

How do you describe yourself in the workplace? Asking teachers about their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in a school survey

Maura Spiegelman, National Center for Education Statistics

Allison Zotti, U.S. Census Bureau

Shawna Cox, U.S. Census Bureau

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This presentation is intended to promote ideas. The views expressed are part of ongoing research and do not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of Education or U.S. Census Bureau.

Background

Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) measurement

- Sexual orientation and gender identity items are increasingly included in federal survey demographic sections
- Research indicates that SOGI items can be included in household surveys without harming response rates or data quality
- Limited information on the impact of asking SOGI survey questions in establishment surveys exists
 - Lower response in *Farm Producer Study* experiment (Young and Rater 2022)
 - Findings may vary by type of establishment, respondent, or climate

Research questions

- Do public school staff understand questions about **their** sexual orientation and gender identity? How do they react?
- Will public school teachers complete a questionnaire that asks about **their** sexual orientation and gender identity?
- Will public school teachers answer questions about **their** sexual orientation and gender identity?

Do public school staff understand questions about their sexual orientation and gender identity?

How do they react?

Feedback from principals and teachers

- Cognitive testing with public school principals and teachers was done in 2018
 - Respondents not screened by SOGI status
 - Minor differences between cognitive testing and pilot questionnaire wordings
- Written responses on 2022 pilot test with public school teachers
- Respondent-initiated feedback on 2022 pilot test
- Cognitive testing with public and private school principals and teachers in 2022
 - Respondents not screened by SOGI status

Feedback from principals and teachers (2)

- For both 2018 and 2022 cognitive interviews, respondents understood the questions
- Respondents were typically comfortable answering, but speculated that their colleagues might not (depending on where they worked and whether they were “out”)
- Some cognitive interview participants supported the addition of SOGI items since they may relate to experiences with discrimination, job dissatisfaction, or other challenges
- Private school staff were not favorable towards the addition of SOGI questions
 - In 2017, representatives of private school associations stated they would be opposed to including questions about SOGI on NTPS questionnaires given to private school administrators or teachers
 - In 2022 cognitive testing, one private school administrator and one private school teacher disagreed with the presence of these questions and the underlying constructs
- 2022 pilot study received little negative feedback from respondents
 - 6 teachers used the write-in option to protest the presence or construct of the SOGI questions (out of about 2,860)
 - One teacher reached out to the Census Bureau by e-mail

Will public school teachers complete a questionnaire that asks about their sexual orientation and gender identity?

2022 pilot study

- Modified version of the U.S. Department of Education’s National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) teacher questionnaire
- Teachers sampled from commercial vendor lists; 1 teacher sampled per school
 - Excluded teachers for whom e-mail addresses were not available
 - Excluded schools sampled in recent, similar NCES collections
- Data collection from January to April 2022
- Online and paper questionnaires
 - Web-push survey, with mailed invitation to complete web survey in 1st and 2nd mailings
 - Paper questionnaires in 3rd and 4th mailings
 - Up to 8 e-mail reminders to complete web survey
- Public school teachers randomly assigned to receive either “standard” (about 2,850) or SOGI (about 2,860) questionnaire

Standard questionnaire

SOGI questionnaire

6. TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

6-1. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

6-2. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?

- Yes
- No

6-3. What is your race?

Mark (X) one or more races to indicate what you consider yourself to be.

- White
- Black or African-American
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native

6-4. What is your year of birth?

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6-3. What is your year of birth?

The next few questions will help us better understand the experiences of teachers of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

6-4. What sex were you assigned at birth (what the doctor put on your birth certificate)?

- Male
- Female

6-5. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Another gender – please specify →

