

**Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB)
Membership Survey January-February 2022**

Sample Information:

The survey was open from January 31, 2022 to February 20, 2022. An initial sample of 548 individuals responded to at least 1 demographic question. However, 19 individuals in this initial sample spent less than 3 minutes in the survey or completed only a small number of questions and then stopped responding. The responding sample includes 529 individuals, 476 of whom completed the entire survey.

Table 1. Respondents' CESA Representation (n=523)

Region	Percent of Respondents from Region	CESA	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents from CESA
Southeast	9.9	1	52	9.9
		2	69	13.2
South	29.9	3	36	6.9
		5	51	9.8
		4	39	7.5
West	24.0	10	36	6.9
		11	50	9.6
		6	56	10.7
East	18.0	7	38	7.3
		8	37	7.1
North	18.4	9	35	6.7
		12	24	4.6

Note. Across tables, numbers might not sum to exactly 100 because of rounding.

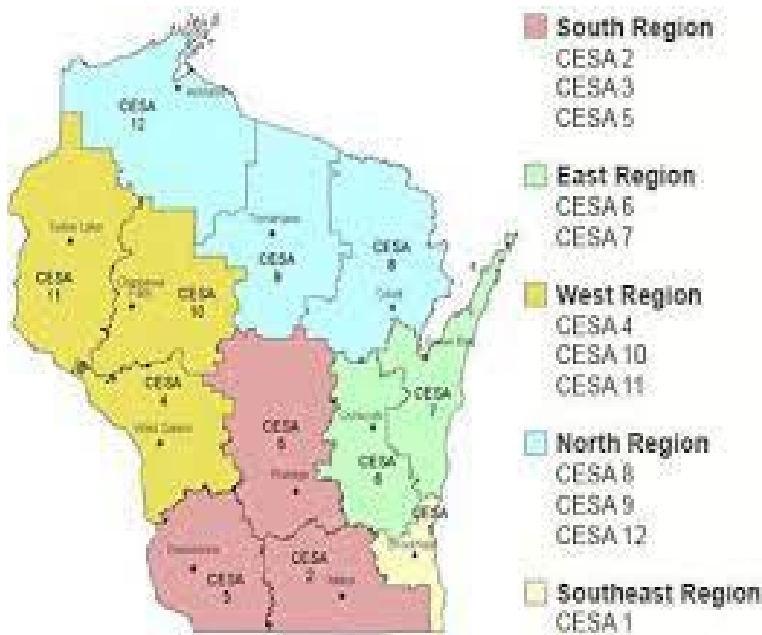


Table 2. Respondents' Reports of their District's Current Enrollment (n=523)

Enrollment	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents
0-499	127	24
500-999	135	26
1,000-1,999	122	23
2,000-4,999	91	17
5,000 or more	48	9

Table 3. Respondent Age (n=525)

Age	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents
25-34 years	5	1
35-44 years	78	15
45-54 years	186	35
55-64 years	141	27
65-74 years	100	19
75 years or older	15	3

Table 4. Respondent Gender (n=526)

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents
Man	285	54
Woman	234	45
Other/Prefer to self-identify	7	1

Table 5. Respondent Race* (n=520)

Race	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents
White	490	94
Black or African American	7	1.3
American Indian or Native Alaskan	4	<1
Asian	2	<1
Two or more races	3	<1
Other/Prefer to self-identify**	14	2.7

* Many respondents did not report their ethnicity. Of those who did, 99% were Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino.

** In text, several reported "American" or asked about the necessity of asking about race.

Table 6. Respondents' Highest Level of Education (n=526)

Level/Degree	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents
High school diploma or equivalent	18	3
Some college, no degree	36	7
Trade/technical/vocational training	36	7
Associate degree	38	7
Bachelor's degree	139	26
Master's degree	149	28
Professional/Doctorate degree	110	21

Table 7. Respondents' Employment Status (n=527)

