1987. Arkansas, Nebraska, and Iowa quickly followed suit in 1989. In contrast to the policies that promoted administrative centralization, discussed in the previous section, adoption of open-enrollment policies began in midwestern and western states. See Figure 4.12 for the timing of open-enrollment policy adoption and Table C.12 of Appendix E for a list of states with an open-enrollment policy currently in place.

Open enrollment laws can create policies that enable (voluntary) or require (mandatory) districts and schools to allow students to transfer within (intra) or between (inter) districts. Many states have more than one policy operating simultaneously. Inter-district voluntary policies are the most common (31 states), followed by inter- and intra-district mandatory policies (22 states), which are supported by provisions of NCLB. The relative popularity of these types of open-enrollment are displayed in Figure 4.13. Mandatory policies represent the most strident state-level commitment to school choice, while voluntary policies prioritize



Figure 4.12: Open Enrollment

Sources: ECS, NCES, and news reports



Figure 4.13: Type of Open Enrollment

Data Sources: ECS, NCES, news reports, and SEAs

the autonomy of the district.²⁸

Next to open-enrollment policies, charter school laws are the most common school-choice policy across the states. Charter schools are semi-autonomous public schools granted waivers by states to free them from state regulations and facilitate innovation. By 2011, 40 states had enacted charter school policies of varying strength. See Table C.13 in Appendix E for a list of states with current charter school laws. As with open-enrollment, charter schools were first piloted in the state of Minnesota and were initially more common in midwestern

 $^{^{28}}$ Current, descriptive information about open-enrollment laws come from the ECS. Dates of passage/enactment come from a report to the Missouri state legislature as well as state legal codes and news articles. Indicators match with adoption of law, not necessarily implementation, which may have lagged a year or two, though infrastructure required to support open-enrollment is minimal.


Figure 4.14: State Charter School Laws

Sources: NCES, ECS, and NAPCS

and western states. No states have passed a charter school law since 2003

The degree to which charter schools have penetrated the educational market varies substantially across the states. I use data from various of sources to estimate the number of charter schools present in each state with a charter school law, and data on the total number of schools in the state in order to computer the percentage of schools in each state that are charters.²⁹ In 2009, charter schools accounted for nearly 5 percent of all schools in the coun-

²⁹From the 1992-1993 school year until 1the 1999-2000 school year, estimates are taken from the NCES State of Charter Schools: National Study of Charter Schools, Fourth Year Report 2000. For the 1999-2000 until the 2010-2011 school year, numbers are taken from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) dashboard. They list state departments of education and state charter school associations as the



Figure 4.15: Percent of Schools that are Charters

Data Sources: ECS, NCES, and NAPCS

try and more than 5 percent of schools in 16 states and Washington, D.C..³⁰ Approximately 22 percent of schools in the state of Arizona were charters. This is the most significant representation of charter schools. Over 10 percent of schools in Florida and Hawaii are charter schools. Across-state regional means (including states without charter schools) are computed and displayed in Figure 4.15. The highest average and most rapid growth are consistently in the West.

Finally, voucher programs represent a rarer and more politically contentious component of

sources of their data. Numbers in the 1999-2000 and 2008-2009 school years are from the NCES report, Condition of Education Statistics 2011. Numbers between 1992 and 1999 are inexact since they report the total number of charter schools started in a state without reflecting closures.

³⁰Alaska, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Texas, Utah, Oregon, California, Delaware, New Mexico, Ohio, Colorado, Wisconsin, Florida, Hawaii, and Arizona.

market decentralization strategies. Rather than facilitating choice or innovation among public schools as open-enrollment and charter laws seek to do, voucher programs offer students the opportunity to switch into the private sector and place public schools in competition with private ones for public dollars. Voucher programs have been adopted in Wisconsin (1990), Ohio (1995), Florida (1999), Washington, D.C. (2003), Utah (2004), Georgia (2007), Louisiana (2008), Oklahoma (2010), and, most recently and broadly, in Indiana (2011). Each voucher program is, however, limited in some significant fashion, either to a specific urban area or to a specific subset of students, and participation in programs is typically capped. For details on these programs, see Table C.14 in Appendix E.

As before, in order to construct an index, the weight and scale of the measures must be considered. Because they are more likely to affect a larger proportion of students, I weight charter school policies and open enrollment policies more heavily than voucher programs, and each policy (or facet of the policy in the case of charter schools) are measured as present (1) or not (1).³¹ The index of market-based decentralization is therefore based on whether or not a state has passed a charter school law, the degree to which charter schools have diffused in the educational system (whether or not charter schools constitute 5 percent of more of a state's total schools), whether or not the state has enacted an open enrollment policy, whether or not some component of that policy is mandatory, and finally whether or not the state has a voucher program in place. The index is scored from 0 to 1.

By 2008, nearly every state had enacted some form of market decentralization. Alabama remains the sole exception with no provisions for open-enrollment, vouchers, or charter schools. Another group of states had in place only weak open-enrollment provisions or a charter law.³² Arizona, Florida, Ohio, and Utah achieved the maximum level of market

 $^{^{31}}$ As choice policies become more prevalent, the sensitivity of this measure should be adjusted to account for nuances in state policies.

³²Alaska, Maryland, Maine, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Virginia, and Nebraska

decentralization as measured by the index. $^{\rm 33}$

States in the West have the highest average level of market decentralization, while states in the Northeast have the lowest. This is notable, particularly because states in the Northeast tend to be much more centralized on other measures than states in the South. It reflects a lack of correlational relationship between this index and the others, with the exception perhaps of gubernatorial authority and partisan involvement in state-level education elections. Market decentralization was slightly less common in states with stronger gubernatorial authority and slightly more common in states with education leaders elected in partisan contests.³⁴ It is possible that market decentralization is compatible with other approaches to governance or that the newness of these market reforms means that this aspect of governance is more in flux than the others.

³³An uneven estimate on the market index indicates uncertainty regarding the start date of an intradistrict mandatory open-enrollment policy between 2004 and 2011 (i.e. the policy was in place as of 2011 but not as of 2004).

³⁴Correlations of -.18 and .20, respectively.



Figure 4.16: Market Decentralization by Region, 1992-2008

State	1992	2008
Alabama	0.00	0.00
Alaska	0.00	0.20
Arizona	0.00	1.00
Arkansas	0.20	0.52
California	0.20	0.80
Colorado	0.40	0.80
Connecticut	0.00	0.40
Delaware	0.00	0.80
Florida	0.00	1.00
Georgia	0.00	0.80
Hawaii	0.00	0.60
Idaho	0.20	0.52
Illinois	0.00	0.60
Indiana	0.00	0.60
Iowa	0.20	0.40
Kansas	0.00	0.40
Kentucky	0.00	0.40
Louisiana	0.00	0.80
Maine	0.00	0.20
Maryland	0.00	0.20
Massachusetts	0.20	0.60
Michigan	0.00	0.73
Minnesota	0.40	0.60
Mississippi	0.00	0.40
Missouri	0.00	0.40
Montana	0.00	0.20
Nebraska	0.20	0.32
Nevada	0.00	0.40
New Hampshire	$0.00 \ 0.40$	
New Jersey	0.00	0.40
New Mexico	0.00	0.73
New York	0.00	0.40
North Carolina	0.00	0.20
North Dakota	0.00	0.20
Ohio	0.40	1.00
Oklahoma	0.00	0.47
Oregon	0.00	0.60

Table 4.3: Market De/Centralization, $1992 \ {\rm and} \ 2008$

State	1992	2008
Pennsylvania	0.00	0.40
Rhode Island	0.00	0.40
South Carolina	0.00	0.40
South Dakota	0.00	0.40
Tennessee	0.00	0.40
Texas	0.00	0.80
Utah	0.30	1.00
Vermont	0.00	0.20
Virginia	0.00	0.28
Washington	0.40	0.40
West Virginia	0.00	0.28
Wisconsin	0.20	0.80
Wyoming	0.00	0.40
Across Sta	te Avera	ges
Midwest	0.117	0.538
Northeast	0.022	0.378
South	0.013	0.485
West	0.115	0.588
United States	0.066	0.505

4.5 Conclusions: Relating Two Dimensions

I present evidence above that suggests political/fiscal centralization has not shifted dramatically over the last 35 years for most states. There are some notable exceptions (e.g. Vermont and Florida). I have also shown that state levels of administrative centralization over various aspects of school policy increased significantly during the same time frame, though again, there appear to be some notable exceptions. But how do these two indices relate to one another? Does centralization along one dimension correspond to centralization along another? To an extent, this seems to be the case. The correlation between the index of political and fiscal centralization in 1974 and the academic index in that same year is approximately .303, suggesting that there was a tendency for fiscally and politically centralized states to also be more administratively centralized. Indeed, this relationship grows stronger during the remainder of the 1970s until 1982, when the correlation peaks at .506. However, the strength of the relationship dissipates after that point, as illustrated in Figures 4.17 and 4.18, in which there are fitted lines plotted to illustrate the relationship between the two primary indices.³⁵

In part, this dissipation is a function of the decreased variance along the indices. But a close study of Figure 4.18 also suggests another possible development, the emergence of more differentiated approaches to school governance, one of which may be disrupting the relationship between political and fiscal centralization of school governance and administrative centralization and which may signal a new direction in school policy.

One set of states, including Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania strive to preserve flexibility and independence for local districts, both in terms of political institutions and fiscal responsibility and in terms of the administrative

³⁵The correlation nonetheless remains strong and positive. See also Figures C.5 and C.6 to view each year independently. In both these figures and Figure 4.18, state abbreviation sizes are weighted by enrollment. Horizontal and vertical lines are used to indicate means.



Figure 4.17: Political/Fiscal, and Administrative De/Centralization, 1974-2008

Note: State abbreviations are sized according to population.

authority to make determinations regarding academic policies. These states governed schools in a decentralized fashion in 1974 and continue to govern in such a fashion in 2008, albeit with some limited concessions to federal legislation. They exhibit a commitment, at the state level, to the ideal of local control in education. This does not necessarily mean these states have low capacity. Colorado has acquired a reputation as an educational innovator, but state leaders must work collaboratively with districts, they cannot mandate content or instructional practices. The state's collaborative approach to policy-making was on display during the Race to the Top application process.³⁶

A second set of states, including North Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, and Alaska are relatively centralized along both dimensions. For the most part, these are states that were relatively centralized along both dimensions previously and have continued to be so. They more tightly control finances, have stronger linkages between general and educational governments, and have promulgated a large number of regulations around educational quality

³⁶The state agency solicited broad input from districts and stakeholders in crafting the state plan. Despite apparently broad buy-in across the state, the Colorado's first applications were awarded grants (Paulson, 2010).

and content. Both of these approaches to educational governance seem consistent in that states are either centralized or decentralized along both dimensions.

