SCHOOL BOARD RETREAT
Community National Bank Meeting Room – North Main Street, Barre VT
MISSION STATEMENT
We are committed to providing a challenging educational environment that encourages
high performance in a nurturing atmosphere characterized by dignity and respect.

October 14, 2015
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Lucas Herring - Chair
Sonya Spaulding – Vice Chair
Jim Carrien - Clerk
Nathan Reigner
Anita Ristau
Tyler Smith

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
Guiliano Cecchinelli, II
Anita Chadderton
Leslie Walz

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:
John Pandolfo, Superintendent
James Taffel, Principal

GUESTS PRESENT:
none

1. **The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Chair Lucas Herring.**

2. **Additions and/or Deletions to Agenda – none**

3. **Visitors and Communications – none**

4. **New Business**

   The Board blended all of Items 4.1 through 4.4 into a large discussion.

   4.1 Board Members Self-Assessment

There was agreement that for many of the questions in the survey, the board members ratings were very consistent.
On the topic of Vision and Mission, the following was noted:
- Some time should be devoted to clarifying the Mission & Vision
- Any Mission & Vision of the Board should be in aligned with that of the school
- The BSU Mission & Vision should also be aligned with each school's individual Mission & Vision
- If/when district consolidation occurs under Act 46, the new board should work on the district Mission and Vision

The board reviewed the Vision, Mission Statement and Philosophy, including the 10 Beliefs, from the Student
Handbook (page 5), and agreed that these articulate the Mission and Vision of the school and board appropriately.
Additionally, the board discussed reviewing these at least annually after the board reorganizes.

In reviewing the results of the Self-Assessment Survey, specific comments were made during discussion of the following questions. Survey results are attached to these minutes:

- Q1: The Continuous Improvement Plan and the 5-year Plan should be the vehicles by which the board discusses where the district is headed in 3-5 years, and should also be reflected in the budget development process.
- Q2: The community is engaged through the Act 46 Committee and through televised meetings, but the community has not been engaged through the vision building process. Additional notes for engaging the community are listed below under the goal of increasing Public Relations. The question came up of whether it is possible to gather data on the number of times the Video Vision posting of each meeting video is viewed.
- Q6: Processes for soliciting and responding to input from staff and community include the Visitors and Communication portion of board meetings, and the Parent Survey that the school has occasionally given and is developing to give in the future. The admin team also surveys staff on various items and can report that data to the board.
- Q11: The board has defined a process to evaluate the superintendent. This was done by developing a job description and creating an evaluation tool based on that job description.
- Q12: To evaluate progress toward meeting established goals, the Continuous Improvement Plan goals will be collated into the Beliefs from the Philosophy statement, and a Survey Monkey will be developed for the board to periodically complete.
- Q13: To evaluate progress, metrics must be determined to allow for the administration and school to measure, present, and analyze the goals.
- Q14: Board goals will be listed and discussed in Item 4.2 below. It was noted that these need to be made more measurable.
- Q18: Community members have served on the Finance Committee in the past. The board discussed setting up a Survey Monkey and administering through Front Porch Forum during the budget season, maybe during November/December.
- Q22: Related to engaging the community meaningfully in understanding changes in the educational system needed for the 21st century, the following was discussed: (1) Public Relations ideas will be discussed in Item 4.2 below; (2) Parents have communicated to board members how difficult it is to help their children with homework/concepts/etc. A suggestion was made that the school website have information available to help parents with this. This could consist of lesson plans, concept explanations, etc.
- Q23: Measurable Goals would help the board keep the community informed on district performance.
- Q28: Board training for new members should include signing a copy of the Code of Conduct.
- Q35: The consensus was that September is the best time of year for a Board Retreat.

4.2 Review of Previously Defined Goals

The previously defined goals developed at the 2013 board retreat are listed below. These were developed based on what the board identified as the top 3 weaknesses at the time. These are:

- Change Schedule
- Differentiation Training
- Parent Program
- Strong Partnership with Mental Health
- Bad PR

While the goals need to be defined in a measurable way so that progress can be clearly articulated, the Board did discuss the following progress on these goals:

- Change Schedule – Start time has been changed. The schedule has been tweaked, particularly middle school. Overall, the schedule is still a work in progress.