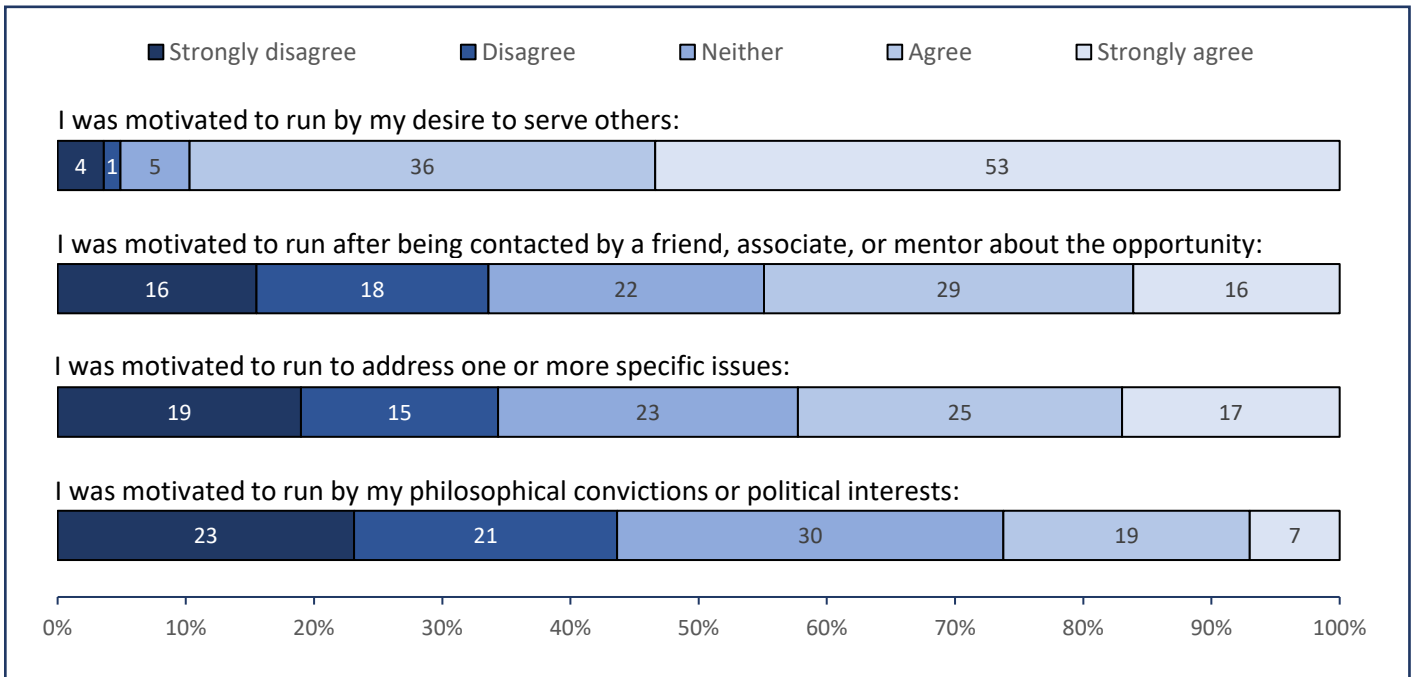
Employment	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents
Employed (full- or part-time)	359	68
Self-employed (full- or part-time)	48	9
Not currently employed	9	2
Retired	106	20
Other	5	1

Table 8. Respondents' General School Board Information

School Board Information	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents
<i>Current School Board Position (n=523)</i>		
Board member	389	74
Superintendent	122	23
CESA administrator	12	2
<i>Total Years on Current and Past School Boards (n=379)</i>		
<1 to 1 year	61	16
2 to 5 years	115	30
6 to 10 years	81	21
11 to 15 years	53	14
16 to 20 years	23	6
>20 years	46	12
<i>Superintendents: Total Years in Current Position (n=132)</i>		
1 year	20	15
2 to 5 years	56	42
6 to 10 years	31	24
>10 years	25	19
<i>School Board Officer Position (n=388)</i>		
President	79	20
Vice President	63	16
Treasurer	43	11
Clerk	54	14
(Not an officer)	149	38
<i>Ever Served as a School Board President (n=308)</i>		
Yes	38	12
No	270	88
<i>Hours/Week Spent on School Board Activities (n=386)</i>		
5 hours or less	202	52
6 to 10 hours	136	35
11 to 15 hours	31	8
16 to 20 hours	14	4
More than 20 hours	3	1

WASB members were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that various factors motivated them to run for a school board seat.

Figure 1. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they ran for school board out of a desire to serve others; and nearly half disagree or strongly disagree that they were motivated by philosophical convictions or political interests.



Some respondents reported running for a school board seat for other reasons. Commonly mentioned reasons were as follows:

- (1) their own children in the schools or general concern for children in the schools
- (2) a commitment to the school district
- (3) a concern for student learning
- (4) there was no one else for the job

WASB members were asked what they thought were the three most important emerging issues for their school district during the next year.