A third set of states including Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Idaho, New Mexico, and Nevada either stayed or became more decentralized along fiscal and political terms, but not in administrative terms. Florida devolved considerable fiscal authority to its districts. Texas has refrained from consolidating its over 1,000 districts. Indiana remains highly decentralized. These states have demonstrated a willingness to set a floor on acceptable levels of performance for students and teachers and have actively imposed accountability on lower-level governments, but have left largely in tact a system in which those localities are still fiscally responsible for local public education. There is a tendency to cast changes in governance as zero-sum power tradeoffs between governments, but both recent scholarship in education and in fiscal federalism suggest that this is a false dichotomy. These states may have landed on a way to derive the benefits associated with local provision of a service whilst simultaneously ensuring curricular consistency and quality. Or it is possible that tense relationships between localities and states may arise as a result of this mismatch between institutional structure and substantively centralized decision-making. I explore the consequences of these different state approaches in Chapter 5 and discuss future research in Chapter 6.



Figure 4.18: Political, Fiscal, and Administrative Centralization, 1974 and 2008

Chapter 5

Estimating Effects of Centralized State School Governance

"When Americans grow dissatisfied with public schools, they tend to blame the way they are governed. There is too much democracy or too little, critics insist, too much centralization or too little, too many actors in policy formation or too few... Despite this faith in reform through changes in governance, we know little about how different forms of governance might affect the heart of education — classroom practice." David Tyack (1993, p. 1)

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I created a series of indices measuring state-level centralization of school governance along several dimensions. I described the considerable variance that exists across states and regions and confirmed that most states have become more centralized in administrative terms.¹ However, states have moved in both directions on the dimension of fiscal and political decentralization, and on balance the degree of change, as measured by the index, appears to be less substantial than the shifts along the administrative dimension. Governors have become stronger educational authorities in several states, and all but a few resistant states have adopted some market reforms that move contrary to the prevailing

¹Administrative centralization refers to control over substantive and day-to-day policy decisions, in this case pertaining to curricular content, assessments of academic quality, and teacher certification, for example.

trend of centralized provision. This chapter begins investigating the consequences of these various changes.

In view of the many ways in which decentralized governance of schools seems likely to fail in the United States, I hypothesize that centralization will have generally positive effects on students. Given the lack of locally-based incentives to confront educational inequality, I hypothesize that centralization will mean better outcomes particularly for disadvantaged groups. Both of these expectations are generally supported. In what follows, I report a series of fixed-effects linear regression models in which dimensions of state-level educational governance are the primary independent variable of interest.

I find evidence to suggest that administrative centralization, in which states promulgate academic policies and regulations to direct local activity, has led to higher rates of high school graduation and degree attainment within states. This finding is robust across several specifications. These effects are small for the overall population but more substantial for at least two disadvantaged groups. Effects are larger for women and for African Americans than for men and whites, respectively. Together, these models suggest that administrative centralization may have contributed to more rapid closing of achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged groups in centralizing states. The effects of fiscal and political centralization are less clear. Several models suggest a positive interaction effect between fiscal and political centralization and administrative centralization, but the effect does not always cross the threshold of statistical significance. In some instances, there appears to be a negative effect of political/fiscal decentralization.

I also find effects suggesting that administrative centralization of school governance, is associated with higher levels of per-student K-12 educational spending, while increases in gubernatorial authority and in fiscal and political centralization seem to have driven educational spending down. These later results are suggestive of a higher level of fiscal responsibility and accountability at the state level. The consistent significance of centralization along the administrative dimension of educational governance suggests in particular that intergovernmental accountability and monitoring and minimum performance expectations are likely explanations for improved student outcomes. However, the increased per-student investments also associated with higher levels of administrative centralization may point to another explanation.

5.2 Overall Attainment

In Chapter 3, I noted that spillovers, homogeneous preferences, and the increasing technical complexity of public education suggest that a more centralized approach to school governance has potential to improve educational outcomes by more efficiently by exploiting economies of scale in terms of infrastructure, teacher certification and training, and curriculum production. To test the hypothesis that centralization produces better outcomes, I estimate models using two different state-level indicators of educational attainment.

The first indicator of overall attainment comes from the United States Decennial Census (Census) and represents the percentage of the state population, 25 and older with a high school diploma, equivalent, or better.² The series provides state-level rates of educational attainment from 1940-2000. I use data from the most recent census to obtain state-level rates of attainment for 2010.

The measure is limited in several ways. First, opportunities for mobility are likely to introduce noise, and potentially bias into the series. Second, even large effects on student outcomes are likely to manifest only as small changes in the proportion of 25 and older population with a diploma. Third, because the measure is only collected every ten years, there is limited variance in the variable. The measure is nonetheless a best-candidate dependent

²Data for the series between 1940 and 2000 can be viewed and downloaded here: http://www.census. gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/census/half-century/ or, in an un-tabulated form, can be obtained from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, run out of the University of Minneota's population center. See www.ipums.org.

variable for several reasons. It is one of very few state-level estimates of attainment that is available over a long period of time. Further, it provides state-level estimates, not only for overall attainment, but also for attainment by subgroups within the population, namely for women and men, and blacks and whites.³ Finally, to the extent that state policies are likely to have only small effects on the level of attainment for the larger population, this would mitigate towards a more conservative test of the hypothesis.

I also employ a state-level measure of the freshman-year graduation rate, as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This series estimates a graduation rate for each state between 1990 and 2007. It does not provide estimates by subgroup.

Using these two variables, I estimate a linear regression for each dependent variable. I include as independent variables the administrative, political-fiscal, and gubernatorial indices described in Chapter 4. ⁴ All indices range from zero to one. The indices are lagged, to allow for time to impact the dependent variables. For the Census measure of overall attainment in the 25 and older population, the indices are lagged by 10 years. For the NCES measure of freshman graduation rates, the indices are lagged by 5 years.⁵ This means that attainment is modeled for the years 1990, 2000, and 2010 as a function of the indices in 1980, 1990, and 2000, respectively, while the freshman graduation rate is modeled for the years between 1990 and 2007 as a function of the indices between 1985 and 2002.⁶ The average level of overall high school or better attainment for this period, across all states, is 81.8 percent, while the

³The series does also provide estimates for attainment in the Hispanic population from 1980 on, but that series is particularly erratic as a result of rapid population growth and mobility.

⁴I also included an interaction term for the administrative and political/fiscal indices, given the apparent relationship between the two, but the interaction consistently failed to achieve statistical significance and is not described in these models. The gubernatorial index is favored over the partisan index since that represents a higher level of political integration and is becoming more rather than less common among the states. The partisan and gubernatorial indices are too negatively correlated to include in models together — change in one was often the direct result of change in the other — and there are more substantial theoretical reasons to expect gubernatorial influence to be significant.

⁵Changing the lag-length by one or two years for either model does not substantively change the results.

⁶The market index is excluded from the analysis of attainment as a result of limited degree to which these reforms had diffused among states by 2000 and 2002.

average graduation rate for the period, across all states, is 74.3 percent. The lowest observed attainment and graduation rates were 64.3 and 51.3 percent, respectively. The highest were 92.3 and 90.8, respectively.⁷

Both models include fixed effects for states and years in order to difference out trends attainment in addition to panel-corrected standard-errors.⁸ Identification in the models therefore stems from within-state change. I also control for time-varying state level factors such as race, poverty, and population size in all models. These controls are lagged by 10 years for the Census measure of attainment and are concurrent for the NCES measure of state graduation rate. The model specifications are expressed in equations 1 and 2 below, in which X represents a vector of indices, Z represents a vector of control variables, *i* indicates a particular state, and *t* indicates a particular period in time. The only difference between the two specifications lies in the lag-length of the independent variables and of the controls.

⁷See Appendix Table D.1 for more detailed summary statistics on all variable.

⁸I use the xtpcse command in Stata 12 to estimate these models. When estimating the same model, absent panel-corrected standard errors, using xtreg, results are similar, though the gubernatorial index is less strongly significant.

$$CensusAttainmentY_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it-10} + \beta_2 Z_{it-lag} + \gamma_i + \alpha_t + u_{it}$$
(5.1)

$$GraduationRateY_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it-5} + \beta_2 Z_{it} + \gamma_i + \alpha_t + u_{it}$$

$$(5.2)$$

	Overall Attainment	Freshman Grad Rate
	1	2
Administrative Index	2.364^{+}	3.598***
10/5 year lag	(1.363)	(1.057)
Fiscal / Political Index	-4.179^{+}	3.720
10/5 year lag	(2.274)	(2.494)
Gubernatorial Index	2.302**	3.541^{*}
10/5 year lag	(0.776)	(1.773)
Percent in Poverty	-0.119*	0.344^{**}
10 year lag/concurrent	(0.055)	(0.111)
Percent White	0.335^{*}	0.284^{+}
10 year lag/concurrent	(0.115)	(0.148)
Percent Other non-Black	-0.013	-0.363*
10 year lag/concurrent	(0.208)	(0.161)
Log Enrolled K-12 Students	-7.078***	2.627
10 year lag/concurrent	(1.303)	(2.633)
Constant	141.176***	17.801
	(11.068)	(35.927)
\overline{N}	150	900
Overall R^2	0.977	0.901
Group N	50	50
Minimum Obs.	3	18
Average Obs.	3	18
Maximum Obs.	3	18

Table 5.1: Modeling Attainment for the Population

Standard errors in parentheses

† $p < 0.10, \ ^*$ $p < 0.05, \ ^{**}$ $p < 0.01, \ ^{***}$ p < 0.001

Model 1 includes fixed effects for years: 1990, 2000, and 2010.

Model 2 includes fixed effects for years: 1990-2007.

