



Education Insider: Back to School Edition

K-12 Policy Predictions

October 2017

Why Education Insider?

An Insider look at education trends from leaders in the field



SURVEY INSIDERS



ANALYZE RESULTS



REPORT INSIGHTS



DRIVE ACTION

About Education Insider

Education Insider is a regular report that uses a proprietary model to cut through the noise and provide real-time insights on national education trends, debates, and issues—from a small group of approximately 30-45 experts. Our goal is not statistically valid data, but rather trendspotting and candid opinions from Insiders who have a unique perspective on the education landscape. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the viewpoints of Whiteboard Advisors or any of its employees.

Who Are the Insiders?

For this edition of *Education Insider*, we sourced insights from influential thinkers and doers at the intersection of K-12 education policy and practice, including staff members from the Senate and House of Representatives, officials at the U.S. Department of Education, and analysts and leaders from think tanks and research groups.

The Education Insider Team

Andy Rotherham is a Senior Advisor at Whiteboard Advisors and co-publisher of *Education Insider*. He is also a contributing editor to *U.S. News & World Report* and a senior editor at *The 74*, an education news and analysis publication. In addition Rotherham writes the blog Eduwonk.com, teaches courses on education at The University of Virginia. Rotherham previously served at the White House as special assistant to the president for domestic policy during the Clinton administration, as a former member of the Virginia Board of Education, and as an education columnist for TIME and Executive Editor of *RealClear Education*.

Ben Watsky is Chief of Staff at Whiteboard Advisors and co-publisher of *Education Insider*. He joined the team after serving as a faculty member at King's Academy, an independent boarding school outside Amman, Jordan, where he pioneered a blended online history course and was a featured presenter on edtech at Jordan's first education conference. Ben holds a degree in Cognitive Science from Yale University, where he toured the world singing a cappella with the Whiffenpoofs.

David DeSchryver is Senior Vice President and Co-Director of Research at Whiteboard Advisors. David focuses on complex market research and analysis on emerging markets in the education and sector. David has been part of a wide range of cutting-edge education issues over his 20-year career. He helped state policymakers understand and craft their own charter school laws in the 1990s, and helped to build the K-12 learning management systems market in the early 2000s. He joined Whiteboard Advisors after working an attorney at the national education law firm of Brustein & Manasevit, he represented state educational agencies and local educational agencies on federal fiscal, procurement, and policy strategy and compliance matters.

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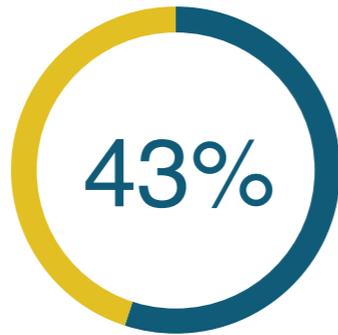
A look at what's ahead

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Executive Summary



of Insiders think it is very unlikely that Congress will follow through on the Trump Administration's proposed funding cut to the Department of Education.



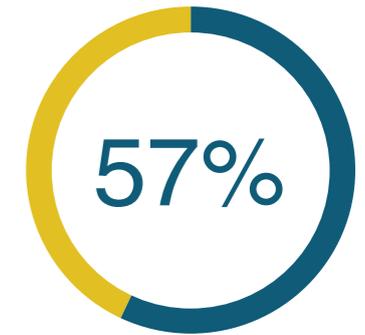
Believe that President Trump's support for charter schools will diminish public support for charters.



Predict that Congress will not advance the President's proposals to make Title I funding more portable.



Expect that there will be little enforcement of state accountability plans under the Every Student Succeeds Act.



Believe that the Department of Education under Trump will be less effective than under Obama.

Education Funding

President Trump's FY2018 budget calls for a \$9 billion cut to the Department of Education, including the elimination of the \$2.3 billion ESSA Title II program for teacher training. Insiders predict that while there may be some cuts to education, it is unlikely that Congress will enact the \$9 billion cut.

Standards and Accountability

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes a number of requirements designed to increase accountability, including requiring states to submit school accountability plans and implementing "evidence-based standards" for school improvement programs. Insiders expect that while states will begin to adopt these plans as stipulated by law, they may not be heavily enforced at the federal level.

The DeVos Effect

Insiders are skeptical that Education Secretary Betsy DeVos will effectively advance any policies during her tenure at the Department of Education. Several respondents noted that while some policies supported by DeVos may move forward in the states, it will be more due to existing state-level momentum than to federal efforts.