Nearly all respondents identified three separate issues. The complete responses are provided in a separate document; however, below is a list of themes and the frequency with which they were nominated:

- Budget/funding/finance: 291
- Staff shortage/hiring/retention: 234
- Student academics/support: 170
- COVID: 132
- Enrollment: 92
- Politics (in community and in school): 78
- DEI/Racism/Gender identities: 63
- Mental/Behavioral health: 60
- Referendum: 56
- Quality of staff: 52
- Community relations: 46
- Salary: 29
- Facilities: 24
- Buildings: 19
- Safety: 18
- Curriculum: 17
- Communication: 11
- Transparency: 10
- Books: 7
- Inflation: 7
- School report card: 6
- Literacy: 4
- Professional development for staff: 3
- Social media: 3
- Poverty: 2
- Drugs and alcohol: 2

WASB members responded to several questions about government relations (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree).

Table 9. About 3 of 4 respondents reported being familiar with WASB legislative advocacy positions and materials, and felt that the information provided was high in quality. Somewhat fewer agreed that their board thought legislative advocacy was an important part of their board’s work; still fewer agreed – in fact, more *disagreed* - that their board has a clear process for setting legislative advocacy priorities.

	Mean (SD)	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree or Strongly Agree
I am familiar with the delegate assembly resolutions process the WASB uses to determine legislative advocacy positions	4.00 (0.97)	9	12	79
I am familiar with many of the positions the WASB advocates to the state legislature	3.89 (0.93)	10	15	75
The WASB provides high-quality legislative advocacy information and resources	3.88 (0.85)	6	20	74
Members of my school board believe legislative advocacy is an important part of the board’s work	3.45 (0.95)	15	35	50
My school board has a clear process for setting legislative advocacy priorities	2.84 (0.99)	36	38	26

WASB members were asked, whether, during the past 12 months, various people had contacted state legislators or their staff to advocate for one or more issues on behalf of their school board.

Table 10. WASB members’ responses suggest that their district superintendent is the person most likely to have engaged in legislative advocacy on behalf of the school board. About one-third of respondents did not know whether various people had engaged in legislative advocacy on behalf of their board.

	% Responding Yes	% Responding No	% Responding I don’t know
The district superintendent:	64	10	26
A designated school board representative:	32	38	30
Another school board member:	32	29	39

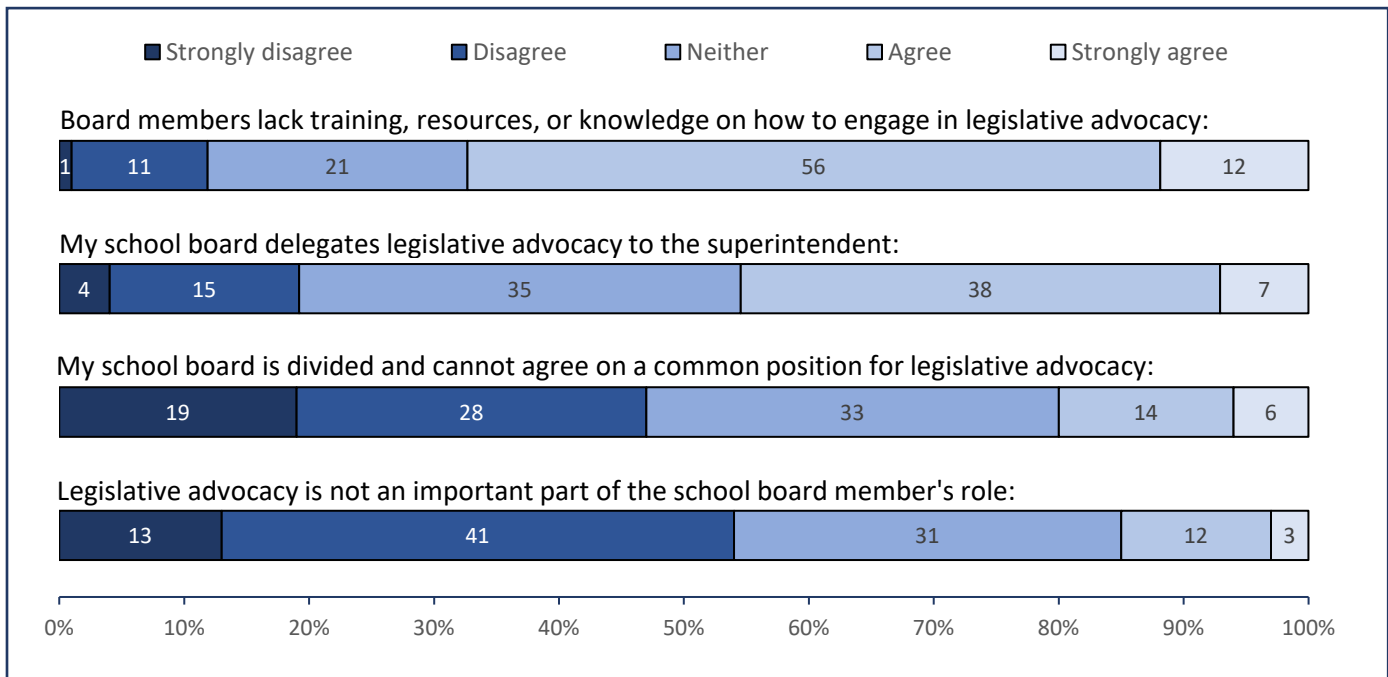
Respondents were asked how often one or more legislative matters appear on their school board’s agenda.