The results of these models are displayed in Table 5.1. Both models show support for the hypothesis that state-level administrative centralization of school governance has had positive effects on student outcomes. In Model 1, the main-effect for the administrative index of centralization nears statistically significant and suggests that a shift from zero to one on the scale would lead to approximately a 2.4 percentage point increase in the rate of high school or better attainment amongst the 25 or older population. This effect, however, overstates the likely impact of administrative centralization, since few states would have shifted from 0-1 during the time period included in the model. It is instead better to conceptualize likely effects in terms of the the average shift that occurred during the time period in question (1980-2000). Given that across the 50 states, administrative centralization increased on average by .30 along the index from .34 to .64, we might expect the overall level of high school (or better) attainment in the population to increase by approximately .71 percentage points. In Model 2, the coefficient for the administrative index is statistically significant and somewhat larger, in keeping with the dependent variables' closer proximity to the independent variable and suggesting a maximum of 3.5 percentage point increase in graduation rates as a result of moving from zero to one on this dimension, or more clearly, a 1. 08 percentage point increase in the high school graduation rate for the average increase in the administrative centralization of a state.

Centralization along the political/fiscal dimension appears to have no significant effect on attainment, in either Model 1 or in Model 2, though its coefficient nears statistical significance in Model 1. The average level of political/fiscal centralization shifted from .36 in 1980, down to .34 in 2000, producing an after decrease in the level of political/fiscal centralization of .02. A decrease of this magnitude would be associated with a miniscule change in either dependent variable. A one standard deviation increase in political/fiscal centralization, corresponding to an increase of .18 on the index, would be associated with a decrease in overall attainment of .7 percentage points. An increase in gubernatorial authority also corresponds with a projected increase in rates of attainment in both models. The standard deviation for this measure during the time-period in the model is .36. However, the index is scored in denominations of .25. Therefore, for an increase of .25 in gubernatorial authority, we might expect an increase in the state population's rate of attainment of .57 percentage points and an increase in the state's high school graduation rate of .88 percentage points. Again, the effect on the high school graduation rate is slightly larger than the estimated effect for attainment. This is consistent with expectations given the additional noise present in the Census measure. Between 1980 and 2000, the 50 state average on the index of gubernatorial authority rose from .44 to .50.

There are some notable discrepancies in the estimated effects of the control variables in the model. The percent of the population in poverty appears negatively associated with overall rates of attainment, consistent with expectations, but is positively associated with rates of high school graduation. Similarly, population size is negatively associated with overall rates of attainment, but positively associated (albeit insignificant) with rates of high school graduation. It is possible the inter-state mobility that occurs after adulthood or multicollinearity among the control variables explains these outcomes. It is also possible that the fixed effects leave little room for the effects of these control variables to be tests. Regardless, these findings warrant further investigation, though the consistent direction and significance for variables of interest is reassuring, particularly given that the results hold up across multiple specifications of the model, including slightly varied lag lengths, alternative methods of standard error calculation, and the inclusion of additional lags of the dependent variables.

5.3 Attainment by Race/Ethnicity

The results above suggest a significant positive effect of centralization on achievement, one that is large enough to manifest as better attainment for the population as a whole. There are, however, strong reasons to believe that increasingly centralized school governance is likely to benefit some groups more than others, particularly those are geographically segregated from one another. As I noted in Chapter 3, the successes of decentralized governance in part relies on competition between districts, mobility, and local-level electoral accountability, all factors likely to be weaker in disadvantaged communities and to be aggravated by high levels of residential segregation. For these reasons, we might expect heterogeneous effects of increasingly centralized governance.

To investigate this possibility, I utilize the Census attainment series, described above to estimate separate models for attainment in the 25 and older white and black populations (Models 3 and 4). I then model the attainment gap between blacks and whites separately (Models 5 and 6).⁹ Adopting this approach has one important benefit. The gap between blacks and whites might be smaller in some states than others, without necessarily meaning that blacks are attaining high school diplomas at a higher rate. Absent these complementary models, it would not be possible to determine if gaps in centralizing states were smaller as a result of depressed white attainment or increased black attainment. Model specification reflects Equation 1 above.

White attainment, black attainment, and the gap between the two are modeled between 1990 and 2010. For this time period, the mean rate of white attainment is 83.9 percent, and for black attainment it is 76.5 percent. The average gap between black and white attainment

⁹Again, all models include fixed effects for year and state and are estimated using xtpcse in Stata 12 in order to employ panel corrected standard errors. As before, when similar fixed-effects models are estimated using xtreg with robust standard errors, results do not differ substantially. Also similarly, shifting lags by a 1 or 2 years in either direction does not alter the substantive conclusions discussed below.



Figure 5.1: Attainment by Race

Data Sources: Census

is 7.4 percent.¹⁰ The attainment gap has narrowed during the time period in question. See Figure 5.1. Has the way that states govern schools contributed to the decreased attainment gap between white and black adults?

	White	$Black^1$	Gap	Gap^2
	3	4	5	6
Administrative Index	2.527^{*}	12.113**	-9.642**	-5.618*
10 year lag	(1.202)	(4.352)	(3.300)	(2.662)
Political/Fiscal Index	-2.629†	-9.533*	6.834^{*}	9.234^{*}
10 year lag	(1.408)	(3.811)	(2.752)	(3.956)
Gubernatorial Index	0.458	4.026***	-3.630***	-2.843**
10 year lag	(0.905)	(0.702)	(0.852)	(1.039)
Percent in Poverty	-0.072	-0.198	0.132	0.473***
10 year lag	(0.102)	(0.225)	(0.0936)	(0.111)
Percent White	0.210^{+}	-1.219*	1.444**	0.390
10 year lag	(0.116)	(0.554)	(0.483)	(0.304)
Percent Other, non-White	-0.198	-1.391†	1.203^{+}	0.477
10 year lag	(0.192)	(0.795)	(0.629)	(0.493)
Log Enrolled K-12 Students	-8.128***	4.124	-12.320***	-7.192**
10 year lag	(1.591)	(1.378)	(3.880)	(2.601)
Constant	170.537***	158.059***	11.978	43.088***
	(13.200)	(24.90)	(23.923)	(3.812)
N	150	149	149	134
Overall R^2	0.978	0.845	0.705	0.828
Group N	50	50	50	45
Minimum Obs.	3	2	2	2
Average Obs.	3	2.98	2.98	2.98
Maximum Obs.s	3	3	3	3

Table 5.2: Modeling Attainment by Race

Standard errors in parentheses

† p < 0.10,*p < 0.05,**p < 0.01,***p < 0.001

Models also includes fixed effects for years: 1990, 2000, and 2010.

 $^1\mathrm{MT}$ is excluded for some years as a result of a small black population.

 $^2 {\rm This}$ model excludes ND, SD, ME, VT, & NH.

¹⁰See Appendix Table D.1 for more detailed summary statistics on all variables.

There are several states for which attainment in the black population is notably higher than attainment in the white population. These outlying states are North and South Dakota, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine.¹¹ This is likely related to the small size of the black populations in those states. As a check, these states are excluded from the analysis in Model 6.Excluding these states from the model of the black-white gap does not alter the statistical significance of the findings, but does produce more moderate estimates of effects.

The results of these four models are displayed in Table 5.2. They provide substantial evidence to suggest that centralization of school governance has benefits for student outcomes but is associated with disproportionate benefits for this traditionally disadvantaged minority group. The coefficient for the administrative centralization index is statistically significant and positive for white attainment in Models 3 and 4, suggesting a maximum percentage point increase in white attainment of 2.5 and black attainment of 12.1, were a state to make the dramatic shift from zero to 1. In the more likely event of a shift on the order of one standard deviation, we might expect an increase attainment of .6 and 3.0 percentage points for white and black adults respectively, producing a corresponding decline of in the degree to which white adults in the state outperform black adults on this measure (.78 and 3.6 percentage points based on average change). In Model 6, where several outlying states are excluded, the estimate still suggests that an increase in administrative centralization is likely to reduce attainment gaps between black and whites, though to a smaller degree, 1.4 percentage points for a one standard deviation increase. These findings are notable given that fixed year effects should difference out the time trend that can be observed in Figure 5.1. As states become more administratively centralized, the discrepancy in high-school level attainment appears to decline.

As with overall attainment, there are additional, statistically significant benefits of cen-

¹¹North Dakota in the early 1980s accounts for the large gap favoring black attainment, the minimum value noted in Appendix Table D.1.

tralization when gubernatorial control is strengthened. The black-white attainment gap is projected to decrease by .9 percentage points in Model 5 and by .7 percentage points in Model 6 for an increase in gubernatorial authority of .25 on the index.

As before, however, centralization along the political/fiscal dimension appears to have contradictory effects. The index fails to achieve statistical significance for white attainment in Model 3 and achieves statistical significance in Models 4, 5, and 6. Increased centralization along this dimension is associated with lower levels of black attainment and larger gaps between whites and blacks. These effects, however, seem likely to have a small substantive impact, given the minimal shift along this index during the time period included in the model (.02) and the fact that states have become slightly less centralized on average rather than more so during the time period in question.

5.4 Attainment by Gender

Race is distributed unevenly across geography. Differential effects of centralization on whites and black may suggest that geographic segregation is one of the mechanisms explaining positive effects. But because this group is traditionally disadvantaged, centralized governance may also be positively impacting outcomes because leadership is accountable to a broader constituency and more attentive to matters of equity and redistribution. Gender, presumably should not be distributed unevenly across geography. Differential effects for men and women would suggest that this second explanation is also salient.

To test for this differential effect between men and women, I again utilize the Census attainment series, described above to estimate separate models for attainment in the 25 and older male and female populations (models 7 and 8). I then model the attainment gap between men and women separately (models 9). As above, adopting this approach enables inference regarding the effects of centralization on the attainment gap between men



Figure 5.2: Attainment by Gender

Data Sources: Census

and women, without limiting the analysis. From Models 7 and 8, it is possible to determine whether or not centralization positively effects both male and female attainment, and modeling the gap tests for statistically significant differences in those effects.¹²

The gap between male and female attainment is different than that for black and white attainment. First, it is substantially smaller over the entire duration of the series. For the period between 1990 and 2010, the mean for male attainment is 81.4 percent, while mean female attainment is 82.1. On balance, women are attaining high school diplomas at higher rates than men. However, this reflects a switch in position, that occurred somewhere in

 $^{^{12}\}mathrm{All}$ model specifications reflects Equation 1 above, include fixed effects for year and

the mid-nineties as women's attainment outpaced men's. For the first half of the period in the sample, men's attainment is higher than women's on average, and for the second half, women's is higher than men's. This shift is depicted in Figure 5.2. There is a range in the gap across states. The minimum value in the series is -3.8, indicating that women's attainment in that state-year outpaced men's attainment by 3.8 percentage points. The maximum value is 3.30, indicating that men's attainment in that state-year outpaced women's.¹³ The mean male-female attainment gap is just -.66 percentage points with a standard deviation of just 1.33.

