

Would an email subject line phrased in any other way read as sweet?

Allison Zotti, US Census Bureau, presenter

Maura Spiegelman, National Center for Education Statistics

AAPOR 79th Annual Conference

May 15th-17th, 2024

Presentation Roadmap

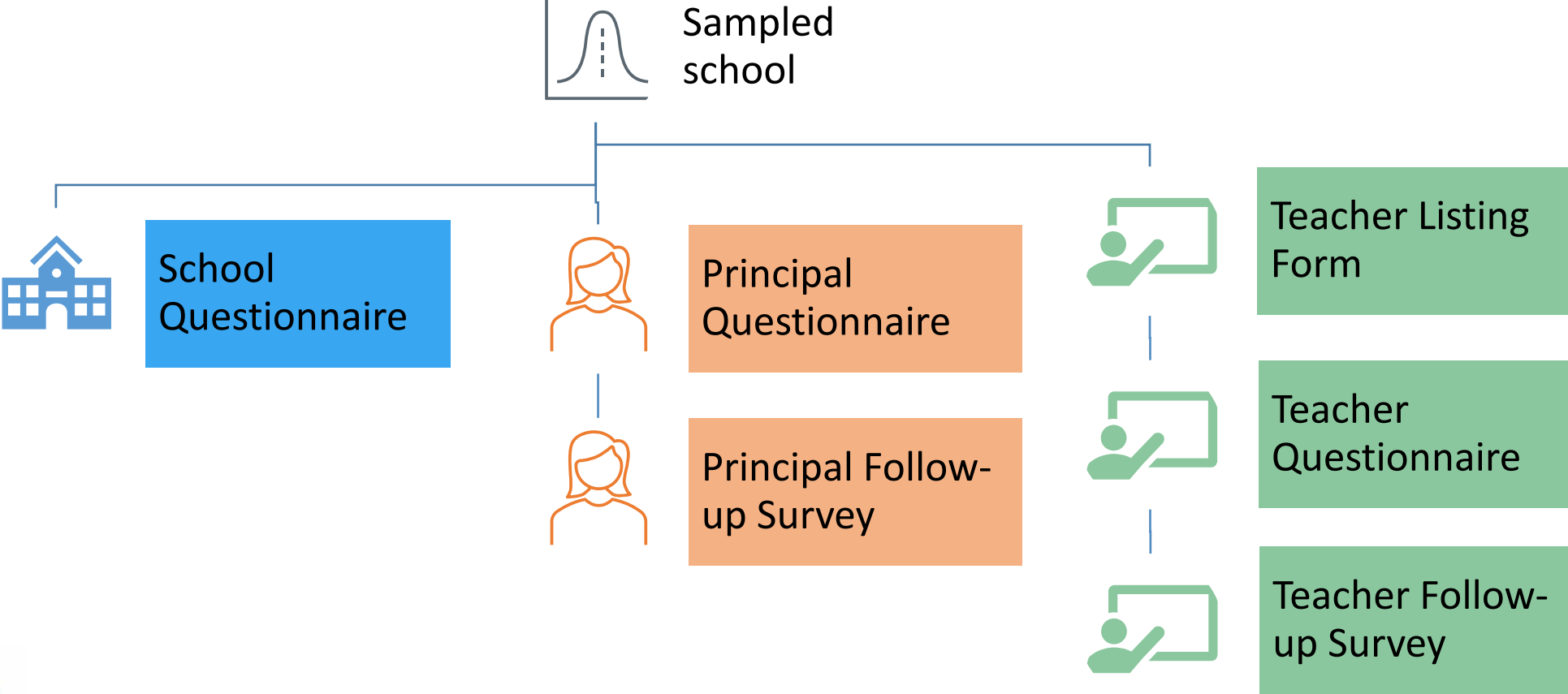
- Survey Background
- Experiment Background
- Principal Emails - Preliminary Results
 - Response Rates
 - Email Action Rates
- Teacher Emails - Preliminary Results
 - Response Rates
 - Email Action Rates
- Summary and Conclusions

National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS)