Table 11. Half of responding board members reported that legislative matters appeared on their board’s agenda “very rarely” or “at least once every six months.”

Legislative matters are on the agenda...	Number of Respondents	Percent (%) of Respondents
Very rarely	213	41
At least once every six months	48	9
At least once per quarter	88	17
At least once every other month	59	11
Nearly every meeting	88	17
(I’m not sure.)	20	4

WASB members reported the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with various reasons why board members are not more active in legislative advocacy.

Figure 2. WASB members’ responses suggest that a lack of advocacy may be due more to a lack of training or how-to knowledge than to a belief that legislative advocacy is not part of their role.



Some respondents mentioned other reasons. Commonly mentioned reasons were as follows:

- (1) lack of time
- (2) a desire to keep the board apolitical
- (3) legislators’ positions are already known and stable
- (4) lack of interest in legislation
- (5) perception that individual advocacy is not effective

WASB members reported how much they personally valued various WASB government relations resources and publications in their school board work (1=Not at all valuable, 5=Extremely valuable).

Table 12. About half of respondents rated several of the government relations resources as very/extremely valuable. Most respondents (about 85%) were familiar with them. The Legislative Update Blog was most often rated as very or extremely valuable. Respondents were most divided on sample letters and emails; for these resources, about 1 in 6 rated them as not at all or a little valuable, and about 3 in 6 rated them as very or extremely valuable.

	% Not at All or A Little Valuable	% Moderately Valuable	% Very or Extremely Valuable	% Not Familiar with this Resource
Legislative Update blog	9	25	54	12
Live and recorded webinars or presentations on legislative matters	13	28	50	8
Sample resolutions, letters, and other materials	16	24	47	13
Sample emails to legislators	17	24	44	14
Capitol Watch column in the School News	13	28	43	15
State Bill Tracking Chart	10	25	38	25

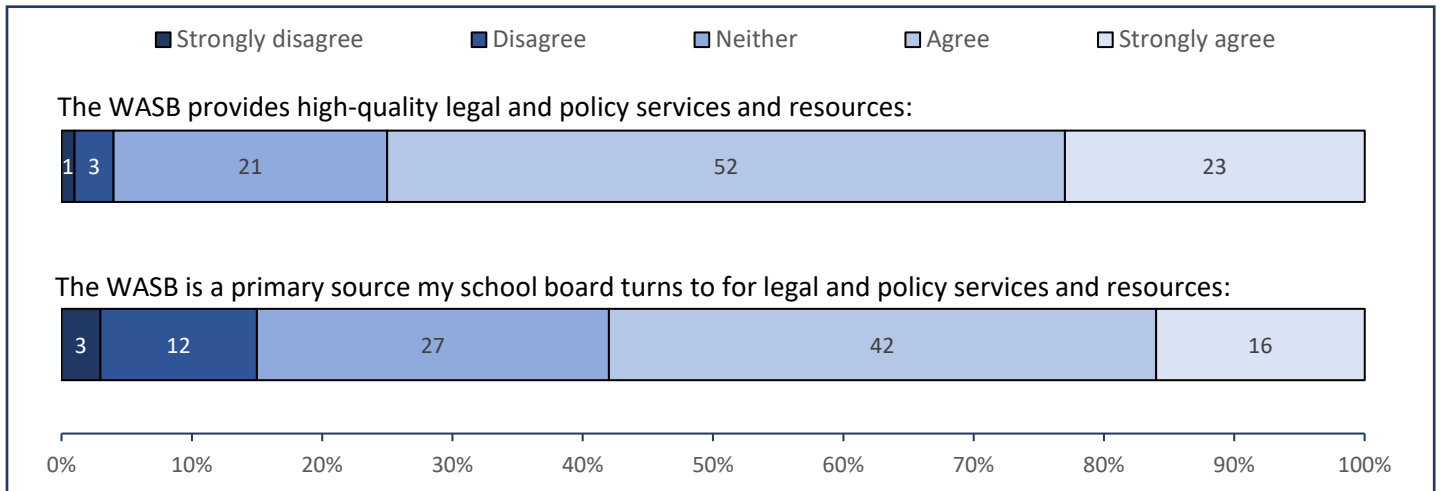
In the section on legal and policy resources and services, WASB members rated the value of various WASB legal and policy resources and publications for their school board work.