The results of Models 7, 8, and 9 are displayed in Table 5.3. These models also suggest that attainment in the population, both women's and men's, is positively impacted by administrative centralization and increased gubernatorial authority. The effect of the average increase in administrative centralization (.30) would suggest a .27 percentage point increase in attainment in the male population and a .98 percentage point increase in rates of attainment among females. The results for Model 9 reflect these findings. Centralization of school governance along the administrative dimension disproportionately promotes attainment for women. Scholars have long wondered why gender gaps favoring women emerge at different times across the country; perhaps state governance is a component of that explanation. Coefficients for gubernatorial authority also promote higher rates of attainment, though this index appears to have a slightly stronger effects on male attainment.

In Models 7 and 8, the political/fiscal measure of centralization is again negatively associated with rates of attainment, though , as with black attainment in Model 4, the effect only becomes large enough to achieve statistical significance with respect to the traditionally disadvantaged population. Centralization along this dimension appears to disproportionately affect women in the negative though again, given the minimal change that has occurred along this dimension it is reasonable to view these results with some caution. While these

 $^{^{13}}$ See Appendix Table D.1

results are again suggestive of centralization's effects, in particular that there are effects of governance that stem from mechanisms beyond the altered politics created by geography, it is wise to be cautious with regard to drawing conclusions from this model in particular, given the limited variance in the dependent variable in combination with the shift in the nature of the attainment gap between the populations in question.

	Male	Female	Female-Male
	7	8	9
Administrative Index	1.353	3.260^{*}	-1.908***
10 year lag	(1.114)	(1.595)	(0.563)
Political/Fiscal Index	-3.139	-5.146*	2.007***
10 year lag	(2.248)	(2.276)	(0.204)
Gubernatorial Index	2.747***	1.961**	0.785^{*}
10 year lag	(0.841)	(0.750)	(0.382)
Percent in Poverty	-0.107*	-0.132*	0.025
7 year lag	(0.047)	(0.061)	(0.017)
Percent White	0.417^{**}	0.276^{+}	0.141^{*}
7 year lag	(0.134)	(0.159)	(0.061)
Percent Other, non-White	0.077	-0.078	0.155^{**}
7 year lag	(0.189)	(0.222)	(0.052)
Log Enrolled K-12 Students	-7.617***	-6.584***	-1.033***
7 year lag	(1.409)	(1.203)	(0.267)
Constant	139.061***	141.505***	-2.444
	(11.273)	(11.014)	(5.466)
N	150	150	150
Overall R^2	0.976	0.975	0.875
Group N	50	50	50
Minimum Obs.	3	3	3
Average Obs.	3	3	3
Maximum Obs.	3	3	3

Table 5.3: Modeling Attainment by Gender

Standard errors in parentheses

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Models also includes fixed effects for years: 1990, 2000, and 2010.

5.5 Per Student Revenues and Expenditures

Finally, many of the hypothesized impacts of centralization of school governance regard efficiency and spending. As states enact policies that create more administratively centralized systems, but largely preserve decentralized political and fiscal structures, they will likely rely on equalizing central transfers, which may drive up expenditures (though this may also yield better outcomes). Higher levels of centralization may also, simply, drive up educational investments as states should have greater equivalence than localities in terms of internalizing the effects of under-providing education and so should be better incentivized to establish broad access to high quality schools in addition to having a greater technical capacity to do so. The challenge for federal systems is to identify the "optimal" allocation of authority in order to maximize social welfare(Schneider, 2003; Musgrave, 1965), and costs should be a component of that calculus, and serve as indicators of effective accountability, even when efficiency (as narrowly determined by direct effects) should not be the paramount value in decision-making (Ahmad et al., 1997; Dafflon, 2006).

To investigate the effects of centralizing governance on K-12 educational spending and investments, I calculate the average total per-pupil revenues for the states between 1979 and 2008 (in adjusted, 2010 United States dollars), and model it as a function of the centralization indices, as above, as well as state-level, time-varying demographic factors and partisanship.¹⁴ The model is specified in a similar matter as those above, where per student spending year t, state i is a function of a constant β_0 , a vector of indices X for state i at time t-5, a vector of demographic controls Z for state i at time t, an additional control for partisanship P in state i at time t-2 and state and year fixed effects, γ_i and α_t . Indices are lagged based on the assumption that effects on spending will take significant time to emerge, 5 years; partisanship is lagged to a lesser degree based on the assumption that its effects will

¹⁴Partisanship is measured by Republican vote-share in presidential election years and is interpolated for years between these major national elections.

be more proximate. The market centralization index is included in these models since the time-horizon for impact is more proximate.

$$PerStudentRevenuesY_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it-5} + \beta_2 Z_{it} + \beta_3 P_{it-2} + \gamma_i + \alpha_t + u_{it}$$
(5.3)

	Revenues Per Student
	10
Administrative Index	1827.390***
5 year lag	(312.405)
Fiscal / Political Index	-2426.167^{***}
5 year lag	(350.631)
Gubernatorial Index	-1278.146***
5 year lag	(233.681)
Market Index	78.706
5 year lag	(197.723)
Percent Republican	-43.207***
2 year lag	(13.244)
Percent in Poverty	-61.100*
*	(27.665)
Percent Black	278.105***
	(32.645)
Percent Other non-White	50.459^{+}
	(27.739)
Log Enrolled K-12 Students	-4062.755***
Ŭ	(435.829)
Constant	62,197***
	(4749.803)
N	1500
Overall \mathbb{R}^2	0.928
States	50
Obs. Per State.	30
Standard errors in parentheses	
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.0$	001

Table 5.4: Modeling State-Level Investments in K-12

=

Models also includes fixed effects for years: 1979-2008

The results of this model of average per-student revenues can be viewed in Table 5.4. In Model 10, I find a large, statistically significant, positive effect of administrative centralization, and large statistically significant negative effects of political/fiscal centralization and gubernatorial authority. The market index does not achieve significance in any of the models. The large, positive effect of the administrative index is unsurprising. Increasing state-level administrative centralization means increasing statutory and programmatic requirements, and should reasonably be associated with increased K-12 investments. The average increase in administrative centralization during the time period in this model is .38, which would be associated with per pupil revenue increase of approximately \$694.

There are also negative effects. As political/fiscal centralization increases, spending looks to decline precipitously. This effect on spending is, however, somewhat surprising, since one of the most touted benefits of decentralized governance is greater efficiency in terms of lower spending. Instead, the model suggests that decentralization is likely to drive up costs. Given the high level of correlation between administrative centralization and political/fiscal centralization, I estimated an additional model excluding the administrative index to be certain that collinearity does not explain the negative sign. There was no substantive change to the outcomes of the model. Political/fiscal centralization is associated with lower spending. This effect could be a result of many mechanisms and warrants further investigation, though, the average decline of .01 along the political/fiscal centralization index would correspond only to an increase in per pupil expenditures of approximately \$24, not a dramatic effect, particularly as compared to the substantive effect size for administrative centralization.

Gubernatorial authority is also statistically significant and negatively associated with level of per-student revenues. An increase of. .25 along this index would be expected to produce a decrease in per student spending of approximately \$319. States in which governors achieve greater levels of influence spend less per student. As with the result for fiscal and political centralization, multiple mechanisms might be at play. Perhaps, as all states provide some significant share of educational resources, the incentives to better manage that money, and not to raid the commons, are greater when school governance is better integrated with general governance.¹⁵ Perhaps public officials face greater electoral or intergovernmental accountability for spending increases when school governance is less politically fragmented and more fiscally integrated.

5.6 Conclusions and Future Work

I find consistent evidence in these models that levels of state-centralization across different dimensions have explanatory power, both for student outcomes and for K-12 per-student investments. The most persistent, positive finding, is that administrative centralization at the state level has led to improved outcomes overall, and substantially improved outcomes for traditionally underprivileged groups. Findings with regard the political/fiscal dimension of centralization were present but less consistent. Since the models rely primarily on within state change over time, interpretation of this dimension may be more limited due to the relatively modest variation present in the dependent variable.

Centralization along the political/fiscal and gubernatorial dimension appears to reduce spending, but how that is likely to translate (or not) into student success is unclear. These conclusions are, however, somewhat limited. The measures of attainment are far-removed from in time from the interventions, and potentially biased depending on patterns of mobility. The results from the model of freshman high school graduation rates are reassuring, but not conclusive. In future work, I hope to expand the universe of dependent variables related to

 $^{^{15}\}mbox{For example, local districts might be less likely to game the system of state aids by neglecting to update their enrollment numbers — an$ ecdotally a common practice.

student achievement and attainment so that conclusions might be more robust. Periodic, nationally representative surveys conducted by NCES may offer a good alternative source of data.

The fact that administrative centralization is so consistently significant in these models suggests that setting a floor on quality and monitoring districts, essentially strengthening intergovernmental accountability and leveraging the superior technical capacity of the states, are likely explanations for improved student outcomes. However, these analyses also provide little leverage for understanding the mechanism by which centralized governance improves outcomes. Do state intervention and administrative centralization increase public awareness of school performance and subsequently electoral accountability? Does intergovernmental accountability succeed where electoral accountability fails, in terms of motivating leadership? Perhaps Manna's argument regarding the mutually beneficial relationship between federal and state educational capacity also applies to the relationship between states and localities. Kirst offers an array of possible explanations for how state-level intervention might alter local practice:

State academic standards policies can stimulate more curriculum activity at the district and principal's office. State policies can be the local springboard for local authorities to devise new solutions... be aware of the complex mutual adaptations and interventions among the three levels of education governance... States are still searching for the right blend of mandates, sanctions, incentives, and deregulation to galvanize their desired local changes... Ponder if the state role has become too large. Do we have the right balance between state and local education? Who should control what?" (x, 2009)

In order to answer these questions, future studies will have to move past aggregate, state level indicators, to also look within-states. If centralization improves redistribution of educational resources, then we may witness greater equality in terms of student-spending between districts. If state accountability policies improve public and electoral accountability, we may witness greater rates of turnover among school board leadership. If administrative capacity buttresses local capacity, we may see that districts allocate revenues in a more efficient manner. Each of these potential mechanisms by which centralization of governance is likely to impact educational quality can be empirically explored, though they are beyond the scope of these particular study.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

"As a matter of policy, appreciating the complex interactions between institutions, the economy, and underlying features of the polity is central to appreciating whether Madison's writings in the Federalist Papers have anything to say about a place like Iraq. As a matter of social science, the lack of widespread attention to institutional endogeneity represents the most serious limitation on further understanding decentralized governments and processes around the world." Erik Wibbels (2006, pg. 167)

In the previous chapters, I put forward several arguments. I asserted that state involvement in K-12 governance is not new. Mischaracterizing the last 35 years as a sudden revolution that has upended a previously unchallenged tradition of local control threatens to reinforce tired protests, protests based less on reasoned expectations about the likely effects of more centralized governance than on the notion that the democratic American tradition is one in which school boards act autonomously and are accountable predominantly to their direct constituents. The truth is that schools and educational governance have been constantly evolving since the founding. As in other policy arenas, who is in charge is constantly in flux, and the relative power of the many governments is constantly being renegotiated in our federal system.