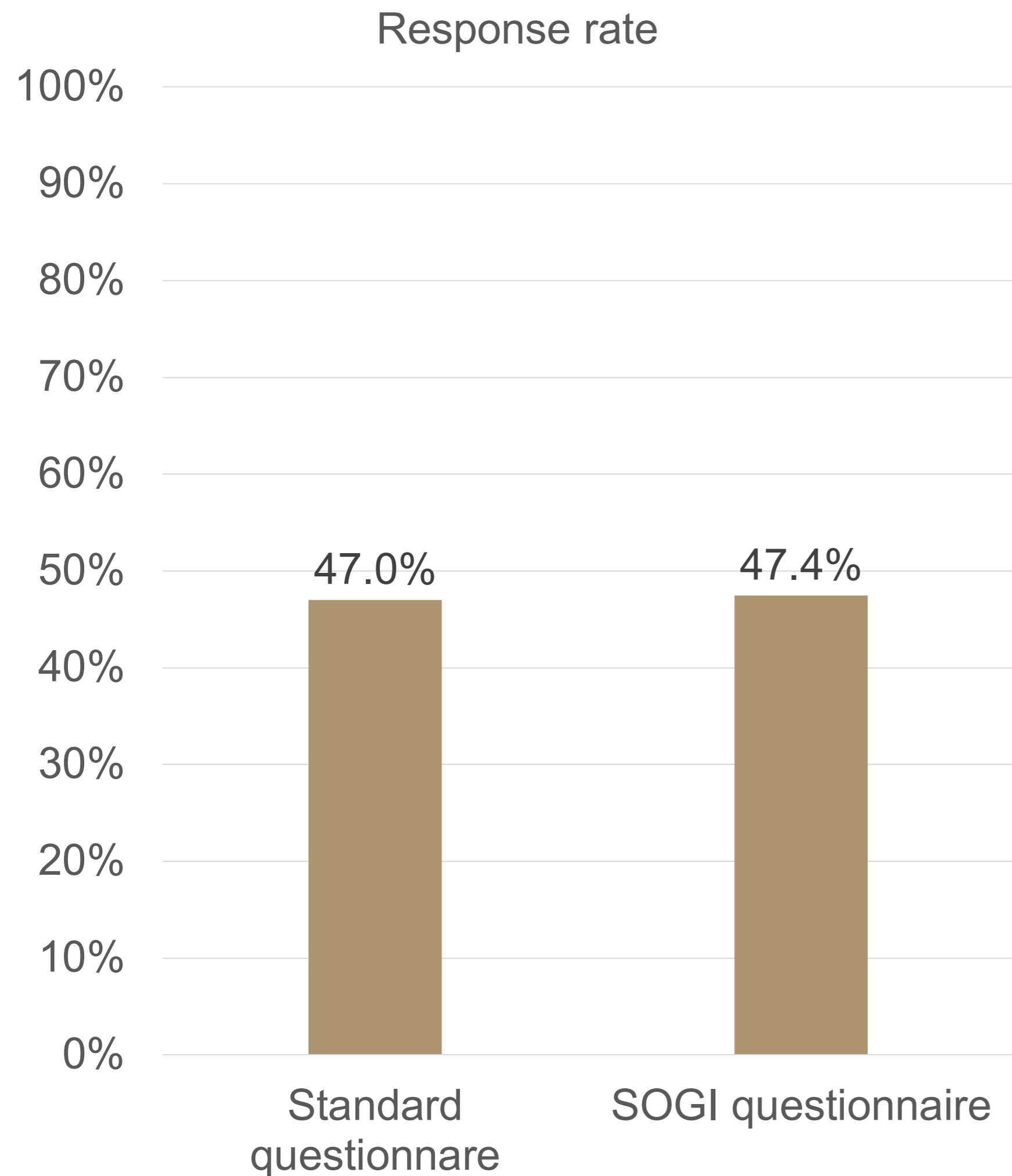
6-6. Which of the following do you think of yourself as?

- Straight
- Lesbian or gay
- Bisexual
- Another sexual orientation – please specify →

Data Processing

- Paper questionnaires scanned and combined with web survey data
- Interviews coded as complete, incomplete, or ineligible
 - To be considered a complete interview, eligible respondents needed to answer key survey items, including at least one question in the demographic section of the questionnaire
- Sample design and data processing differ from typical NTPS procedures, and the pilot test cannot be used to produce national estimates

Unit response rates



There was **no difference** in overall response rates based on whether questionnaires include SOGI items with $\alpha = .05$.

There was also **no difference** in response by school characteristics (e.g., school level, locale) or teachers' subject area taught.

Web survey breakoffs

- Few “breakoffs” at SOGI items
 - About 21 percent of teachers who logged in to the questionnaire with SOGI questions did not complete the survey
 - For these breakoff cases, less than 2 percent left the survey at SOGI questions
 - Overall, about 0.4 percent of web survey users broke off at SOGI items
- Demographics asked at the end of the questionnaire
 - SOGI questions asked at the end of the demographics section
 - Demographics section followed by the collection of additional contact information for longitudinal follow-up

Will public school teachers answer questions about their sexual orientation and gender identity?