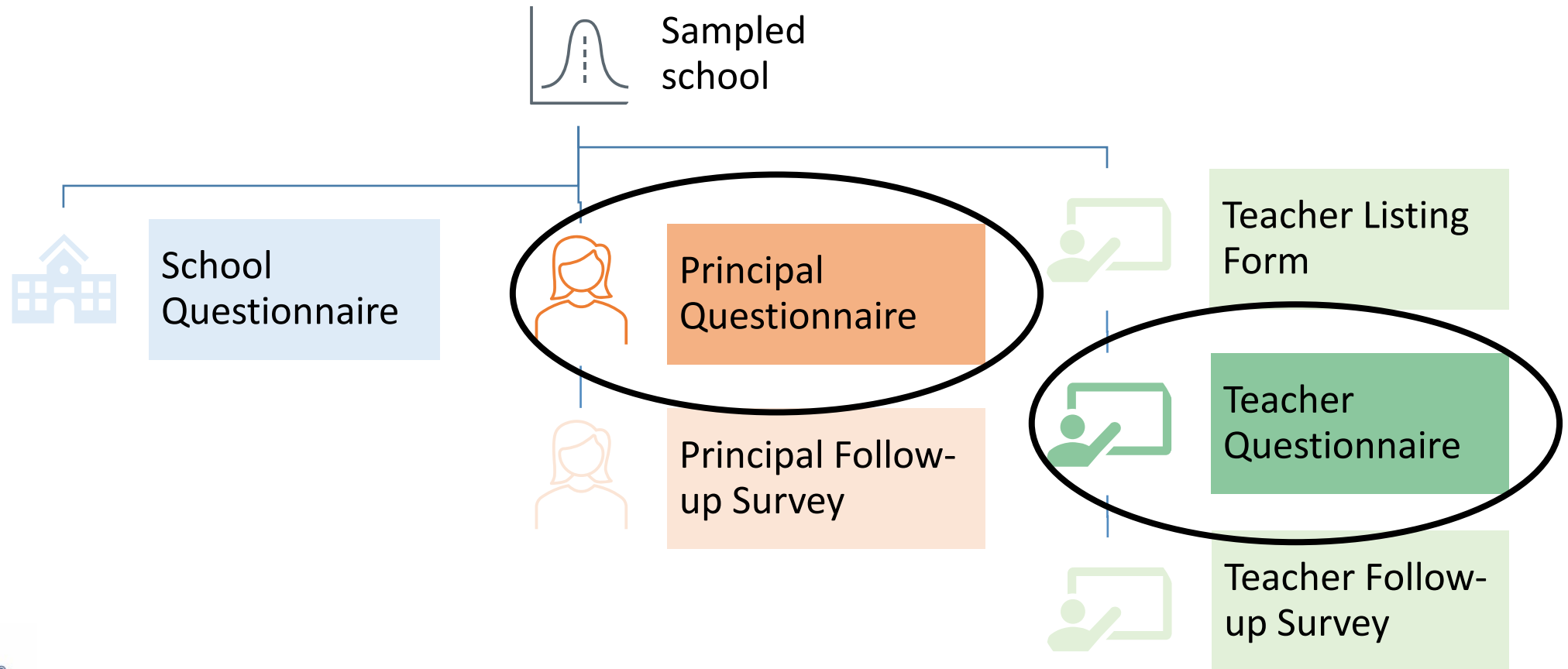
Survey Background

- Coordinated surveys of public and private K-12 schools, principals, and teachers from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education
- Approximately 10,000 public schools and 60,000 public teachers sampled
- Approximately 3,000 private schools and 11,000 private teachers sampled
- Contact modes: E-mail, mail, telephone, in-person follow-up
- Completion modes: Web, paper

NTPS Questionnaires



NTPS Questionnaires



Experiment Background

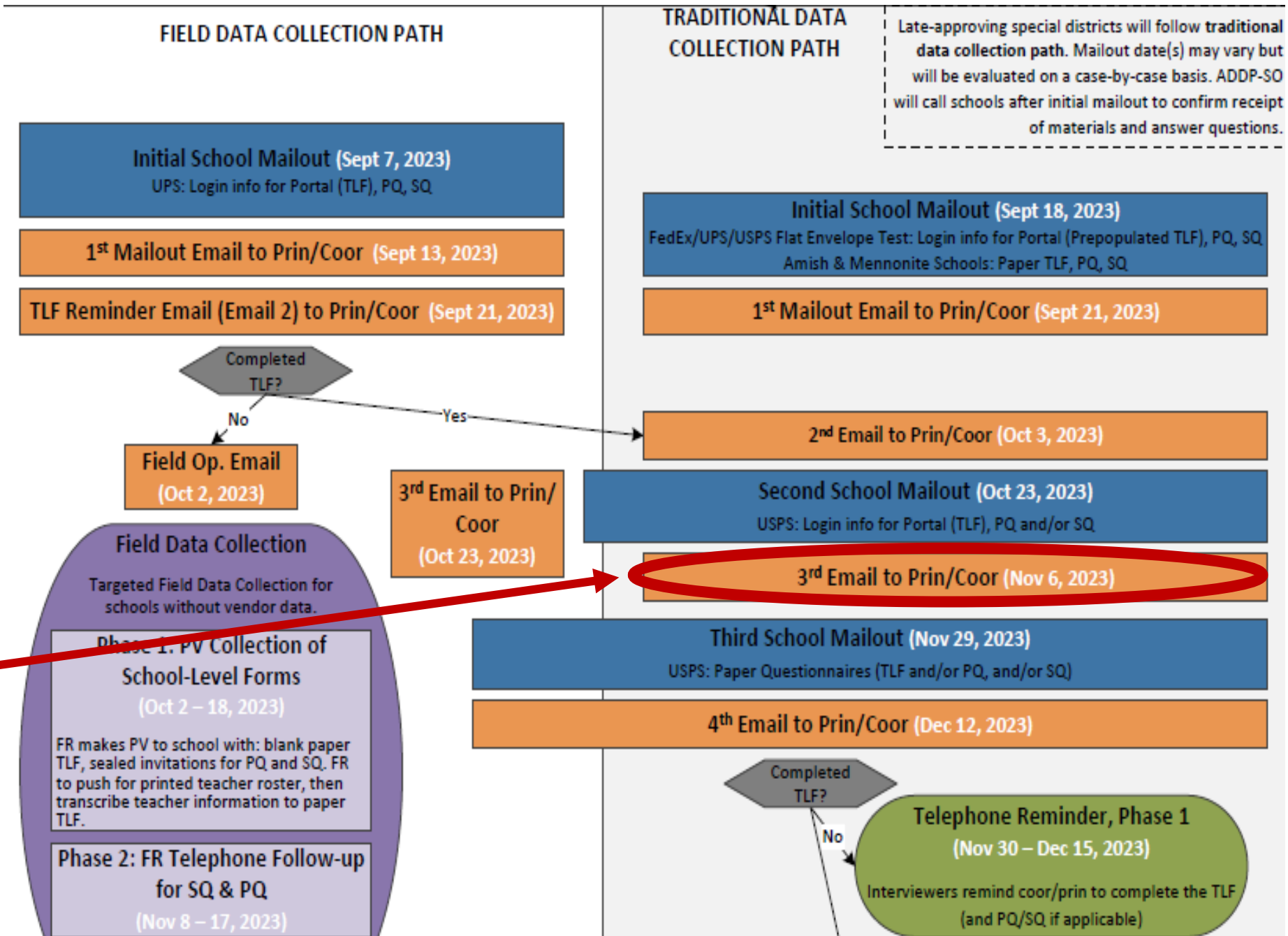
- During the previous NTPS data collection in 2020-21, we were particularly reliant on email communications at times when we couldn't mail letters or packages due to COVID-19 shutdowns
 - Looking at anecdotal results from the ad hoc email messages sent during NTPS 2020-21 and its follow-up surveys provided a basis for formally testing the content of our email subject lines
- In planning for the 2023-24 NTPS cycle, American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted a review of the existing literature on email subject lines to inform our final email subject line treatments