State leaders have sought to foster the development of school systems and have worked to expand state influence over their finance and content for two hundred years, not just the last 35. The progressive centralization of school governance throughout U.S. history is a well-documented phenomenon (Kaestle and Smith, 1982; Green, 1990), but the extent and success of these efforts has varied substantially from state to state, and systematically across regions. These inter-state distinctions have long been neglected, both in empirical and theoretical analyses, in favor of a local or national narratives.

The constant refrain of local control obscures meaningful public and scholarly conversations that ought to take place around which levels of government are best suited to make which decisions and what arrangements will most readily facilitate productive collaborations between localities and states. Though several scholars have concluded that school governance cannot be treated as zero sum game in which one authority grows in stature while the other is diminished (Fuhrman and Elmore, 1990; Manna, 2006b; Kirst, 2009), theoretically informed scholarly conversations about school governance that address the roles of states and localities have by and large not moved beyond this insight.

In an attempt to push these discussions further, to move beyond an analysis oriented almost exclusively around local control or national policy, and to "bring the states back in," I turned to the literature on fiscal federalism. This body of work acknowledges that institutional fragmentation and broadly dispersed political authority, both features that are admittedly present in many state systems of school governance, can have important consequences for the nature of political deliberations and subsequently policy outcomes.

It offers a promising strategy for conceptualizing intergovernmental relationships and for identifying several dimensions of governance, a strategy that is particularly necessary given the vast network of agencies involved with school governments. These dimensions include responsibility and autonomy with regard to *fiscal* matters like taxation, budgeting, debt load and spending; number and visibility of *political* institutions, representatives, and elections; intergovernmental accountability and *administrative* autonomy to set goals and make substantive policy determinations; and reliance on *market*-based strategies for promoting service delivery and innovation.

I sought to ground each of these conceptual dimensions by operationalizing them as a series of indices. I identified a relevant a set of state-level indicators, tracked them in time, and then collapsed them into a series of indices to enable inter-state cross-sectional and intra-state historical comparisons. In combination, they paint a more holistic picture of state approaches to school governance.

I assess fiscal and political centralization in school governance as one dimension, because of the tight interrelationships between the indicators for these dimensions. Fiscal and political institutions at the local level vary substantially across the states but have remained largely unaltered over the past 35 years. States that were centralized at the beginning of the series tended to be centralized at the end, and vice versa. But while most adjustments have been small, I observe that states have moved in both directions, some devolving fiscal authority to localities (Florida) or switching from appointed to elected leadership (Virginia), while others have consolidated fiscal authority in state institutions (Vermont). Among state political leadership, several governors have successfully obtained the authority to appoint and dismiss chief state school officers or state school boards. Several continue to pursue expanded authority over school systems (Zinth, 2011). I also observe that in fiscal and political terms, states' school governance is, on average decentralized. Few states score above .5 on an index that ranges from zero to one.

There is a more apparent trend when it comes to administrative and market centralization. Along the administrative dimension, all but one state moved towards greater centralization. As Kirst (2009) observes, "State policymakers now have the instruments to connect the capitol to what goes on weekly inside local classrooms." Along the market dimension, all but a small number of states have adopted some decentralizing school choice reforms.

At first glance, these trends might seem contradictory: increasing administrative centralization and increasing market decentralization, but I would submit that they are indicative
of a national system that is flexible, evolving, and varied as well as of very different state approaches to promoting innovation, quality, and equity. At the same time that administrative centralization has increased intergovernmental accountability and established minimum quality standards, market reforms have emerged as a means of spurring competition and innovation. And while the administrative index was strongly correlated with fiscal-political index (.43 in 2008), the correlation between those indices and the market index was less than .10 in 2008.

In addition to describing variance across states and change over time, I sought to evaluate their potential impact on two state-level outcomes: attainment of a high school diploma and per-student spending in K-12 education. In a series of fixed-effects models, I found a statistically significant and large association between administrative centralization and higher rates of high school attainment, and conditional on increasing administrative centralization a statistically significant, positive effect of fiscal and political centralization. I found also significant associations suggesting that centralization of school governance along both dimensions disproportionately benefited black and female populations in the state. In short, these results suggest that centralizing school governance may, on net, be positive.

It has not been my intent in this project to argue against particularistic evaluations of specific policy interventions. Nor is it my intent to suggest, based on these findings that local control is bad and that all state interventions are likely to be positive. In fact, one of the indicators included in the index of administrative centralization likely has negative impacts on graduation rates (Grodsky et al., 2009).

Instead, I am suggesting that there is value to be found in understanding state approaches to school governance, that these indices can serve as parameter estimates for dimensions of centralization, and that the indicators I have used to construct them constitute of a sample of possible measures. States that enact high school exit exams or that choose to license teachers or pass academic bankruptcy (district takeover) laws may also have higher levels of technical capacity or a stronger political will to act. States with higher levels of fiscal and political decentralization might more efficiently allocate resources, or they might be better able to adapt policies to match local circumstances. The optimal allocation of authority among interested governments is likely to be different from state to state and is probably contingent on political and economic factors I have only begun to consider in these pages.

How and when de/centralization works are important questions, rife with endogeneity, but as Wibbels argues above, they are questions worth attempting to answer. For that reason it will also be important in future work to also consider which factors explain state decisions to centralize or decentralize. Federal pressures cannot explain the full range of approaches to educational governance across the states, and historical contingencies, though they determine positions at the start of the race, do not dictate the future. I have demonstrated in this project that states have taken divergent approaches to governing schools and shown that there are potentially significant consequences of these approaches. We must continue to explore these interstate differences, what explains state approaches, and how policies work in concert with one another in order to move towards institutional environments that promote quality, equity, and innovation in schools.

Chapter 7

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Appendix A

Total United States K-12 Education Revenues: 1970-2008 (Local, State, and Federal Sources)



Figure A.1: Total Education Revenues: 1970-2008

Data Sources: National Center for Education Statistics Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education, 1970-85 and Common Core of Data, 1986-2008 . See also Figure 3.2.

Appendix B

Public Opinion and Public Schools

	Р	erce	nt A	ssig	ning	g Le	tter	Gra	de t	0
	Ι	loca	l Scł	nools	5	Na	ation	al S	cho	\mathbf{ols}
Year	Α	В	С	D	\mathbf{F}	Α	В	С	D	\mathbf{F}
1981	9	27	34	15	7	2	18	43	15	6
1982	8	29	33	15	5	2	20	44	15	4
1983	6	25	32	16	7	2	17	38	16	6
1984	10	32	35	11	4	2	23	49	11	4
1985	9	34	30	12	4	3	24	43	12	3
1986	11	30	28	10	5	3	25	41	10	5
1987	12	31	30	11	4	4	22	44	11	2
1988	9	31	34	13	4	3	20	48	13	3
1989	8	35	33	15	4	2	20	47	15	4
1990	8	33	34	16	5	2	19	49	16	4
1991	10	32	33	13	5	2	19	47	13	5
1992	9	31	33	18	5	2	16	48	18	4
1993	10	37	31	17	4	2	17	48	17	4
1994	9	35	30	17	7	2	20	49	17	6
1995	8	33	37	17	5	2	18	50	17	4
1996	10	35	34	18	6	1	20	46	18	5
1997	10	36	32	15	6	2	20	48	15	6
1998	10	36	31	15	5	1	17	49	15	5
1999	11	38	31	16	5	2	22	46	16	4
2000	11	36	35	14	3	2	18	47	14	5
2001	11	40	30	14	5	2	21	51	14	5
2002	10	37	34	13	3	2	22	47	13	3
2003	11	37	31	12	5	2	24	52	12	3
2004	13	34	33	13	4	2	24	45	13	4
2005	12	36	29	13	5	2	22	46	13	4
2006	13	36	32	14	5	2	19	51	14	3
2007	9	36	34	18	5	2	14	57	18	5
2008	12	34	30	13	5	3	19	44	13	5
2009	10	41	32	19	3	1	18	55	19	6
2010	11	38	33	20	5	1	17	53	20	6
2011	14	37	32	23	5	1	16	51	23	7

Table B.1: PDK/Gallup Poll of Attitudes Towards Public Schools

Data Source: http://www.pdkintl.org/

Appendix C

Measures of Centralization

State	1972	1980	1990	2000	2009	% Change
Alabama	126	127	129	128	133	+5.556
Alaska	29	52	56	53	53	+82.759
Arizona	281	217	228	243	227	-19.217
Arkansas	384	370	326	310	245	-36.198
California	$1,\!059$	1,041	1,076	978	962	-9.160
Colorado	181	181	176	176	178	-1.657
Connecticut	166	165	166	166	169	+1.807
Delaware	26	16	19	19	19	-26.923
District of Columbia	1	1	1	1	1	-
Florida	67	67	67	67	67	-
Georgia	188	187	185	179	180	-4.255
Hawaii	1	1	1	1	1	-
Idaho	115	115	115	115	116	+0.870
Illinois	1,082	1,010	951	892	871	-19.501
Indiana	310	304	303	295	294	-5.161
Iowa	453	444	430	374	362	-20.088
Kansas	312	308	304	304	319	+2.244
Kentucky	190	181	176	176	174	-8.421
Louisiana	66	66	66	68	69	+4.545
Maine	236	226	283	282	315	+33.475
Maryland	24	24	24	24	24	
Massachusetts	370	348	352	348	352	-4.865
Michigan	596	575	561	554	551	-7.550
Minnesota	439	434	435	349	342	-22.096