- Differentiation Training – This is also a work in progress. The Instructional Strategies Professional Development from 2014-2015, and the Peer Observation from 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 address this goal.
- Strong Partnership with Mental Health - The professional development on Trauma with NFI (Northeast Families Institute) shows progress toward the goal.
- Parent Program –It was noted that one goal in the Continuous Improvement Plan is to "partner with parents to support the educational experience for every child". Efforts have been made to increase parent participation in Parent Teacher Conferences (Task #1 under this goal). The remaining tasks under this goal remain a work in progress.
- Bad PR – This is where most of the discussion occurred, in terms of ways to move forward. This will be addressed in Item 4.3 below. In terms of progress to date, the school and SU have developed a Facebook page to push out information and it has seen moderate use. Also, Jackie Tolman has started a blog from the school website to promote and share what has been happening at the middle school.

4.3 Set Board Goals using Planning Template

The board reviewed the goals from the Continuous Improvement Plan, and agreed that these were goals the board fully supports. The ensuing discussion did not use the Planning Template and focused primarily on increasing the quantity and quality of "PR" communication. Discussion included the following highlights:
- Facebook:
    - How frequently do we use it and for what?
    - Ask Jessie V. to gather data from the weekly summaries FB provides to document how much the FB page is viewed.
    - Have Jackie Tolman's blog be pushed out through a link sent out on FB each time Jackie writes a new blog entry.
    - Have the school newsletter and other correspondence highlighted with a FB blast each time it goes out.
    - The question came up as to whether FB is the best venue to reach the "right" folks. I cannot be the only method of communication as many people use more traditional methods (World, Times-Argus, etc.)
- Positive Messaging:
    - Highlight the successes that we have and the good things that we do:
        - Solar agreement that will save us money
        - Efficiently approaching our boiler replacement
        - $70K grant for fresh fruits and vegetables
        - Our academic progress (test scores) in light of our demographic and disability factors, as well as in light of our per pupil spending.
    - Have administrators and the superintendent write pieces to deliver these positive messages
    - Ideas for ways the board can help more:
        - Maybe each committee has a point person to message the work of that committee
        - Maybe each board member takes a month and does the PR for that month through a variety of channels.
- Google Web Calendar
    - This is currently set up for athletics, but it would be helpful to expand it for board and committee meetings, other school events, family events, etc.
    - Possibly someone like Jessie V or Linda P could manage this, or alternatively it can be assigned to the webmaster.
- Community Service Groups
    - It would be beneficial to try to make regular appearances at the meetings of many of the local service groups. Visits could be planned throughout the year to promote the school by sharing the good things that are happening. Additionally, visits could be planned during budget season to promote the budget. This could be done by the superintendent at times with a board member joining him. Service groups include:

- Rotary, Lions (Tommy W?), Kiwanas, VFW, Legion, Masonic, Elks (Don M?), Mutwa, Canadian (Mike G?), others?