The Trump Effect

Insiders expect that President Trump's support for education policy proposals (from charter schools to tax credits) will hurt public opinion of those policies. As one Insider put it, "Trump is poison."

Education Department Funding

Insiders predict the likelihood of success for Trump's proposed ED budget cuts

Background

President Trump's proposed FY2018 budget, released in May, calls for a \$9 billion cut to the Department of Education, which amounts to 13.5% of the Department's total budget. The proposal calls for the elimination of \$2.3 billion in funding for teacher training programs (discussed on next slide) and \$1.2 billion to 21st Century Community Learning Centers, among other changes across both K-12 and higher ed.

Insiders Weigh In

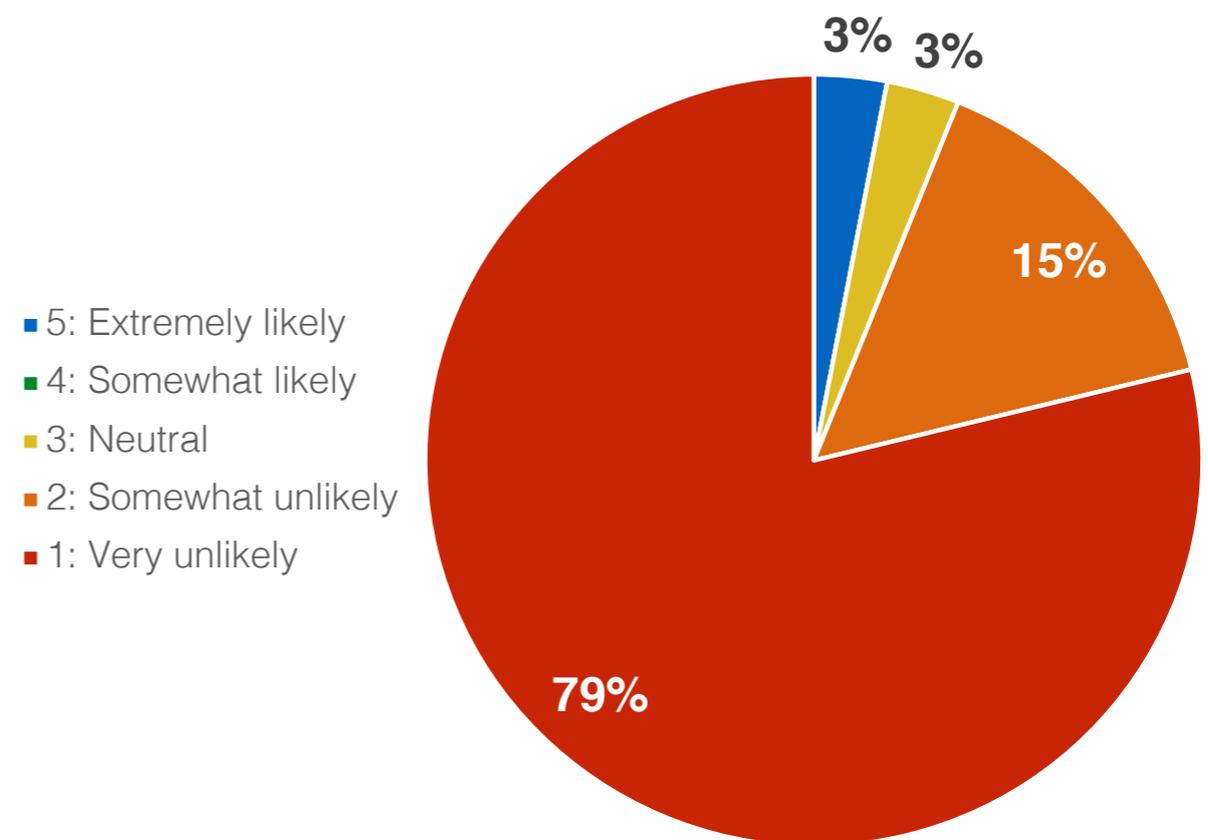
"Total nonstarter. It's not thoughtfully proposed and they've done nothing to actually make their case."

"No \$9 billion cut, but the Republicans will definitely be looking for big cuts."

"No, but there will be cuts. Sure, President Trump's budget may be dead on arrival, but the budget skeleton is still lying there. (bare bones funding, if I want to be cute about it)."