Table C.1: Number of Districts and Change, Selected Years

State	1972	1980	1990	2000	2009	%. Change
Mississippi	150	153	151	152	152	+1.333
Missouri	600	552	543	524	523	-12.833
Montana	671	567	536	453	427	-36.364
Nebraska	$1,\!309$	1,026	812	576	254	-80.600
Nevada	17	17	17	17	17	-
New Hampshire	156	157	170	178	180	+15.385
New Jersey	581	585	606	604	616	+6.024
New Mexico	87	89	88	89	89	+2.299
New York	736	715	718	703	697	-5.299
North Carolina	152	144	134	117	115	-24.342
North Dakota	343	294	276	230	189	-44.899
Ohio	621	615	613	662	615	-0.966
Oklahoma	649	618	595	544	534	-17.720
Oregon	338	310	299	197	190	-43.787
Pennsylvania	506	504	502	501	502	-0.791
Rhode Island	40	40	37	36	32	-20.000
South Carolina	93	92	95	90	85	-8.602
South Dakota	220	188	184	176	161	-26.818
Tennessee	147	147	140	138	140	-4.762
Texas	$1,\!131$	$1,\!076$	$1,\!053$	$1,\!040$	1,032	-8.753
Utah	40	40	40	40	41	+2.500
Vermont	246	247	336	288	292	+18.699
Virginia	135	135	161	135	134	-0.741
Washington	316	300	296	296	295	-6.646
West Virginia	55	55	55	55	55	-
Wisconsin	442	433	428	426	428	-3.167
Wyoming	60	49	49	48	48	-20.000
	Totals					
Midwest	6.727	6.183	5.840	5.362	4.909	-27.0254
Northeast	3.037	2.987	3,170	3,106	3.155	+3.885
South	3.584	3,459	3,377	3,243	3,159	-11.858
West	3,195	2,979	2,977	2,706	2,644	-17.246
United States	$16,\!543$	15,608	$15,\!364$	14,417	13,867	-16.176
Data Sources: ELSEGIS, 1972-1980 and CCD 1980-2009						

Note: Excludes Charter Districts.

State	1972	2009	Change	% Change
Alabama	6,217	$5,\!630$	-586	-9.435
Alaska	2,942	$2,\!484$	-458	-15.576
Arizona	1,726	4,748	3,021	175.049
Arkansas	1,201	1,961	759	63.232
California	4,250	6,510	2,260	53.189
Colorado	3,172	4,676	1,503	47.392
Connecticut	4,004	$3,\!337$	-667	-16.666
Delaware	5,166	$6,\!673$	1,507	29.185
Florida	$22,\!602$	39,321	16,718	73.969
Georgia	5,799	9,264	3,465	59.758
Hawaii	$181,\!979$	180, 196	-1,783	-0.980
Idaho	$1,\!606$	2,382	776	48.334
Illinois	$2,\!176$	2,416	240	11.015
Indiana	$3,\!937$	$3,\!560$	-377	-9.579
Iowa	1,427	$1,\!359$	-68	-4.784
Kansas	1,576	$1,\!487$	-89	-5.630
Kentucky	3,761	$3,\!909$	147	3.917
Louisiana	$12,\!816$	10,013	-2,803	-21.868
Maine	1,061	601	-461	-43.394
Maryland	38,371	$35,\!351$	-3,020	-7.871
Massachusetts	$3,\!250$	2,719	-531	-16.348
Michigan	$3,\!632$	$2,\!993$	-640	-17.607
Minnesota	2,072	$2,\!448$	375	18.118
Mississippi	3,509	$3,\!240$	-269	-7.669
Missouri	1,717	1,755	39	2.245
Montana	268	332	64	23.884
Nebraska	251	$1,\!163$	911	362.402
Nevada	7,745	$25,\!232$	$17,\!487$	225.799
New Hampshire	1,078	$1,\!095$	18	1.642
New Jersey	2,600	2,266	-334	-12.831
New Mexico	$3,\!277$	3,758	481	14.665
New York	4,766	$3,\!969$	-798	-16.738
North Carolina	$7,\!640$	$12,\!899$	$5,\!259$	68.830
North Dakota	413	503	90	21.906
Ohio	3901	2,869	-1,032	-26.465
Oklahoma	935	1,226	291	31.089
Oregon	$1,\!395$	3,068	$1,\!673$	119.951

Table C.2: Average District Size and Change, 1972-2009

$4,667 \\ 4,742 \\ 6,707 \\ 738 \\ 6,066$	3,558 4,535 8,508 768 6,947	-1,109 -207 1,800 30	-23.756 -4.373 26.841 4.095
$4,742 \\ 6,707 \\ 738 \\ 6,066$	4,535 8,508 768 6.947	-207 1,800 30	-4.373 26.841 4 095
6,707 738 6,066	8,508 768 6.947	$\begin{array}{c}1,\!800\\30\end{array}$	$26.841 \\ 4.095$
738 6,066	768 6 947	30	4.095
6,066	6.047		1.000
-	0,947	880	14.511
2,421	4,700	2,279	94.128
$7,\!648$	$14,\!214$	6,567	85.861
433	317	-116	-26.894
7,921	9,294	$1,\!373$	17.327
2,502	$3,\!510$	1,008	40.297
7,454	5,139	-2,315	-31.056
2,252	2,038	-213	-9.470
1,434	$1,\!837$	403	28.107
Across S	tate Ave	erages	
2,008	1,947	-61	
2,956	$2,\!488$	-467	
8,662	$10,\!255$	1,593	
$16,\!919$	$19,\!457$	2,539	
$8,\!185$	9,256	$1,\!071$	
	2,421 7,648 433 7,921 2,502 7,454 2,252 1,434 Across S 2,008 2,956 8,662 16,919 8,185	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$

Data Source: Note: Averages exclude DC.



Figure C.1: Regional Average District Enrollment, 1972-2009

Data Sources: NCES etc.



Data Sources: NCES etc.



Figure C.3: Distribution of Average District Enrollment, 1972-2009

Data Sources: NCES etc.



Figure C.4: Distribution of Adjusted Average District Enrollment, 1972-2009

Data Sources: NCES etc.

Table C.3: Local School Board Selection, 1972 and 2009

		Elected or Appointed	On Cycle (Nov.)
State	1972	2009	2009
Alabama ¹	Both	Both	Some
Alaska	Elected	Elected	Off (Oct.)
Arizona	Elected	Elected	On
Arkansas	Elected	Elected	Off (Sept.)
$California^2$	Both	Both	Some
Colorado	Elected	Elected	On
$Connecticut^3$	Elected	Both	Most
$Delaware^4$	Both	Both	Off (May)
District of Columbia ⁵	Elected	Both	On
Florida	Elected	Elected	On
Georgia	Both	Elected	On
$Hawaii^6$	Elected	Elected	On
Idaho	Elected	Elected	Off (May)

	Elected o	r Appointed	On Cycle (Nov.)
State	1972	2009	2009
Illinois ⁷	Both	Both	Off (April)
Indiana	Both	Both	Off (Varies)
Iowa	Elected	Elected	Off (Sept.)
Kansas ⁸	Elected	Elected	Off (April)
Kentucky	Elected	Elected	On
Louisiana	Elected	Elected	Off (Oct.)
Maine	Both	Elected	Off (Varies)
Maryland ⁹	Both	Both	On
Massachusetts ¹⁰	Elected	Both	Some
$Michigan^{11}$	Elected	Elected	Some
Minnesota	Elected	Elected	On
$Mississippi^{12}$	Both	Both	On
Missouri	Elected	Elected	Off (April)
Montana	Elected	Elected	Off (May)
Nebraska ¹³	Elected	Elected	Most
Nevada	Elected	Elected	On
New Hampshire ¹⁴	Elected	Elected	Some
New Jersey	Both	Both	Off (April)
New Mexico	Elected	Elected	Off (Feb.)
New York ¹⁵	Both	Both	Off (Varies)
North Carolina	Both	Both	On
North Dakota	Elected	Elected	Off (Varies)
$Ohio^{16}$	Elected	Both	On
Oklahoma	Elected	Elected	Off (Feb.)
Oregon	Elected	Elected	Off (May)
Pennsylvania ¹⁷	Both	Both	On
Rhode Island ¹⁸	Both	Both	On
South Carolina	Both	Both	Off (Varies)
South Dakota	Elected	Elected	Off (Varies)
Tennessee	Both	Both	Off (Varies)
Texas	Elected	Elected	Off (Varies)
Utah	Elected	Elected	On
Vermont	Elected	Elected	Off (March)
Virginia ¹⁹	Appointed	Both	Some
Washington	Elected	Elected	On
West Virginia	Elected	Elected	Off (May)
Wisconsin	Elected	Elected	Off (April)
Wyoming	Elected	Elected	On
	To	tals	
Midwest	Elected (10)	Elected (9)	On (2)

	Elected or	· Appointed	On Cycle (Nov.)
State	1972	2009	2009
	Both (2)	Both (3)	Off (10)
Northeast	Elected (4)	Elected (3)	On (2)
	Both (5)	Both (6)	Off (7)
South	Elected $(7 + D.C.)$	Elected (9)	On $(6 + D.C.)$
	Both (8)	Both $(7 + D.C.)$	Off (10)
	Appointed (1)		
West	Elected (12)	Elected (12)	On (7)
	Both (1)	Both (1)	Off (6)
United States	Elected $(33+D.C.)$	Elected $(32 + D.C.)$	On $(17 + D.C.)$
	Both (16)	Both (18)	Off (33)
	Appointed (1)		

Data Sources: ELSEGIS 1972, NSBA 2009, ECS 2004.

¹As of 2009, Alabama has both county and city school boards. All county boards are elected. Some city boards are elected, and some are appointed. County elections take place on-cycle in November. City elections take place in August.

 2 As of 2009, in California, all school boards are elected, with the exception of the LA County school board, which is appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. State law allows for some cities to have school boards appointed by the city council, but this arrangement has been exceedingly rare. In 1972 (and onward) the only city to take advantage of this was Sacramento.

³As of 2009, all school boards in Connecticut are elected, except for the New Haven board, which is appointed by the Mayor, and the Hartford board which is half elected and half appointed by the mayor. All but 12 elections take place in Nov. on-cycle. Some exceptions may be made in odd-numbered years. There are both regional and local boards.

 4 There 16 elected local boards, and 3 special vocational district boards that are appointed by the governor.

⁵As of 1997, Washington, D.C. school board was partially elected and partially appointed, but was only an advisory body in the mayors office. The board recently reverted to an entirely elected body.

 $^6\mathrm{There}$ is only one school board for the state of Hawaii, which is administered as a single district.

⁷All local boards are elected, with the exception of the school board for the city of Chicago, which is appointed by the Mayor.

⁸All boards in Kansas are elected, with the exception of the Ft. Leavenworth board, which is appointed by the base commander. There are similar practices in other states regarding military bases (e.g. Texas).