Table 13. Members rated many legal and policy resources as very/extremely valuable, with Updated Wisconsin School Laws and the New School Board Member Handbook receiving the highest ratings and the Online Learning Platform and The FOCUS the lowest. Approximately 20-25% of respondents were not familiar with some of the resources.

	% Not at All or A Little Valuable	% Moderately Valuable	% Very or Extremely Valuable	% Not Familiar with this Resource
Updated Wisconsin School Laws	7	18	64	11
New School Board Member Handbook	9	20	62	8
Legal and Policy Newsletter (electronic)	8	26	61	6
Election Schedule and other election resources	13	23	52	12
PowerPoints/presentations on legal/policy matters	13	23	51	13
Wisconsin Policy Resource Guide	12	25	49	14
Annual Meeting booklet	15	25	45	16
Policy Perspectives Newsletter (paper)	12	22	44	22
Nonrenewal Bulletin	14	22	40	24
Online Learning Platform	16	27	37	20
The FOCUS	12	24	37	27

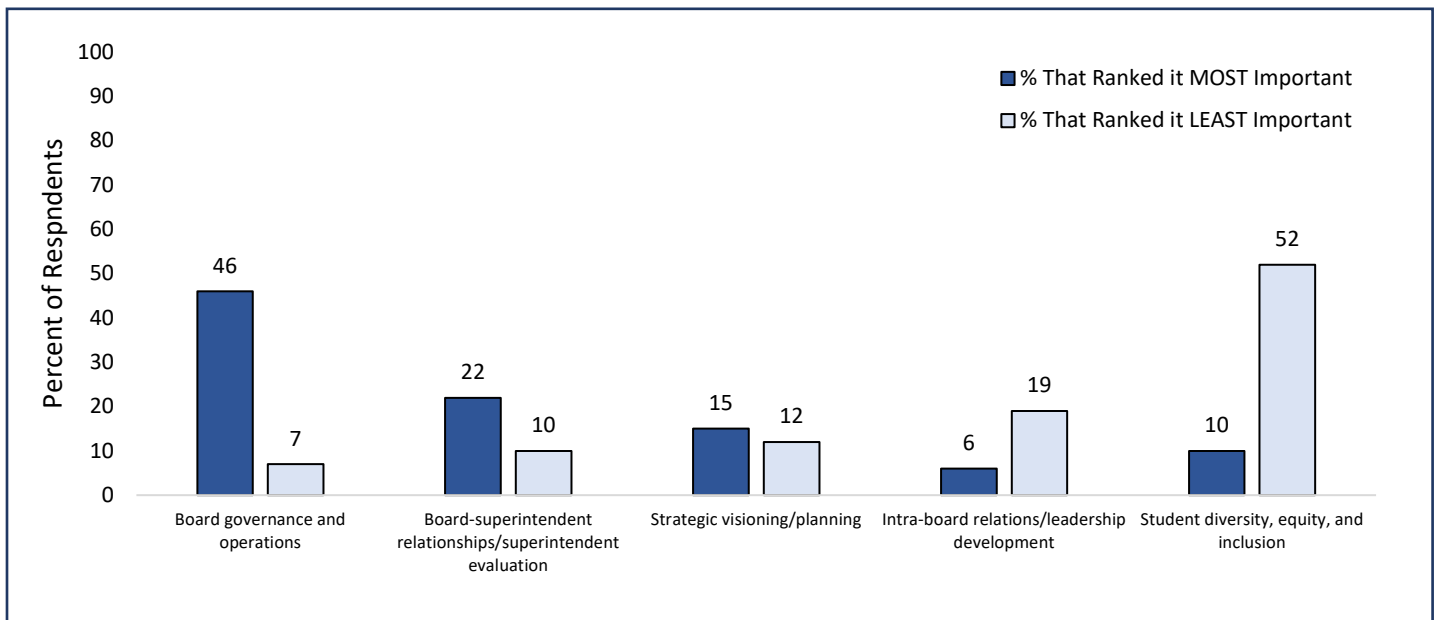
Members rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with two general statements about their school board’s perceptions of WASB legal and policy services and resources.