By The Numbers

More than three-quarters of Insiders predict that Congress will not enact the Trump Administration's proposed Education Department budget cuts.



Q: How likely is it that Congress will follow through on the \$9 billion cut to the U.S. Department of Education budget included in the Trump Administration's proposed FY 2018 budget?

ESSA Title II Funding

Insider predictions align with Senate decision on funding for teacher training programs

Background

Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) calls for more than \$2 billion in funding for teacher training and development programs. President Trump has proposed eliminating the funding altogether.

NOTE: While the Education Insider survey was active, the Senate appropriations committee approved a spending bill that would provide \$2.05 billion for Title II. The House decision is still forthcoming.

Insiders Weigh In

“It will see a reduction, but not a substantial one.”

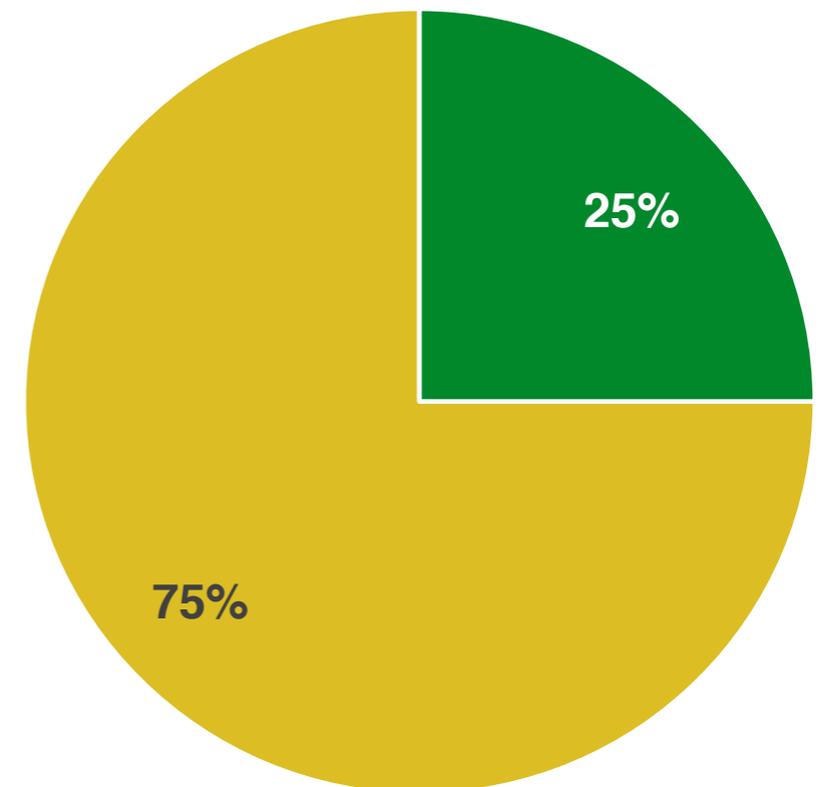
“Maybe a slight decrease. But no way does it get a substantial cut. Everyone knows that teachers have the greatest impact -- how do you cut this funding and not do anything to support educators?! It's tone deaf.”

“I don't think it will be eliminated. How much survives will depend in large part on how much noise advocates make. Senate mark-up was encouraging.”

By The Numbers

Most Insiders expect that ESSA Title II funding will remain about the same. No Insiders predicted either a total elimination or an increase in funding.

- Eliminate the funding
- Substantially reduce funding
- Keep the funding about the same
- Add more money



Q: Congress is considering whether to defund ESSA Title II, the \$2.3 billion federal investment in teacher training and career development programming. What are Congressional appropriators likely to decide for FY2018?

Evidence-Based Standards

Insiders predict that new evidence-based standards will be required, if not enforced

Background

The Every Student Succeeds Act requires that states and districts use evidence to determine the effectiveness of school improvement programs. In 2016, the Department of Education released guidance around that requirement, which includes three tiers of evidence for interventions using school improvement dollars: strong (which requires experimental trials), moderate (quasi-experimental studies), and promising.