Item response rates

School characteristic	Standard	Sex assigned at birth	Gender
All public schools	92.1%	91.8%	92.0%
Public charter	92.4%	89.9%	89.9%
Traditional public	92.0%	91.9%	92.1%
Primary	91.0%	91.3%	91.7%
Middle	94.6%	94.9%	94.5%
High	93.6%	91.6%	91.6%
Combined	90.0%	86.5%	86.5%
City	91.5%	89.9%	89.9%
Suburban	90.0%	92.4%	92.4%
Town	89.1%	95.0%*	94.5%*
Rural	95.5%	90.8%*	91.5%*
Enrollment less than 100	91.0%	92.7%	92.7%
Enrollment 100-199	94.7%	93.0%	93.0%
Enrollment 200-499	93.1%	91.2%	91.2%
Enrollment 500-749	89.4%	91.9%	92.3%
Enrollment 750-999	86.8%	92.4%	93.3%
Enrollment 1000 or more	100.0%	91.5%*	91.5%*
Free/reduced price lunch 0-34%	91.5%	93.3%	93.5%
Free/reduced price lunch 35-49%	92.1%	90.8%	90.4%
Free/reduced price lunch 50-74%	92.9%	91.5%	91.8%
Free/reduced price lunch 75-100%	91.0%	90.9%	91.3%

For teachers who completed the questionnaire, item response rates for the standard question were **similar** to those for the experimental sex and gender questions for most key school characteristics.

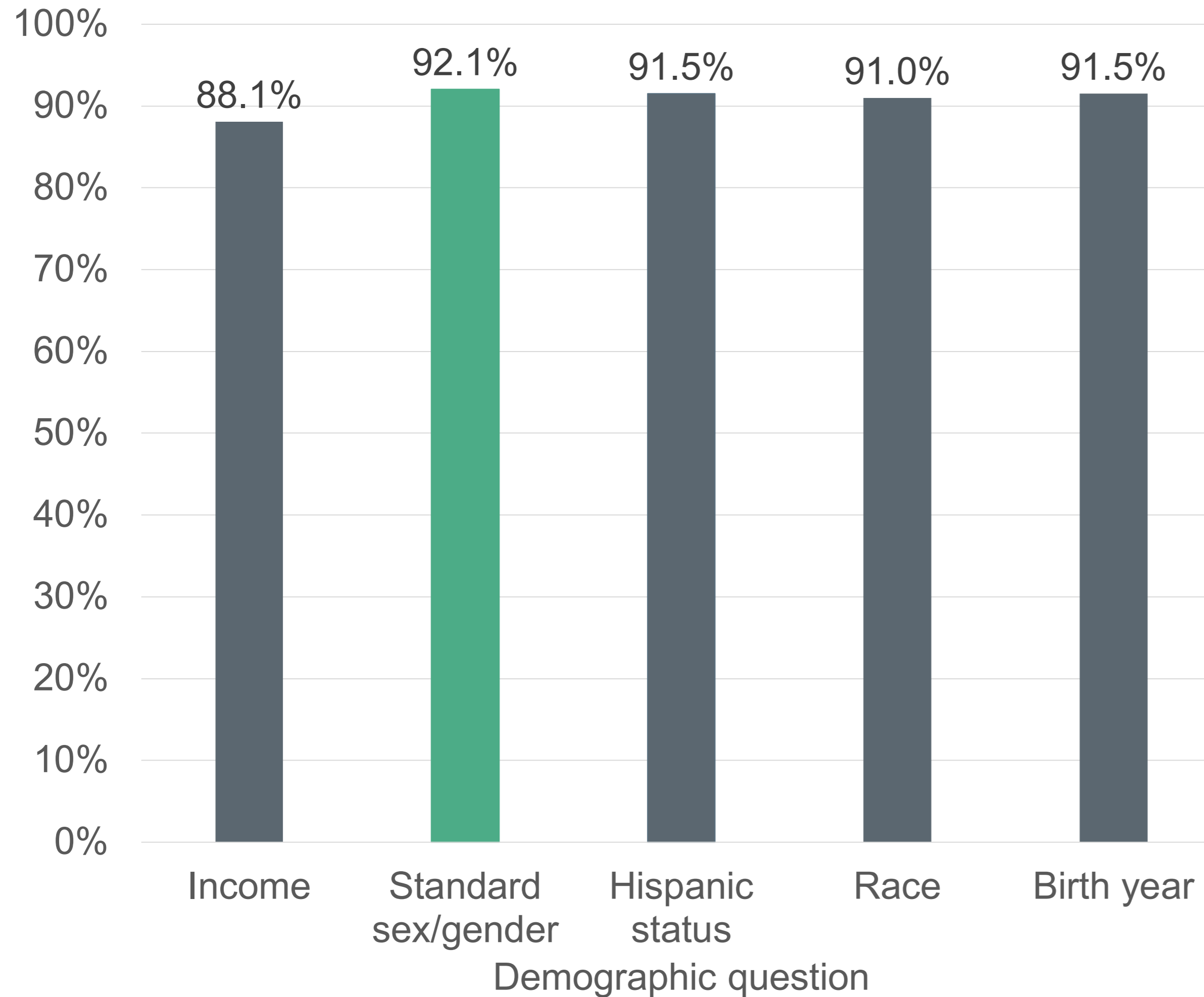
* Significantly different than the standard question with $\alpha = .05$