Principal Email Subject Lines

Treatment Group	Email Subject Line
Descriptive Subject Line	U.S. Department of Education principal survey reminder
Descriptive Subject Line with Response by Date	Respond by November 10th: U.S. Department of Education principal survey reminder
Altruistic Subject Line	Please help the U.S. Department of Education with this important principal study
Altruistic Subject Line with Response by Date	Respond by November 10th: Please help the U.S. Department of Education with this important principal study
Authoritative Subject Line	Voice your needs to state and federal policymakers via this important principal study
Authoritative Subject Line with Response by Date	Respond by November 10th: Voice your needs to state and federal policymakers via this important principal study

Principal Data Collection Flow

The experimental subject lines were only included in the 3rd email to principals in the traditional data collection path, which includes schools with publicly available vendor data.



Teacher Email Subject Lines

Treatment Group	Email Subject Line
Descriptive Subject Line	U.S. Department of Education teacher survey
Persuasive Subject Line	Share your experience – U.S. Department of Education teacher survey
Alternate Persuasive Subject Line	Voice your needs to state and federal policymakers
Altruistic Subject Line	Please help the U.S. Department of Education with this important teacher study
Expertise Subject Line	The U.S. Department of Education wants to hear from teachers like you
Authoritative Subject Line	Complete your U.S. Department of Education teacher survey

Teacher Data Collection Flow

Wave	A	B	C	D	F
Teacher E1: Advance E-mail	10/16/2023	10/30/2023	11/13/2023	11/29/2023	1/16/2024
Teacher E1.5:	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coor/Prin E1: Initial MO	11/2/2023	11/16/2023	11/30/2023	12/14/2023	2/1/2024
Initial Teacher Mailout (web)	11/2/2023	11/16/2023	11/30/2023	12/14/2023	2/1/2024
Teacher E2: Initial MO	11/2/2023	11/16/2023	11/30/2023	12/14/2023	2/1/2024
Teacher E3	11/14/2023	11/28/2023	12/12/2023	1/9/2024	2/13/2024
Second MO (web)	12/1/2023	12/11/2023	1/8/2024	1/22/2024	2/26/2024
					...
Final Email	3/26/2024	4/9/2024	4/16/2024	4/30/2024	6/4/2024

The subject line treatments were included in the advance email to teachers in data collection waves A through F, which includes teachers sampled from the school-returned Teacher Listing Forms.



Sample Sizes

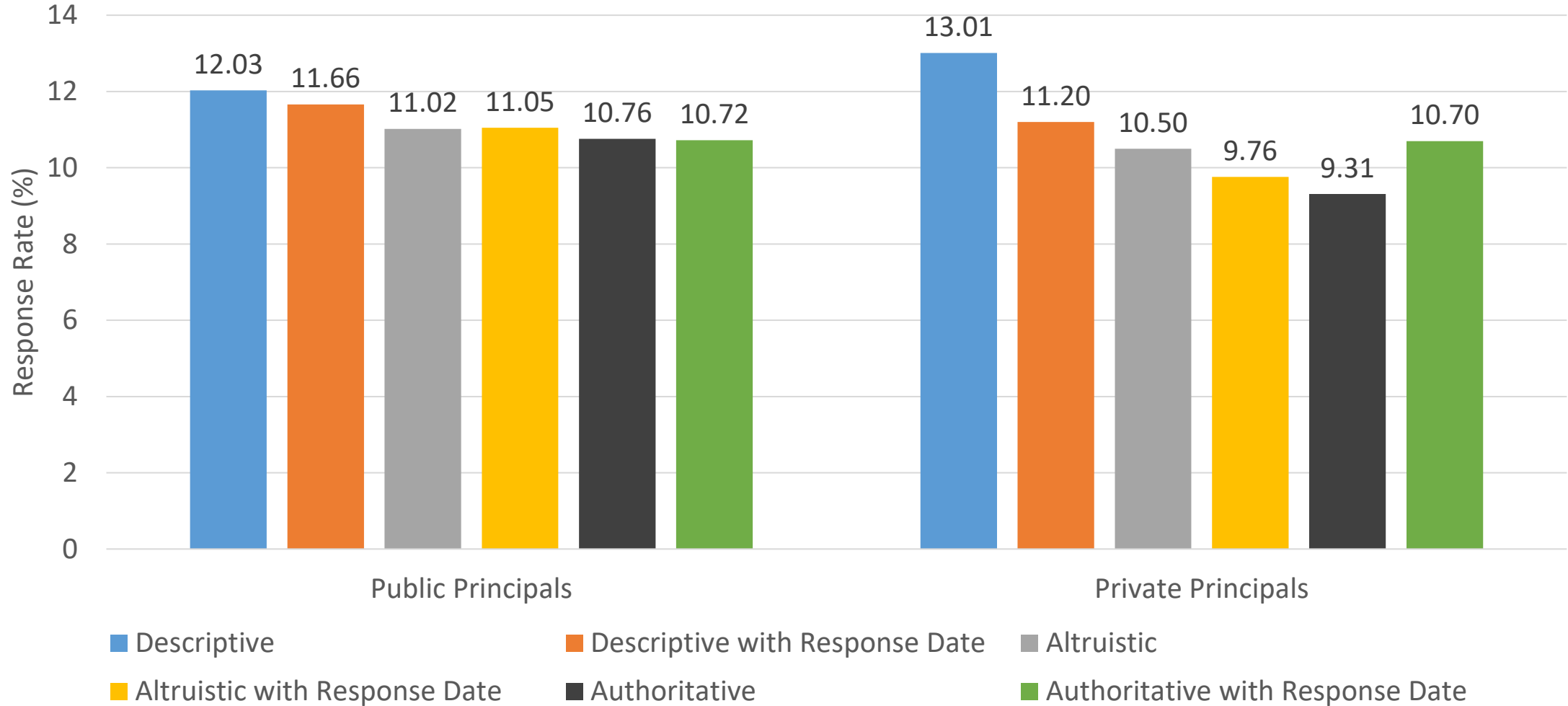
	Treatment Group	Public N	Private N
Principal Email Subject Line Treatments	Descriptive	1700	500
	Descriptive with Response Date	1700	500
	Altruistic	1700	500
	Altruistic with Response by Date	1700	500
	Authoritative	1700	500
	Authoritative with Response by Date	1700	500
Teacher Email Subject Line Treatments	Descriptive	3750	800
	Persuasive	3550	800
	Alternate Persuasive	3750	750
	Altruistic	3600	850
	Expertise	3450	750
	Authoritative	3750	750