Insiders Weigh In

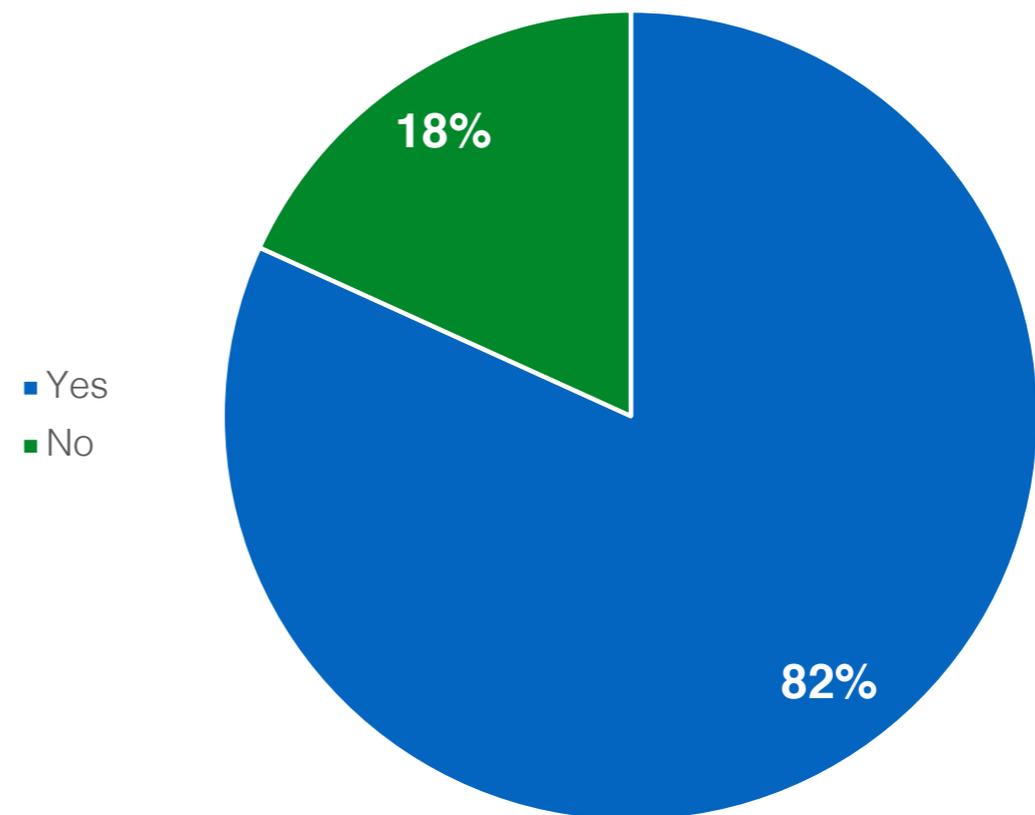
“This can be a point of bipartisan agreement at the federal and state level and is the right thing to do. So yes, I think we will see more states and districts building evidence into decision making. Alleluia.”

“Although very unclear if the inclusion of that language will carry meaning or consequence.”

“States will have requirements, but it's pretty unlikely they'll really enforce them in a legitimate way.”

By The Numbers

Eight in ten Insiders expect that states and districts will adopt requirements based on the evidence-based standards. However, Insiders are skeptical as to whether these requirements will be enforced.



Q: Arizona’s Move On When Reading grant program now requires applicants to adopt “evidence-based standards,” as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Do you expect other states and districts to implement similar requirements based on the ESSA evidence-based standards?

Portability of Title I

Insiders doubt that Trump's Title I portability efforts will move forward in Congress

Background

Both during his campaign and since the election, President Trump has called for policies that will increase school choice. The Trump Administration's FY2018 budget includes a \$1 billion funding increase to Title I, which would support a new program to allow students to attend public schools outside their neighborhood.

Insiders Weigh In

"Title I portability is an unworkable policy and lousy politics for House members. Congress will give the President something on choice if he pushes for it but not that."