Item response rates (2)

Teacher subject	Standard	Sex assigned at birth	Gender
All	92.1%	91.8%	92.0%
Elementary	90.7%	91.3%	91.7%
Secondary	96.0%	94.4%	94.4%
English/Language arts	95.4%	96.1%	96.1%
Fine arts	88.6%	97.8%	95.7%
Mathematics	94.3%	82.4%	82.4%
Physical education/Health	87.0%	91.1%	91.1%
Science	92.9%	92.9%	92.9%
Social studies	97.4%	89.5%	89.5%
Special needs	92.3%	91.9%	91.9%
Other subject area	96.3%	92.5%	92.5%

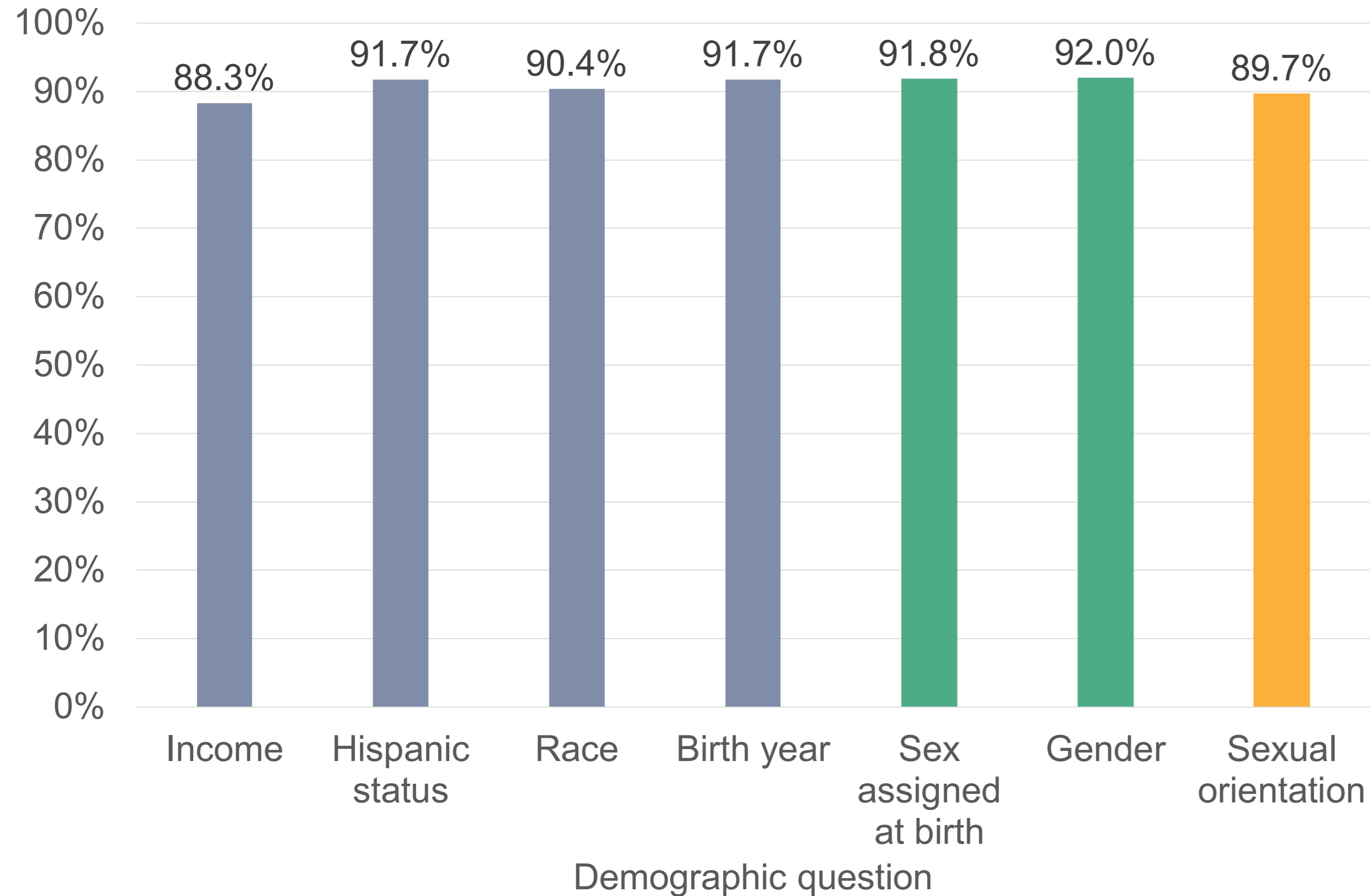
For teachers who completed the questionnaire, item response rates for the standard question were **similar** to those for the experimental sex and gender questions for teachers' subject area.