⁹In Maryland, all boards are elected, except for Wicomico, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and

Harford counties and Baltimore city (in 2009). The county boards are appointed by the governor. The Baltimore city board is jointly appointed by the governor and the mayor and has been since at least 1992.

¹⁰There are local and regional boards in Massachusetts. Some regional boards are appointed. The city of Boston board is appointed by the mayor (since 1989). City board elections take place in November, on-cycle. Town board elections occur during town meetings, which are typically in May.

¹¹All boards are elected in Michigan. Between 1999 and 2005, the (then) seven member Detroit city school board was appointed by the mayor (six) and the governor (one). Localities select from a set of state-determined dates. Many are switching to be on-cycle.

¹²Most districts in Mississippi are governed by elected boards, with the exception of municipal separate school districts in which the board can be appointed by municipal governing body. The authorizing legislation for these types of districts was repealed in 1987, but did not require existing districts to change their mode of governance.

¹³Most board elections in Nebraska take place during on-cycle as legislated by the state, except for in the largest districts, which are authorized to set their elections to coincide with other municipal contests.

¹⁴Ten cities hold elections in November.

¹⁵All school boards in New York are elected except for in Yonkers and New York City. In Yonkers, the board members are appointed by the mayor. In New York, the board is jointly appointed by the mayor and the borough presidents. Elections take place in May, though major cities may petition and is approved to hold elections at another time.

 16 In 2009, all Ohio school boards are elected except for the board in Cleveland, which is appointed by the mayor.

¹⁷All school boards are elected, except for the school board in Philadelphia, which is appointed by the mayor.

¹⁸All school boards are elected, except for the school boards in two large cities. In Providence, the board is appointed jointly by the mayor (nominates) and the city council (confirms). In Central Falls, the board is jointly appointed by the state's education commissioner (nominates) and board of regents (confirms).

¹⁹As of 2009, there were 108 elected boards, and 26 appointed. Elections take place either in May or November, depending on the supervising local government.

State	1972	2008
Alabama	Independent	Independent
Alaska	Dependent	Dependent
Arizona	Dependent	Independent (95%)
Arkansas	Independent	Independent
California	Dependent	Independent(94%)
Colorado	Independent	Independent
Connecticut	Dependent (96%)	Dependent (86%)
Delaware	Independent	Independent
District of Columbia	Dependent	Dependent
Florida	Independent	Independent
Georgia	Independent	Independent
Hawaii	Dependent	Dependent
Idaho	Independent	Independent
Illinois	Independent	Independent
Indiana	Independent (99%)	Independent (99%)
Iowa	Independent	Independent
Kansas	Independent	Independent
Kentucky	Independent	Independent
Louisiana	Independent	Independent
Maine	Dependent	Dependent (66%)
Maryland	Dependent	Dependent
Massachusetts	Dependent	Dependent (75%)
Michigan	Independent	Independent
Minnesota	Independent	Independent
Mississippi	Dependent (64%)	Independent (98%)
Missouri	Independent	Independent
Montana	Independent	Independent
Nebraska	Independent	Independent
Nevada	Dependent	Independent
New Hampshire	Independent (95%)	Independent (94%)
New Jersey	Independent	Independent (91%)
New Mexico	Dependent	Independent
New York	Independent (99%)	Independent (99%)
North Carolina	Dependent	Dependent
North Dakota	Independent	Independent
Ohio	Independent	Independent
Oklahoma	Independent	Independent

Table C.4: District Fiscal In/Dependence, $1972 \ {\rm and} \ 2008$

State	1972	2008				
Oregon	Independent	Independent				
Pennsylvania	Independent	Independent				
Rhode Island	Dependent	Dependent (89%)				
South Carolina	Dependent (72%)	Independent				
South Dakota	Independent	Independent				
Tennessee	Dependent	Dependent (90%)				
Texas	Independent	Independent				
Utah	Independent (97)	Independent				
Vermont	Independent	Independent				
Virginia	Dependent	Dependent				
Washington	Independent	Independent				
West Virginia	Independent	Independent				
Wisconsin	Independent (90%)	Independent (99%)				
Wyoming	Independent	Independent				
Totals						
Midwest	Independent (12)	Independent (12)				
	Dependent (0)	Dependent (0)				
Northeast	Independent (5)	Independent (5)				
	Dependent (4)	Dependent (4)				
South	Independent (10)	Independent (12)				
	Dependent $(6 + D.C.)$	Dependent $(4 + D.C.)$				
West	Independent (7)	Independent (11)				
	Dependent (6)	Dependent (2)				
United States	Independent (34)	Independent (40)				
	Dependent $(16+ D.C.)$	Dependent (10+D.C.)				

Data Sources: ELSEGIS 1972, Census of Governments 2008.
	Loc	al %	Stat	e %	e % Feder	
State	1972	2008	1972	2008	1972	2008
Alabama	23.508	31.709	57.131	57.549	19.362	10.742
Alaska	9.619	21.580	66.224	64.502	24.159	13.918
Arizona	54.085	41.343	36.916	47.019	8.999	11.639
Arkansas	36.400	32.818	44.391	55.645	19.209	11.536
California	59.530	29.561	31.803	57.445	8.667	12.994
Colorado	65.045	49.144	27.973	43.935	6.982	6.922
Connecticut	64.655	56.614	30.435	38.921	4.910	4.466
Delaware	22.878	29.502	69.334	61.813	7.787	8.115
District of Columbia	63.409	89.356			36.591	10.644
Florida	34.989	55.390	54.819	34.373	10.192	10.237
Georgia	37.778	47.445	48.489	43.184	13.732	9.370
Hawaii	0.000	3.416	87.056	81.979	12.944	14.605
Idaho	53.606	22.498	34.709	67.289	11.686	10.213
Illinois	51.219	60.504	42.502	27.627	6.278	11.869
Indiana	61.165	49.102	33.176	39.499	5.659	11.399
Iowa	63.569	45.847	30.945	46.113	5.486	8.041
Kansas	64.770	34.404	27.109	57.718	8.120	7.878
Kentucky	29.464	31.736	54.574	57.252	15.962	11.012
Louisiana	30.657	38.218	55.279	46.176	14.064	15.606
Maine	55.030	46.700	35.688	43.759	9.282	9.541
Maryland	49.769	51.185	42.899	43.510	7.331	5.305
Massachusetts	64.665	51.581	30.303	39.968	5.033	8.451
Michigan	54.481	32.815	39.903	55.678	5.616	11.507
Minnesota	37.546	28.413	56.944	65.591	5.510	5.995
Mississippi	24.057	30.967	49.386	53.532	26.557	15.501
Missouri	56.447	57.585	34.761	34.111	8.792	8.304
Montana	61.840	38.998	27.901	48.526	10.259	12.476
Nebraska	76.258	56.769	14.971	35.110	8.772	8.122
Nevada	57.181	59.634	35.131	30.604	7.688	9.762
New Hampshire	86.858	57.655	7.787	36.923	5.355	5.422
New Jersey	69.080	54.253	24.995	41.630	5.925	4.116
New Mexico	19.170	15.056	60.177	70.048	20.653	14.896
New York	53.785	48.582	40.705	45.622	5.510	5.796
North Carolina	27.135	26.388	58.021	63.058	14.844	10.554
North Dakota	58.828	48.345	27.114	37.008	14.058	14.647
Ohio	60.731	45.097	$33.\overline{189}$	$47.\overline{560}$	$6.\overline{080}$	$7.\overline{343}$

Table C.5: Shares of K-12 Revenues 1972 and 2008 $\,$

	Loca	al %	Stat	e %	Feder	ral %
State	1972	2008	1972	2008	1972	2008
Oklahoma	43.795	33.447	44.387	53.101	11.818	13.452
Oregon	72.244	38.361	19.694	50.727	8.062	10.912
Pennsylvania	44.471	54.009	47.382	38.703	8.147	7.288
Rhode Island	59.915	53.717	33.077	36.628	7.009	9.655
South Carolina	27.710	42.331	53.163	47.773	19.127	9.896
South Dakota	70.969	50.597	12.931	33.029	16.101	16.375
Tennessee	41.260	42.725	42.543	45.986	16.197	11.289
Texas	41.605	46.791	46.961	42.530	11.433	10.678
Utah	37.120	35.001	52.365	52.561	10.515	12.438
Vermont	61.434	7.761	33.077	85.697	5.489	6.543
Virginia	54.640	51.765	33.270	42.124	12.091	6.111
Washington	41.482	28.325	49.315	60.036	9.203	11.639
West Virginia	31.203	29.754	54.092	59.091	14.705	11.155
Wisconsin	65.173	43.579	30.532	44.398	4.295	12.024
Wyoming	56.401	37.001	34.245	56.398	9.355	6.601
Across State Averages						
Midwest	60.096	46.088	32.006	43.620	7.897	10.292
Northeast	62.210	47.875	31.494	45.317	6.295	6.809
South	34.803	38.886	50.546	50.419	14.651	10.660
West	45.178	32.301	43.347	56.236	11.475	11.463
United States	48.504	40.520	40.795	49.381	10.700	10.087
	Data S	Source: C	CCD 2008	3		

Note: Across state averages exclude DC.

State	1972	2008
Alabama	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Alaska	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Arizona	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Arkansas	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
California	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Colorado	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Connecticut	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Delaware	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
District of Columbia ¹	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP) & Appt.
Florida	Ex Officio	Gov. Appt.
Georgia	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Hawaii	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Idaho	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Illinois	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Indiana	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Iowa	Elected (P)	Gov. Appt.
Kansas	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Kentucky	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Louisiana	Elected (P)	Elected (P) & Gov. Appt.
Maine	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Maryland	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Massachusetts	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Michigan	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Minnesota	Gov. Appt.	No Board
Mississippi	Ex Officio	Gov., Lt. Gov, & House Spkr. Appt.
Missouri	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Montana	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Nebraska	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP)
Nevada	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP)
New Hampshire	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
New Jersey	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
New $Mexico^2$	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
New York	Leg. Appt.	Leg. Appt.
North Carolina	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
North Dakota	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Ohio	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP) & Gov. Appt.