Principal Emails - Preliminary Results

Disclaimer: Data collection is still ongoing, so the following results are preliminary, unweighted, and are subject to change.

Principal Emails - Response Before 4th Email

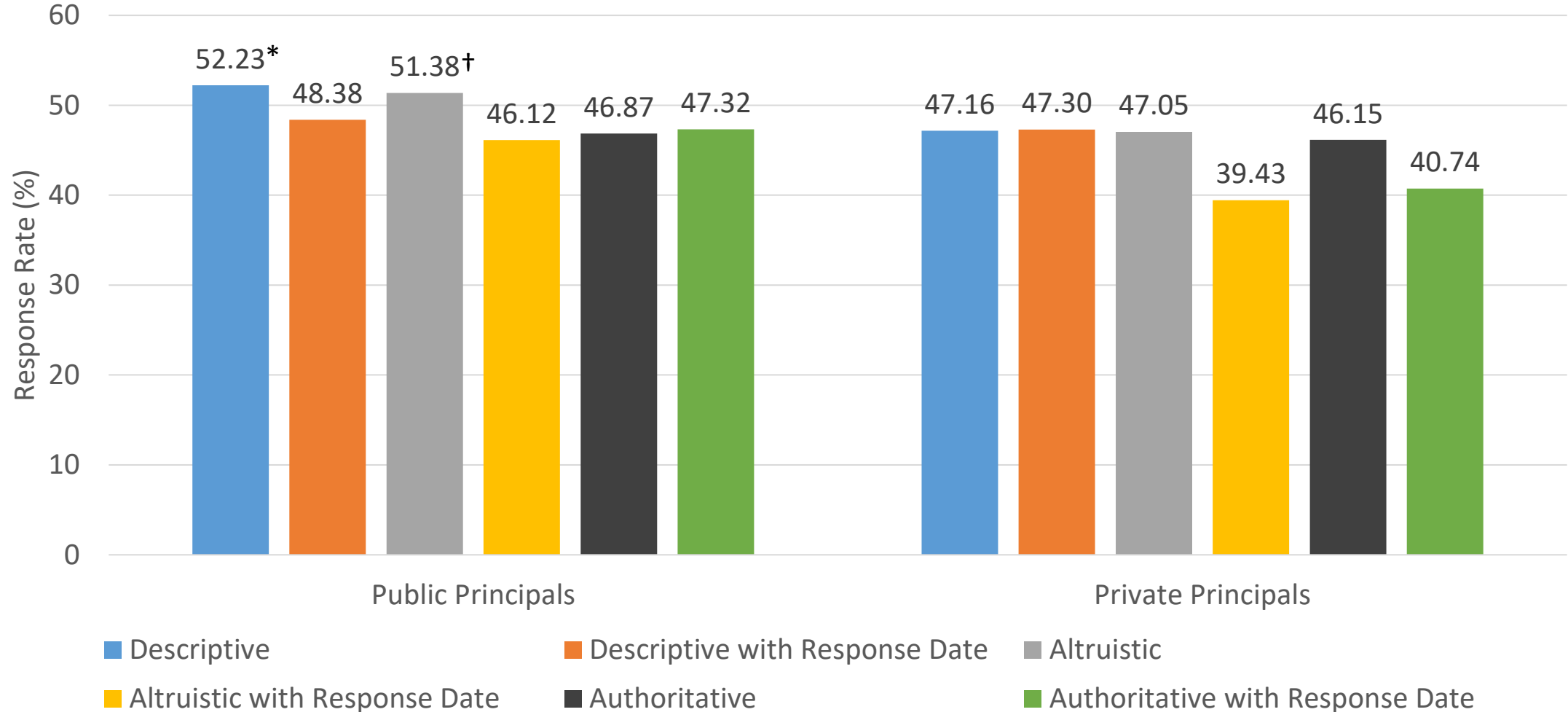
Among non-responding principals at the time of the 3rd email



No significant findings (with 95% confidence)