Item response rates (3)



In the standard questionnaire that uses typical NTPS demographic questions, the item response rate for the standard sex/gender question was statistically **higher** than for other demographic questions.

Item response rates (4)



In the experimental questionnaire, the new sex and gender questions also had statistically **higher item response rates** than income and race, but were **not significantly different** from Hispanic status or birth year.

The item response rate for sexual orientation was **lower** than for Hispanic status and birth year (but **not significantly different** from income or race).

Summary and Discussion

Summary

- Including SOGI questions did not impact unit response rates for public school teachers
- Public school teachers provided minimal negative feedback
- Item response rates for the experimental sex/gender questions were similar to or higher than rates for other demographic items; the item response rate for sexual orientation was similar to rates for demographic items typically considered to be more sensitive

Discussion

- Consider whether data can support estimates for small populations
- Continue to monitor potential concerns about climate or privacy

Thank you!

maura.spiegelman@ed.gov

Supplemental tables

Unit response rates (2)

School characteristic	Standard questionnaire	SOGI questionnaire
All public schools	47.0%	47.4%
Public charter	39.5%	44.8%
Traditional public	47.5%	47.6%
Primary	49.1%	47.2%
Middle	47.0%	49.0%
High	42.5%	47.0%
Combined	37.0%	48.1%
City	41.9%	43.7%
Suburban	43.9%	46.0%
Town	50.2%	50.1%
Rural	51.3%	49.8%
Enrollment less than 100	47.9%	50.5%
Enrollment 100-199	48.1%	48.3%
Enrollment 200-499	48.3%	47.5%
Enrollment 500-749	47.8%	46.1%
Enrollment 750-999	42.6%	49.4%
Enrollment 1000 or more	39.9%	45.9%
Free/reduced price lunch 0-34%	44.8%	47.9%
Free/reduced price lunch 35-49%	49.8%	47.5%
Free/reduced price lunch 50-74%	50.5%	48.5%
Free/reduced price lunch 75-100%	44.5%	46.1%
Did not participate in free/reduced price lunch	25.9%	40.8%

There was **no difference** in response rates for key school characteristics with $\alpha = .05$.

Unit response rates (3)

Teacher subject	Standard questionnaire	SOGI questionnaire
All	47.0%	47.4%
Elementary	48.6%	48.8%
Secondary	50.0%	49.2%
English/Language arts	49.6%	49.4%
Fine arts	38.9%	43.4%
Mathematics	51.0%	45.5%
Physical education/Health	34.9%	35.7%
Science	44.7%	45.7%
Social studies	46.3%	38.8%
Special needs	45.8%	49.3%
Other subject area	44.6%	47.7%

There was **no difference** in response rates for teachers' subject area with $\alpha = .05$.