Table C.6: State Board of Education Selection, 1972 and 2008

State	1972	2008
Oklahoma	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Oregon	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Pennsylvania	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Rhode Island	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
South Carolina	Leg. Appt.	Leg. Appt.
South Dakota	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Tennessee	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Texas	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Utah	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP)
Vermont	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Virginia	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Washington	Elected	Elected & Gov. Appt.
West Virginia	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Wisconsin	No Board	No Board
Wyoming	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
	Totals	5
Midwest	Elected (4)	Elected (3)
	Gov. Apt. (7)	Gov. Apt. (6)
	No Board (1)	No Board (2)
	Other (0)	Other (1)
Northeast	Gov. Appt. (8)	Gov. Appt. (8)
	Leg. Appt. (1)	Leg. Appt. (1)
\mathbf{South}	Elected $(3 + D.C.)$	Elected (2)
	Gov. Appt. (10)	Gov. Appt. (11)
	Ex Officio (2)	Ex Officio (0)
	Leg. Appt. (1)	Leg. Appt. (1)
	Other (0)	Other $(1 + D.C.)$
West	Elected (6)	Elected (5)
	Gov. Appt. (7)	Gov. Appt. (7)
	Other (0)	Other (1)
United States	Elected $(13 + D.C.)$	Elected (10)
	Gov. Appt. (32)	Gov. Appt. (32)
	Ex Officio (2)	Ex. Officio (0)
	Leg. Appt. (2)	Leg. Appt. (2)
	No Board (1)	No Board (2)
	Other (0)	Other $(4 + D.C.)$

Data Sources: Harris 1973, ECS 2008.

¹The Washington D.C. board is an advisory body in the office of the Mayor, as of 1997. ²The board in New Mexico is an advisory body to the governor, as of 2003.

State	1972	2008
Alabama	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
$Alaska^1$	SBE/Gov. Appt.	SBE/Gov. Appt.
Arizona	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
$Arkansas^1$	SBE/Gov. Appt.	SBE/Gov. Appt.
California	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP)
Colorado	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Connecticut	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Delaware	SBE Appt.	Gov. Appt.
District of Columbia	SBE Appt.	Mayoral Appt.& Appt.
$\mathrm{Florida}^2$	Elected (P)	SBE Appt.
Georgia	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Hawaii	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Idaho	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Illinois	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Indiana	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
$Iowa^3$	SBE Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Kansas	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
$\mathrm{Kentucky}^4$	Elected (P)	SBE Appt.
$Louisiana^5$	Elected (P)	SBE Appt.
Maine	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Maryland	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Massachusetts	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Michigan	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
$Minnesota^6$	SBE Appt.	Gov. Appt.
$Mississippi^6$	Elected (P)	SBE Appt.
Missouri	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Montana	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
Nebraska	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Nevada	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
New Hampshire	SBE Appt.	Gov. Appt.
New Jersey	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
New Mexico	SBE Appt.	Gov. Appt.
New York	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
North Carolina	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
North Dakota	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP)
Ohio	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt. & Gov. Appt.
Oklahoma	Elected (P)	Elected (P)

Table C.7: Chief State School Officer, 1972 and 2008

State	1972	2008
Oregon	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP)
Pennsylvania	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Rhode Island	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt
South Carolina	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
South Dakota	Elected (NP)	Gov. Appt.
Tennessee	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Texas	SBE Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Utah	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Vermont	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Virginia	Gov. Appt.	Gov. Appt.
Washington	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP)
West Virginia	SBE Appt.	SBE Appt.
Wisconsin	Elected (NP)	Elected (NP)
Wyoming	Elected (P)	Elected (P)
	Totals	
Midwest	Elected (4)	Elected (3)
	SBE. Apt. (8)	SBE. Appt. (6)
Northeast	SBE Appt. (6)	Elected ()
	Gov Appt. (3)	SBE Appt. ()
South	Elected (8)	Elected (2)
	SBE. Appt. $(5 + D.C.)$	Gov. Appt. (11)
	Gov. Appt. (3)	Ex Officio (0)
West	Elected (7)	Elected (5)
	SBE. Appt. (6)	Gov. Appt. (7)
United States	Elected (19)	Elected (14)
	SBE Appt. $(25+D.C.)$	SBE Appt. (24)
	Gov. Appt. (6)	Gov. Appt. $(12 + D.C.)$

Data Sources: Harris 1973, ECS 2008.

¹In both Arkansas and Alaska, the SBE has authority to appoint the CSSO, but the CSSO serves at the pleasure of the Governor and can be dismissed. The appointment process is therefore joint, in practice.

²Florida law governing the selection of the CSSO and the SBE changed in 2002.

³ Iowa's state department of education was reorganized in 1986, and the CSSO was converted from an SBE appointed position to a Governor appointed position. ⁴Kentucky reorganized in 1990. ⁵Louisiana law changed in 1988. ⁶Minnesota Mississippi state laws governing CSSO selection changed in 1983.

State	1972	2008
Alabama	20	24
Alaska	16	21
Arizona	16	20
Arkansas	16	22.
California	-	13
Colorado	-	-
Connecticut	-	20
Delaware	18	22
District of Columbia	-	24
Florida	15	24
Georgia	18	23
Hawaii	18	22
Idaho	17	21
Illinois	16	18
Indiana	16	20
Iowa	-	-
Kansas	17	21
Kentucky	18	22
Louisiana	20	23
Maine	16	16
Maryland	18	21
Massachusetts	-	-
Michigan	-	-
Minnesota	15	21.5
Mississippi	16	20
Missouri	20	22
Montana	16	20
Nebraska	-	-
Nevada	19	22.5
New Hampshire	16	20
New Jersey	-	22
New Mexico	18	24
New York	16	22
North Carolina	16	20
North Dakota	17	21
Ohio	17	20

Table C.8: Credits Required for HS Graduation, 1974 and 2008

State	1972	2008
Oklahoma	18	23
Oregon	21	22
Pennsylvania	-	-
Rhode Island	16	20
South Carolina	18	24
South Dakota	16	22
Tennessee	18	20
Texas	18	24
Utah	15	24
Vermont	16	20
Virginia	23	22
Washington	16	19
West Virginia	17	24
Wisconsin	_	13
Wyoming	18	13
Totals		
Midwest	11.17	14.88)
Northeast	8.89	15.56
South	17.94	22.38
West	14.62	18.58
United States	13.82	18.36

Data Sources: NASSP and ECS Note: Average excludes D.C.

Regions	States	Totals			
Midwest	Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio	3			
Northeast	Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York	3			
South	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia	11			
West	Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Washington	7			
Total		24			
Data Source	Data Source: Multiple, Grodsky et al. (2009), ECS, News Reports				

Table C.9: States With Exit Exams, 2011

*Since the entire state school system of Hawaii comprises only a single district, takeover authority is not a technically apt descriptor, but the state is coded as having the authority to takeover a district in the administrative index.

Regions	States	Totals
Midwest	Illinois	1
Northeast		0
South	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia	14
West	California, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah	6
Total		21
Data Sourc	ee: Durrance (1952), PDK, and ECS	

Table C.10: States with Textbook Selection, 2011

Table C.11: States with Takeover Authority 2011

Regions	States	Totals
Midwest	Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio	5
Northeast	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York Pennsylvania, Rhode Island	7
South	Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia	12
West	Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii*, Idaho, Nevada New Mexico	6
Total		32
Data Source	e: ECS, note that there have been very few changes,	

Table	C.12:	States	with	Open	Enrollment	Laws,	2011	

Regions	States	Totals
Midwest	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin	12
Northeast	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont	9
South	Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia	13
West	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming	13
Total		47
Data Source	ce: ECS, note that there have been very few changes,	

Regions	States	Totals
Midwest	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota,	9
	Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin	
Northeast	Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire,	7
	New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island	
South	Arkansas, Delaware, D.C., Florida, Georgia, Louisiana,	13 + D.C.
	Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma,	
	South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia	
West	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho,	11
	Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming	
Total		40 + D.C.
Data Source	ee: ECS, NCES, and NAPCS	

Table	C 13.	States	With	Charter	School	Laws	2011
rable	0.15	States	VV 1011	Unarter	SCHOOL	Laws,	2011

States	Year	Notes				
Wisconsin	1990	Limited to Milwaukee				
Ohio	1995	Limited to Cleveland				
Florida	1999	For students who are special needs or in a				
		low-performing school.				
Washington, D.C.	2003	Priority for students who are low-income or				
		in low-performing schools				
Utah	2004	Very limited, for special needs students only				
Georgia	2007	Very limited, for special needs students only				
Louisiana	2008	Very limited, for special needs students only				
Oklahoma	2010	Very limited, for special needs students only				
Indiana	2011	Targeted at low-income students				

Table C.14: States with Voucher Programs

Data Sources: ECS and News Reports



Figure C.5: Political/Fiscal and Administrative De/Centralization, 1974

Note: State abbreviations are sized according to population.



Figure C.6: Political/Fiscal and Administrative De/Centralization, 2008

Note: State abbreviations are sized according to population.

Appendix D

Summary Statistics for Models

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Ν	Years
Administrative Index	0.438	0.277	0	1	1,500	1974-2004
Political/Fiscal Index	0.310	0.220	0	1	1,500	1974-2004
Gubernatorial Index	0.473	0.360	0	1	$1,\!500$	1974-2004
Market Index	0.109	0.196	0	1	1,500	1974-2004
Percent in Poverty	12.488	3.576	2.90	27.20	1,600	1977-2008
Percent White	82.186	12.476	24.275	99.234	1,600	1977-2008
Percent Black	9.627	9.291	0.207	36.868	1,600	1977-2008
Percent Republican	50.022	9.036	26.80	74.50	1,500	1977-2006
Percent Other, non-White	8.188	10.798	0.412	73.909	1,600	1977-2008
Log Enrolled K-12 Students	13.219	0.989	11.343	15.678	$1,\!600$	1977-2008
FY Graduation Rate	74.805	7.490	51.339	90.806	900	1990-2007
Overall Attainment	81.787	6.330	64.300	92.279	150	1990-2010
Black Attainment	76.468	9.696	47.300	95.900	149	1990-2010
White Attainment	83.879	6.078	64.7	95.311	150	1990-2010
Male Attainment	81.443	6.087	64.000	91.772	150	1990-2010
Female Attainment	82.105	6.614	64.500	92.795	150	1990-2010
Black-White Attainment Gap	7.353	6.537	-19.00	24.40	149	1990-2010
Male-Female Attainment Gap	-0.662	1.329	-3.777	3.30	150	1990-2010

Table D.1: Summary Statistics

	Total Per Student	Revenues ¹ 9	.113 2	2,705 3	3.899 - 2	0.191 1	1.500	1979-2009
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¹Real 2010 United States Dollars

 $^2\mathrm{Std.}$ deviations and means in models vary slightly.