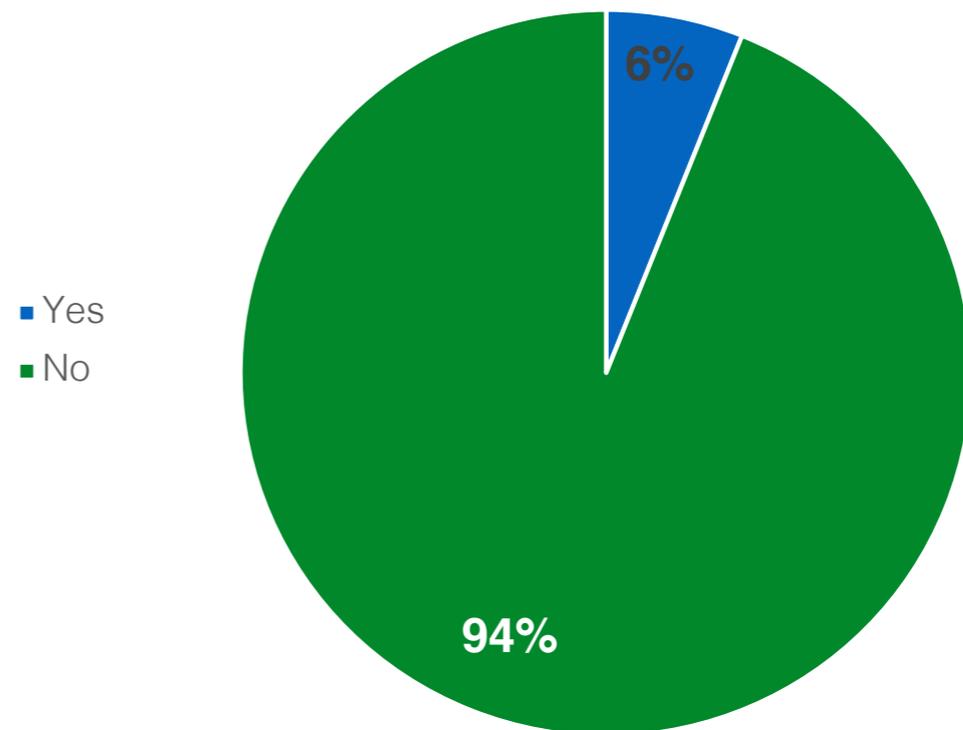
"No way this gets through the Democrats."

"There are so many other issues that Congress needs to deal with; this won't be a priority."

"The House will advance it but the Senate won't."

By The Numbers

Almost no Insider expects Congress to advance legislation in support of the President's proposal to increase portability of Title I funding.



Q: Will Congress advance legislation in support of the President's proposal to make Title I more portable?

State Accountability Plans

Insiders are split on how strictly the Department of Education will enforce state accountability

Background

The Every Student Succeeds Act calls for states to submit plans detailing how they will measure school performance and intervene to support low-performing schools. To date, the Department of Education has approved accountability plans submitted by 13 states and the District of Columbia.

Insiders Weigh In

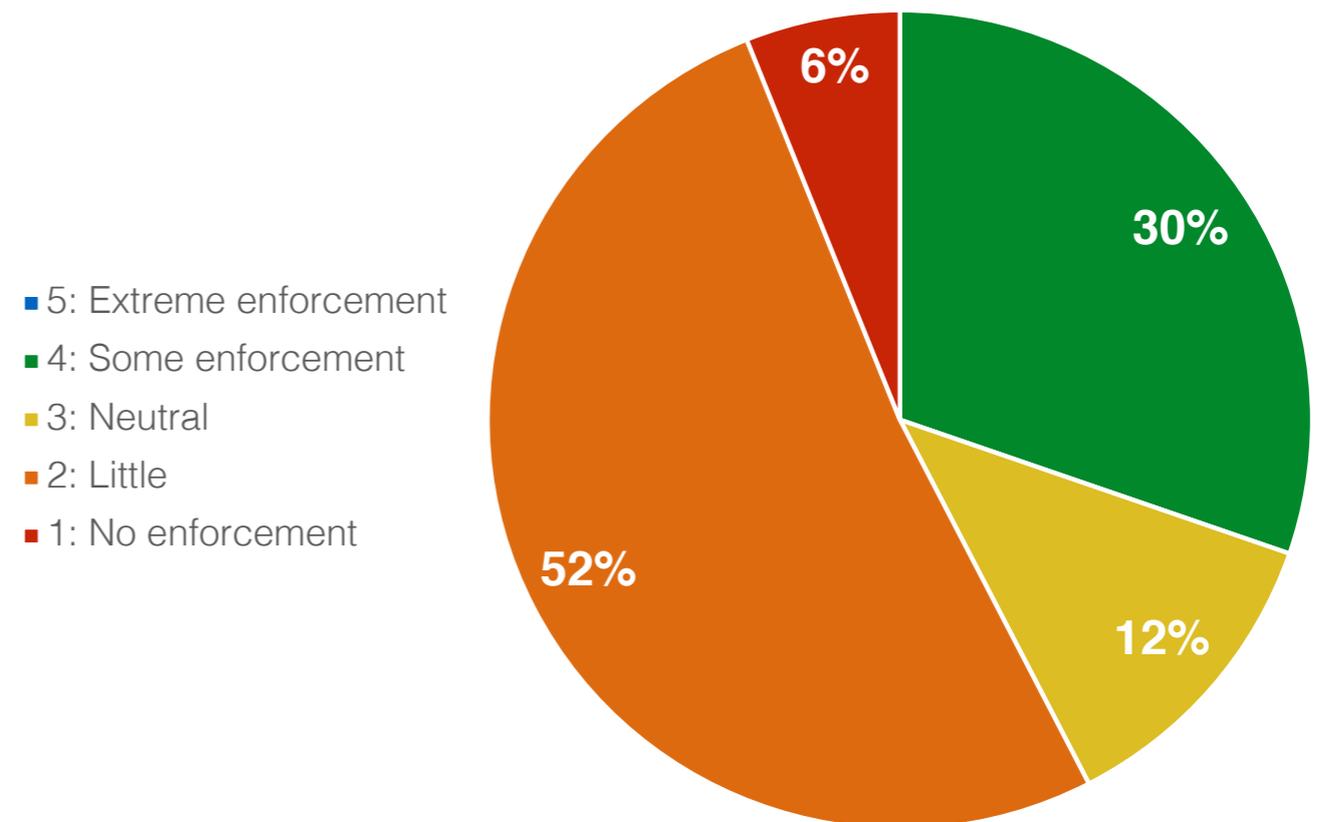
“They will follow the law and approve state plans that follow the law and then leave states alone for a while.”

