

Public supports education reforms, undecided on governance

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Voters continue to support public education reforms in New Orleans with 63 percent saying charter schools have improved education in the city and 62 percent affirming that the city's open enrollment policy has had a positive impact, according to a new [opinion poll](#) by the [Cowen Institute at Tulane University](#).

However, public opinion is divided on when — and how — all charter schools should return to local control under the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB). A plurality of voters, 38 percent, felt that all Recovery School District (RSD) charter schools should be required to return to the OPSB by 2018, compared to 32 percent who believe that the current policy, in which RSD schools set the terms of return, should stay in place. Only five and eight percent of respondents want schools to return in 2019 or 2020, respectively.

“Our annual poll is a barometer for public sentiment about our city's education system,” said Amanda Kruger Hill, Cowen Institute executive director. “This year's poll indicates the public believes schools are improving, but there is still not a consensus on how and when schools should return to local control.”

New Orleans has the most decentralized public education system in the nation with 93 percent of students attending charter schools. Most schools are overseen by the RSD, a state entity designed to turn around the lowest-performing schools. Many of these schools are becoming eligible to return to the OPSB and state legislators are debating measures on whether to mandate the return of all schools by a set date.

The poll, which surveyed 600 registered voters, also found:

- 43 percent would grade the schools overall as a C.

- Nearly twice as many respondents believe public schools are improving as opposed to those who believe they are getting worse.
- Respondents believed that RSD and OPSB are comparably capable of overseeing schools.

The complete report is available at www.coweninstitute.org.