Principal Emails - Final Response

Subset to non-responding principals at the time of the 3rd email

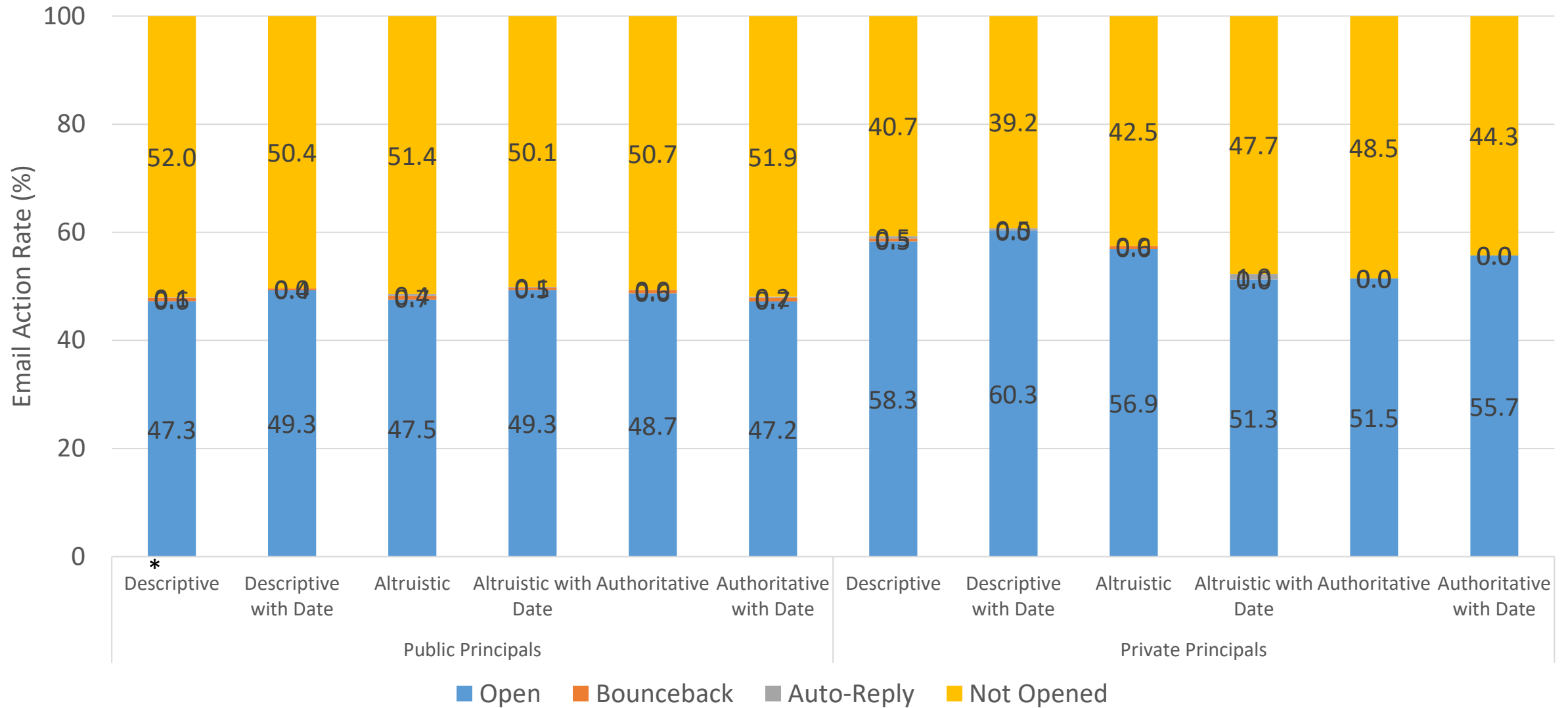


Significant findings (with 95% confidence):

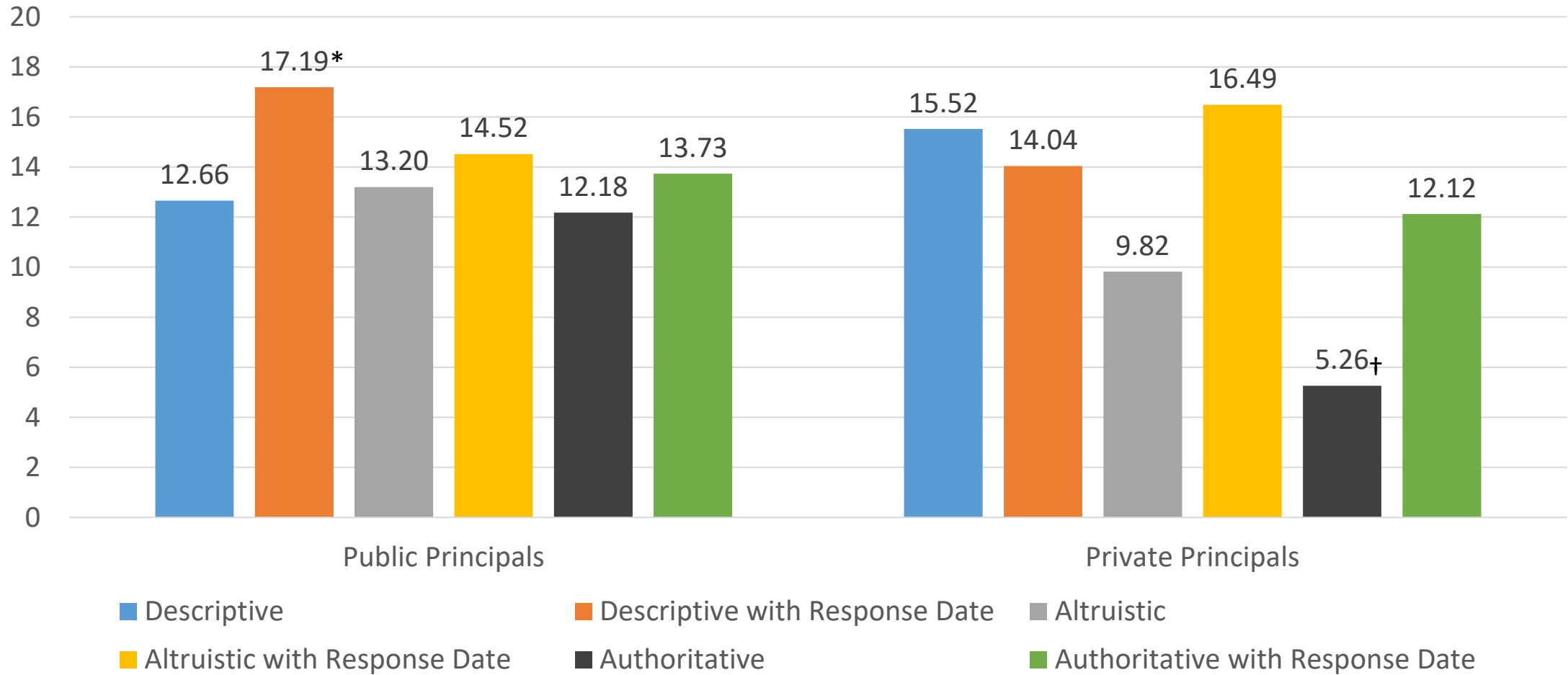
* Public Principals - Descriptive subject line is significantly higher than the Altruistic with Date, Authoritative, and Authoritative with Date subject lines