“There's been little in the recent past, and there will be less going forward. On the positive side, the Department has shown greater interest than I anticipated.”

“I am more concerned with ensuring USED enforces them consistently across all 50 states. (None of the variation we saw in review of the RttT applications or the NCLB waivers.)”

By The Numbers

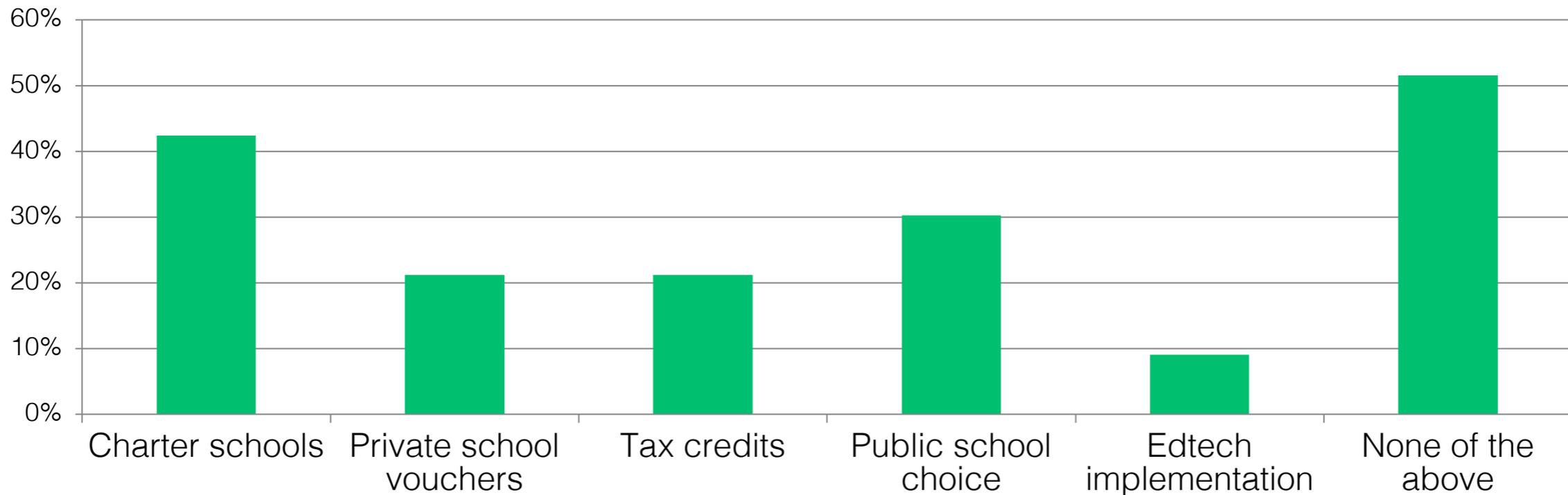
Half of Insiders expect that there will be little federal enforcement of state accountability plans. Nearly one-third, though, expect a greater degree of enforcement.