Figure 3. The majority of WASB members agreed or strongly agreed that WASB provides high-quality services and resources; somewhat fewer agreed or strongly agreed that WASB is their school board’s primary source.



WASB provides governance training and information. WASB members were asked to rank five governance issues for how important they are to the work of their school board.

Figure 4. Board governance and operations was most often ranked as the *most* important issue, and student DEI was most often ranked as the *least* important issue.



Some members mentioned other issues of importance, and those varied widely. Several respondents mentioned relationship issues (some of which appear to fall under issues they were asked to rank): board/superintendent relationships, board/community relationships and interaction, board member relationships (dealing with difficult board members).

Members were asked which sources they turn to when they need help on various governance topics.

Table 14. Member responses suggest a reliance on WASB and local superintendents for a variety of governance issues.

	WASB	Local Sup*	Sups from other districts	Local district staff	CESAs	WASDA	(We don't seek help for this)
Board member roles and responsibilities	54	45	7	8	13	11	11
New board member onboarding	50	44	3	13	9	4	8
Board-superintendent relationship	45	28	7	7	15	13	16
Superintendent evaluation	42	18	8	10	15	11	19
Strategic planning	23	47	10	16	19	8	12
School board goal setting	21	47	4	16	12	4	19
Budget cycle/finance	19	49	8	30	10	8	10

*Sup=Superintendent

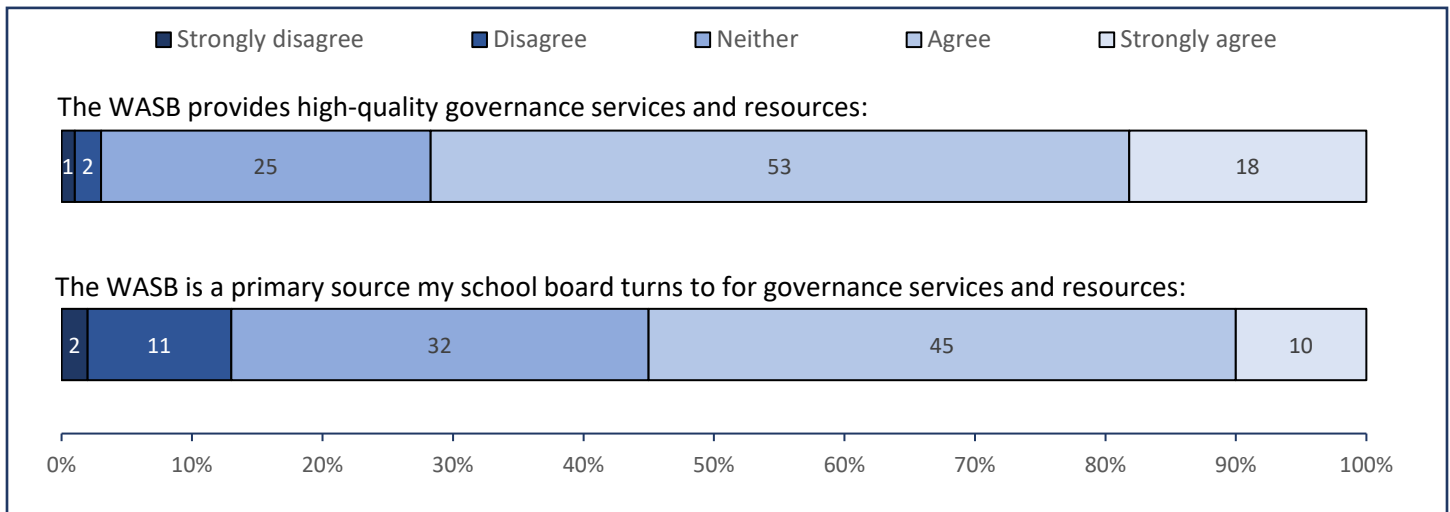
WASB members reported how much they personally valued various WASB online governance resources and publications for their school board work (1=Not at all valuable, 5=Extremely valuable).

Table 15. PowerPoints and presentations on governance were rated as most the valuable online governance resources; most respondents were familiar with them, as well.

	% Not at All or A Little Valuable	% Moderately Valuable	% Very or Extremely Valuable	% Not Familiar with this Resource
PowerPoints and presentations on governance	17	27	42	14
Superintendent Evaluation Framework	21	26	36	17
Online Learning Platform	20	27	33	20
Annual Board Development Tool	21	25	31	23

Members rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with two general statements about their school board’s perceptions of WASB governance services and resources.

Figure 5. The majority of WASB members agreed or strongly agreed that WASB provides high-quality governance services and resources; somewhat fewer agreed or strongly agreed that WASB is their school board’s primary source.