† Public Principals – Altruistic subject line is significantly higher than Altruistic with Date

Principal Emails - Email Action Rates



Response to the Link Embedded in the 3rd Email Among All Respondents after 3rd Email



Significant findings (with 95% confidence):

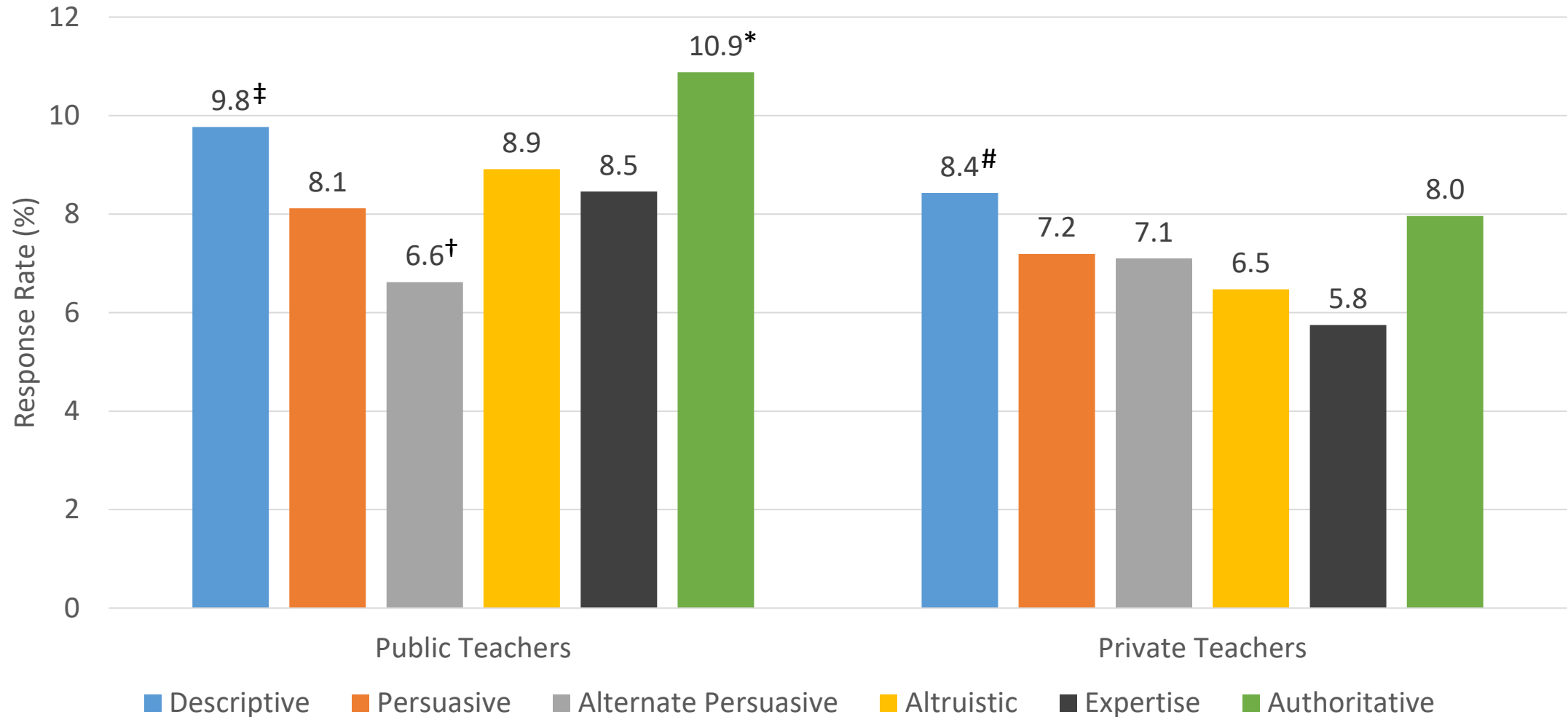
* Public Principals – Descriptive with Date has significantly higher response to the link in the 3rd email than the Authoritative subject line

† Private Principals – Authoritative has significantly lower response to the link in the 3rd email than the Descriptive, Descriptive with Date, and Altruistic with Date subject lines

Teacher Emails - Preliminary Results

Disclaimer: Data collection is still ongoing, so the following results are preliminary, unweighted, and are subject to change.

Teacher Emails - Response Before 2nd Email



Significant findings (with 95% confidence):