Q: How rigorously will the Department of Education monitor and enforce the state accountability plans that state educational agencies are now submitting to ED for approval?

The DeVos Effect

Q: Will Betsy DeVos' tenure at the Department of Education lead to an expansion of:



“I think the pool has already started to pick her last day on the job.”

“Has she put forth an agenda? Because I have no clue what she's trying to do. She's only undoing her predecessor's work. It's sad.”

“Maybe something happens, but it certainly won't be because of her.”

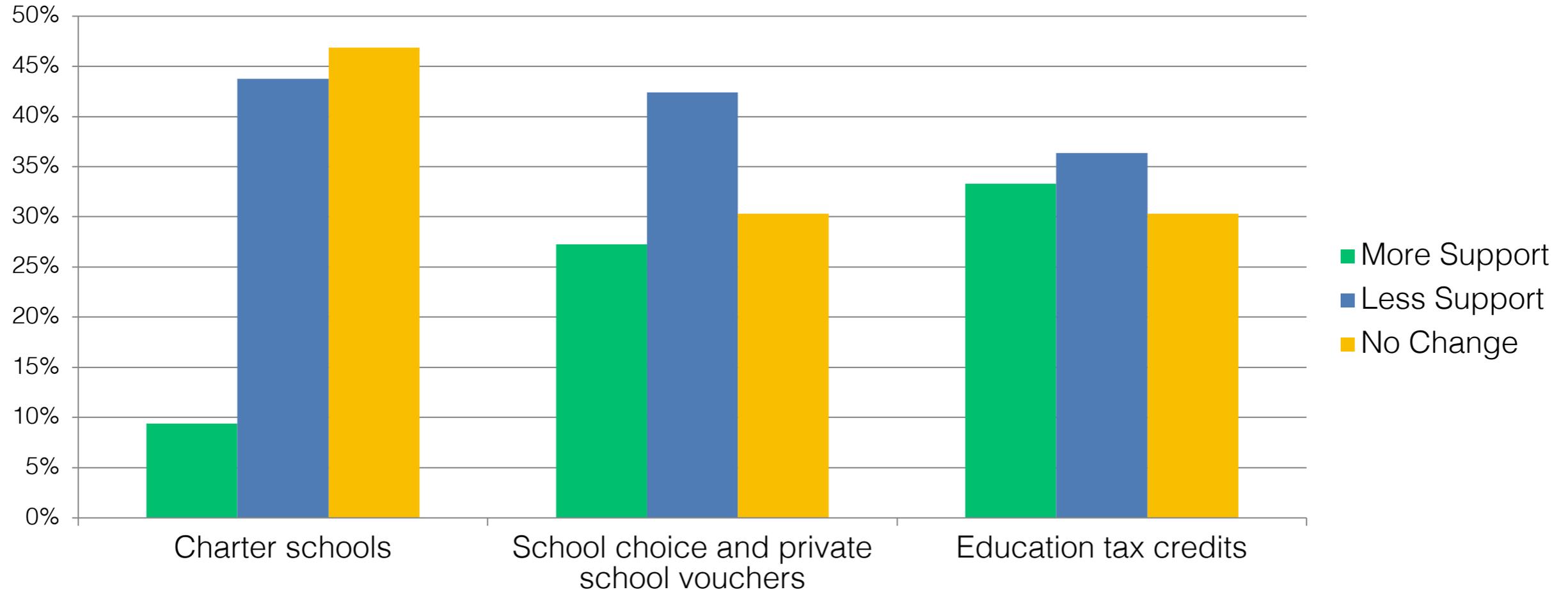
“Most expansion will likely take place at the state and local level irrelevant of federal action.”

“All of the above will grow, partly due to forces with which DeVos is associated.”

“I think it is important to separate a flurry of activity (I think they'll try) with what they can actually get done (not much). Also, I don't think this administration wants to use it's 'chits' on education.”

The Trump Effect: Public Support

Q: Will the Trump Administration's positions on the following topics lead to more or less public support for those topics?



“His support for charters is already hurting public opinion of them.”

“Trump is poison.”

“Trump and his efforts to have more federal programs around choice is dividing the "charter coalition" and the "choice coalition," and yet these horses are out of the stalls in states and that is where the action is.”