A total of 190 respondents (36%) reported that their school board had conducted a superintendent search within the last three years. Of those, 37% used the WASB superintendent search services; 46% did not; 17% were not sure if their school board had used WASB services or not. Those who reported that their school board did not use WASB search services (n=88) were offered reasons for choosing another option.

Table 16. Over half of respondents reported that their school board chose a search service other than WASB because of the perceived strength of the proposed search process.

	Number	*Percent (%)
Perceived strength of the proposed search process	47	53
Perceived higher quality of services	17	19
Anticipated costs	16	18
Some other reason**	22	25

*Values will not add up to 100 because respondents could check multiple options.

**The other reasons varied widely. Some of the reasons were as follows:

- (1) they did not use a search service/conducted the search themselves
- (2) they used the local CESA’s service
- (3) they promoted from within
- (4) they were unhappy with WASB search previously/did not agree with WASB’s political positions

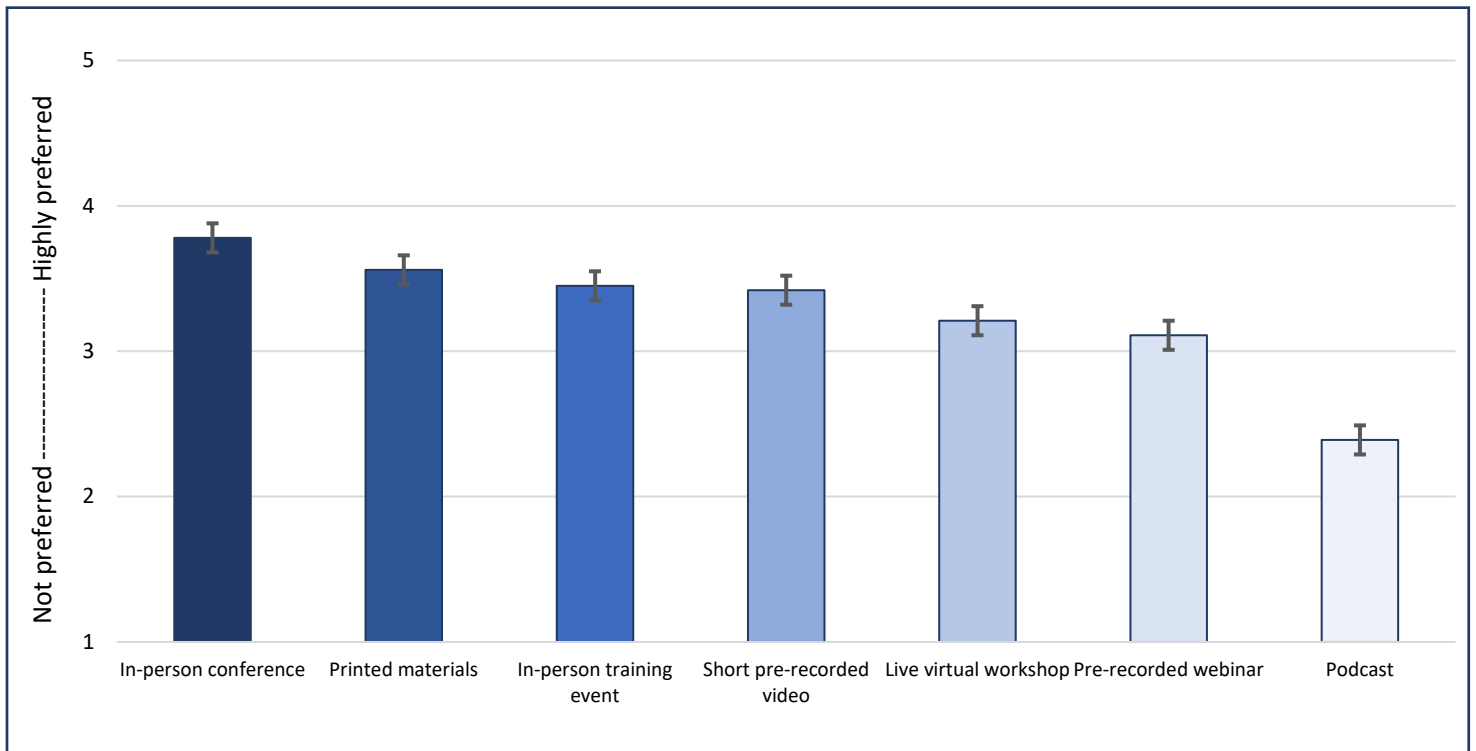
WASB members were asked the degree to which they value different WASB communications services in their school board work. (1=Not at all valuable, 5=Extremely valuable).