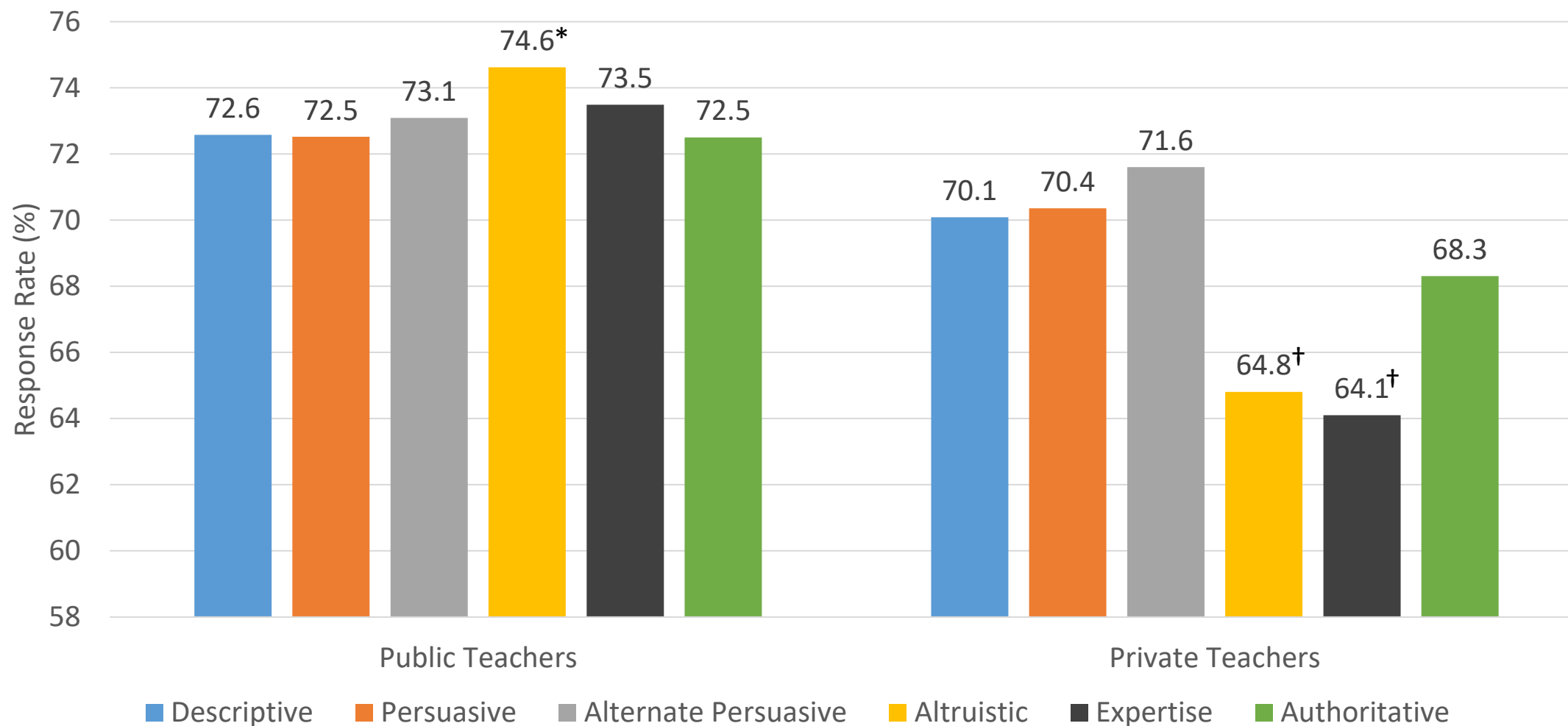
* Public Teachers - Authoritative has significantly higher response before the 2nd email than all but the Descriptive subject line

† Public Teachers – Alt Persuasive has significantly lower response before the 2nd email than all but the Persuasive subject line

‡ Public Teachers – Descriptive has significantly higher response before the 2nd email than the Persuasive subject line

Private Teachers – Descriptive has significantly higher response before the 2nd email than the Expertise subject line

Teacher Emails - Final Response

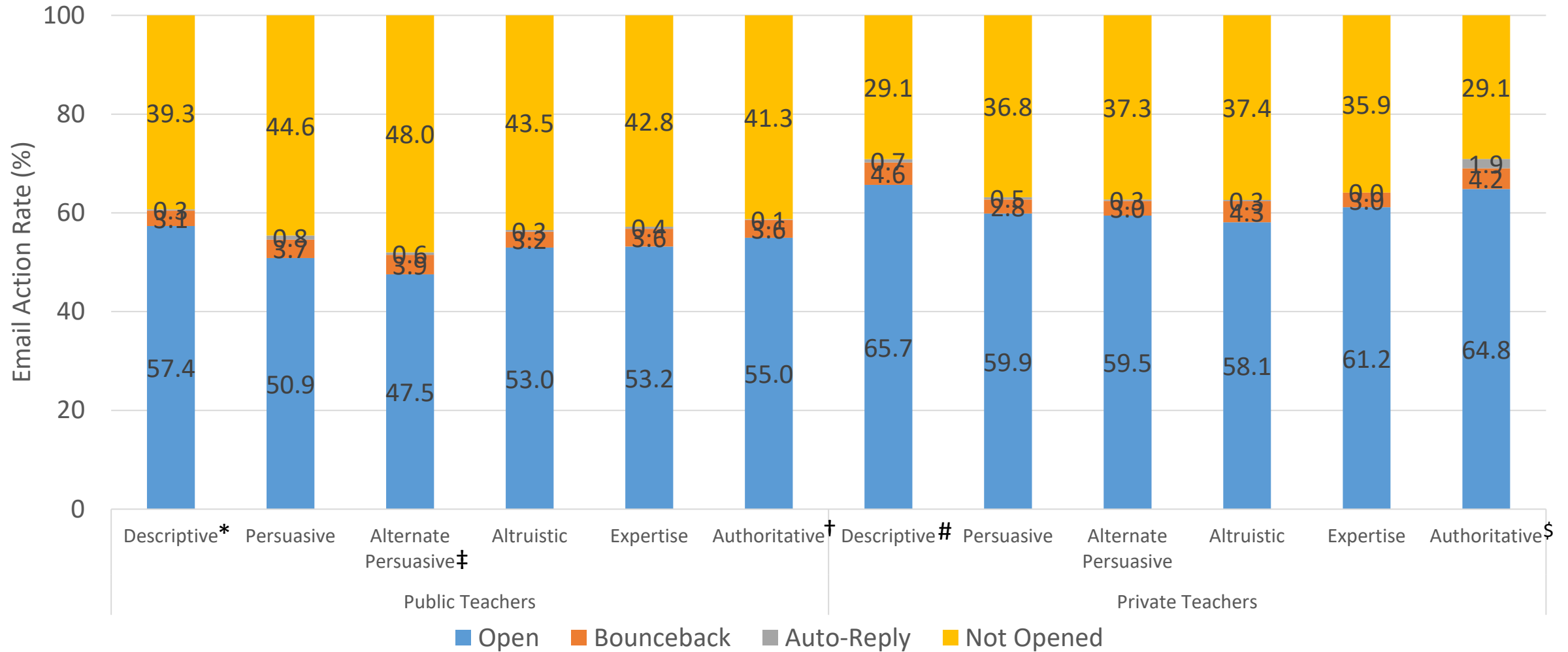


Significant findings (with 95% confidence):