The Trump Effect: Effectiveness

Insiders predict a less effective Department of Education under President Trump

Insiders Weigh In

“First they need to establish goals. Where's the agenda? It's been 9 months and no one has any clue.”

“I don't think there is a real vision or set of goals for education in this administration.”

“What the Obama Administration achieved is pretty fleeting as it turns out, so it's a low bar to achieve the same.”

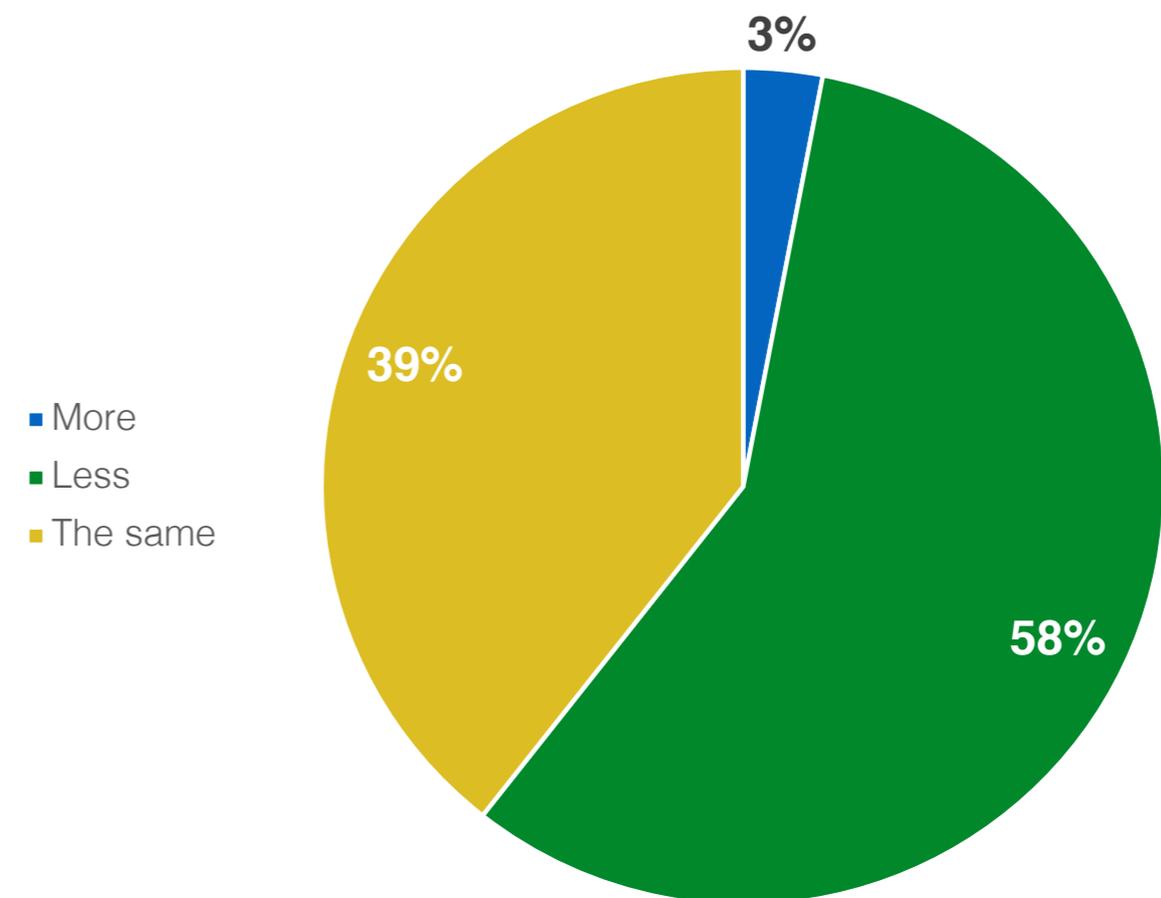
“There was a lot of motion in the previous Administration but little real achievement of goals. Here there will be far less motion and little achievement.”

“Tough question. I think Obama USED came in with a clear agenda and strategies. I think the Trump administration has neither (and they lack the capacity to carry it out).”

“DeVos vs. Duncan/King? Please.”

By The Numbers

Nearly six in ten Insiders expect that the Department of Education under President Trump will be less effective than the previous Administration.



Q: Will the Department of Education during the Trump Administration be more or less effective in achieving its goals than it was during the Obama Administration?

W/A

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