Table 17. WASB members gave generally high rating to the WASB communications services. One notable exception was the Connection podcast, which many respondents were unfamiliar with, and those who were familiar with it were more likely to rate it as low in value than high in value.

	% Not at All or A Little Valuable	% Moderately Valuable	% Very or Extremely Valuable	% Not Familiar with this Resource
State Education Convention	11	18	67	4
Other training events (one-day conferences, etc.)	11	25	59	6
The WASB website	12	26	59	3
School News magazine	19	32	45	4
eConnection Newsletter	18	33	45	5
Connection podcast	26	22	15	37

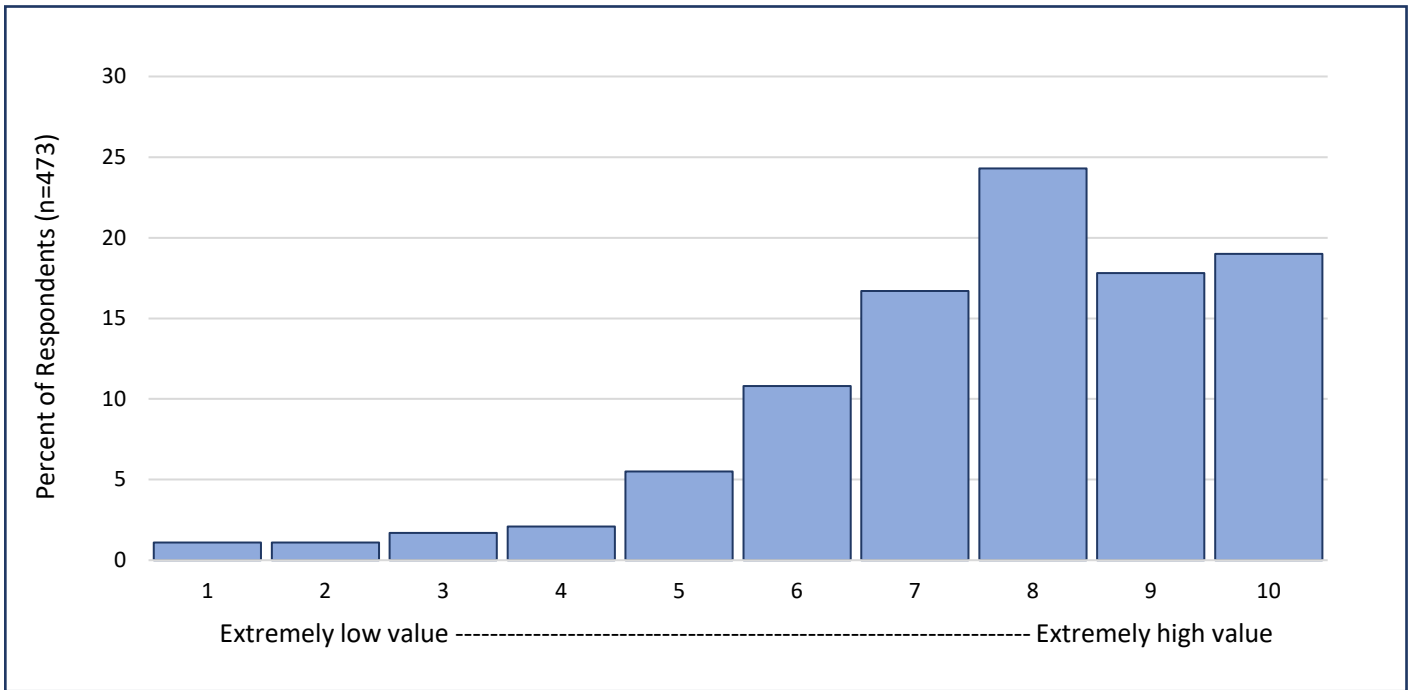
Respondents reported the degree to which they prefer various learning methods and venues (1=Not at all preferred, 5=Highly preferred).

Figure 6. On average, respondents preferred in-person conferences and workshops the most. Podcasts were clearly less preferred than printed materials, in-person training, virtual workshops, and short pre-recorded videos.



WASB members rated the overall value of WASB membership for their school board.

Figure 7. Respondents gave WASB favorable ratings. On the 10-point scale provided, nearly 90% of WASB respondents rated the overall value of WASB membership at 6 or above, and over 40% rated it either an 8, 9, or 10.



WASB members were asked one final question: “How can the WASB improve its services to you or your district’s school board?”

The complete responses to this question, with any identifying information removed, are provided in a separate document.