* Public Teachers – Altruistic has significantly higher response than the Persuasive and Authoritative subject lines

† Private Teachers – Altruistic and Expertise have significantly lower response than the Descriptive, Persuasive, and Alternate Persuasive subject lines (and no significant difference between the two)

Teacher Emails – Email Action Rates



Significant findings (with 95% confidence):

* Public Teachers – Descriptive was opened significantly more often than all other subject lines

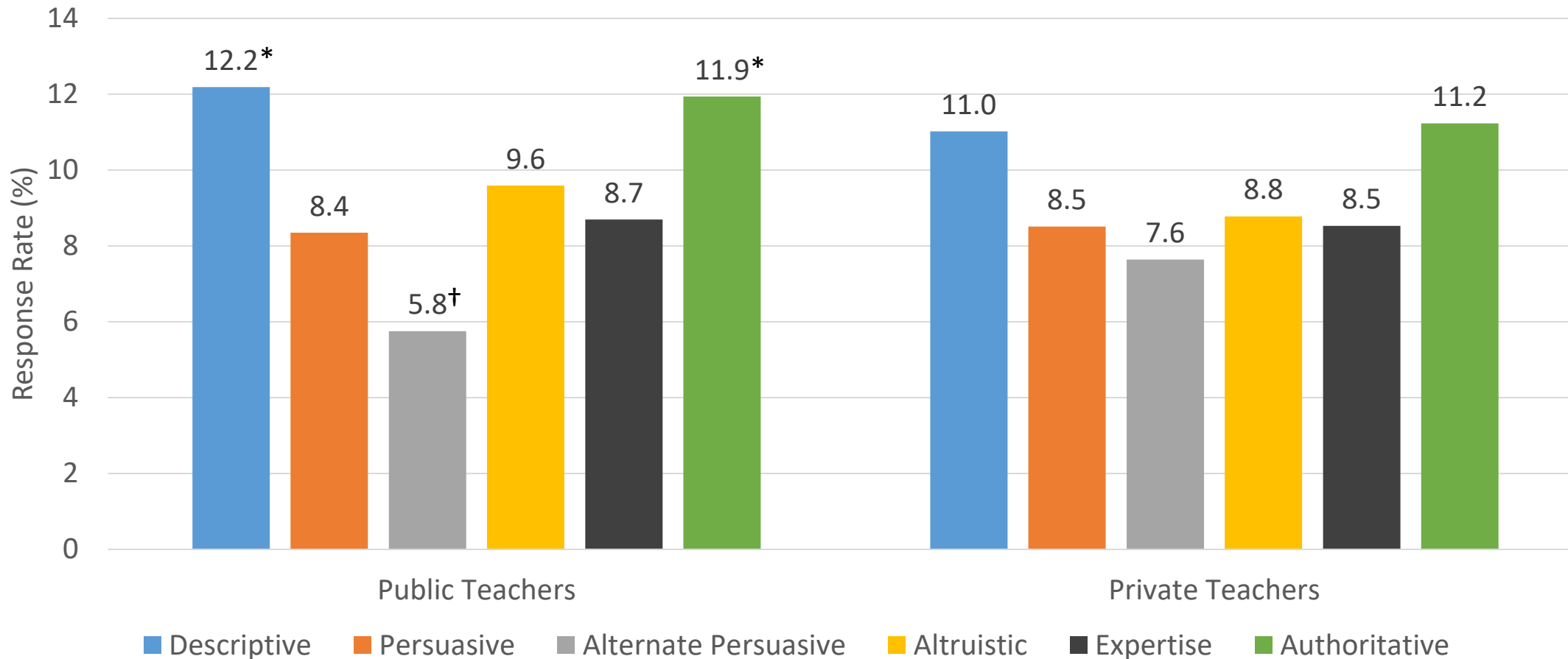
† Public Teachers – Authoritative was opened significantly more often than the Persuasive and Alternate Persuasive

‡ Public Teachers – Alternate Persuasive was opened significantly less often than all other subject lines

Private Teachers – Descriptive was opened significantly more often than Persuasive, Alternate Persuasive, and Altruistic

\$ Private Teachers – Authoritative was opened significantly more often than Alternate Persuasive and Altruistic

Response to the Link Embedded in the Advance Email Among All Respondents



Significant findings (with 95% confidence):

* Public Teachers – Descriptive and Authoritative have significantly higher response attributed to the initial email link than the other four subject lines (and no significant difference between the two)

† Public Teachers – Alternate Persuasive has significantly lower response attributed to the initial email link than all other subject lines

Summary and Conclusions - Principals

- There were no significant differences in response in the immediate time period following when the treatment emails were sent.
- There were also no significant differences in the number of principals opening the different subject line emails.
- Private principals that received the Authoritative email subject line responded at a lower rate than 3 of the other 5 subject lines tested.

Summary and Conclusions - Teachers

- In the immediate time period following the advance email, the Authoritative subject line showed significantly higher response among public teachers than all other subject lines except the Descriptive subject line.
- For private teachers, the Descriptive email showed significantly higher response before the 2nd email than only the Expertise subject line.
- The emails with the Descriptive subject line were opened more often than any other subject line for public teachers and more often than 3 of the other 5 subject lines for private teachers.
- Furthermore, public teachers used the link embedded in the Descriptive email to respond more often than for any other subject line except the Authoritative subject line.

Questions?

Contact:

Allison Zotti

allison.zotti@census.gov

Maura Spiegelman

Maura.Spiegelman@ed.gov