4.4 Collate Board Goals & Priorities into Continuous Improvement Plan

John Pandolfo will collate the goals identified from these notes, the goals from the Continuous Improvement Plan, and the Beliefs from the Philosophy Statement into a form where the board can review them quarterly to determine progress made.
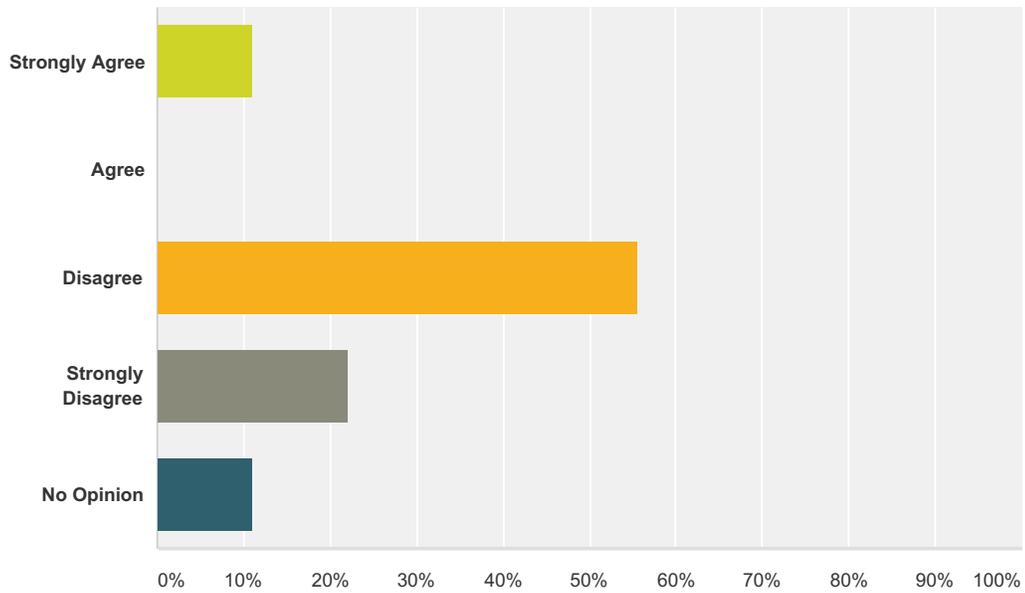
5. Adjournment
On a motion by Ms. Spaulding, seconded by Mr. Smith, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
John Pandolfo

Q1 The Board regularly discusses where the district should be headed 3-5 years into the future

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**0.00%**	0
Disagree	**55.56%**	5
Strongly Disagree	**22.22%**	2
No Opinion	**11.11%**	1
Total		**9**

Q2 The Board engages the community when establishing the future vision of the district

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
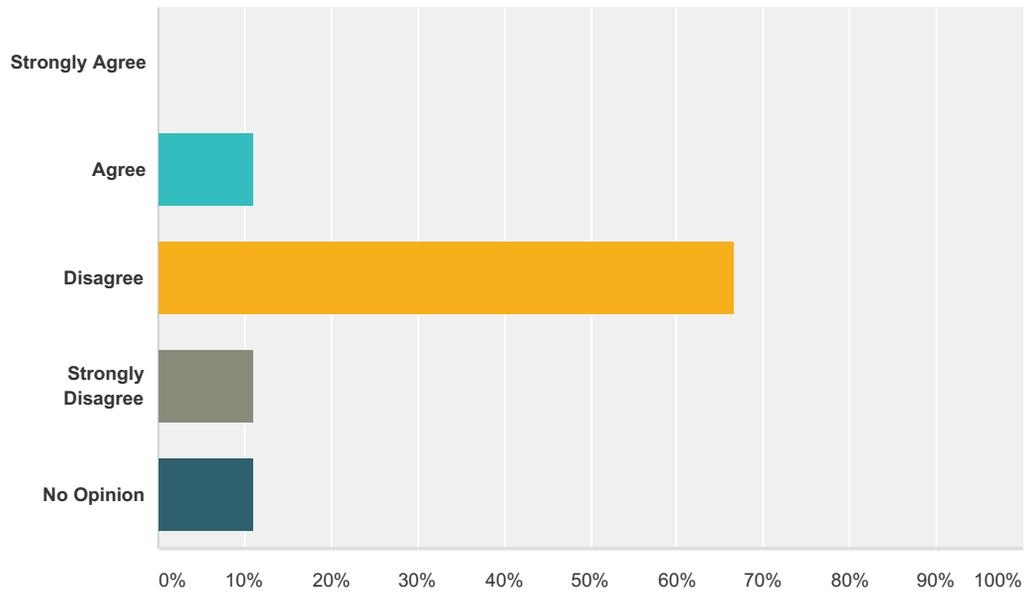
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**0.00%**	0
Agree	**11.11%**	1
Disagree	**66.67%**	6
Strongly Disagree	**11.11%**	1
No Opinion	**11.11%**	1
Total		**9**

2 / 36

Q3 The vision is focused on what we want for our children. It is written in terms of expected results for student learning rather than activities the district will engage in

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
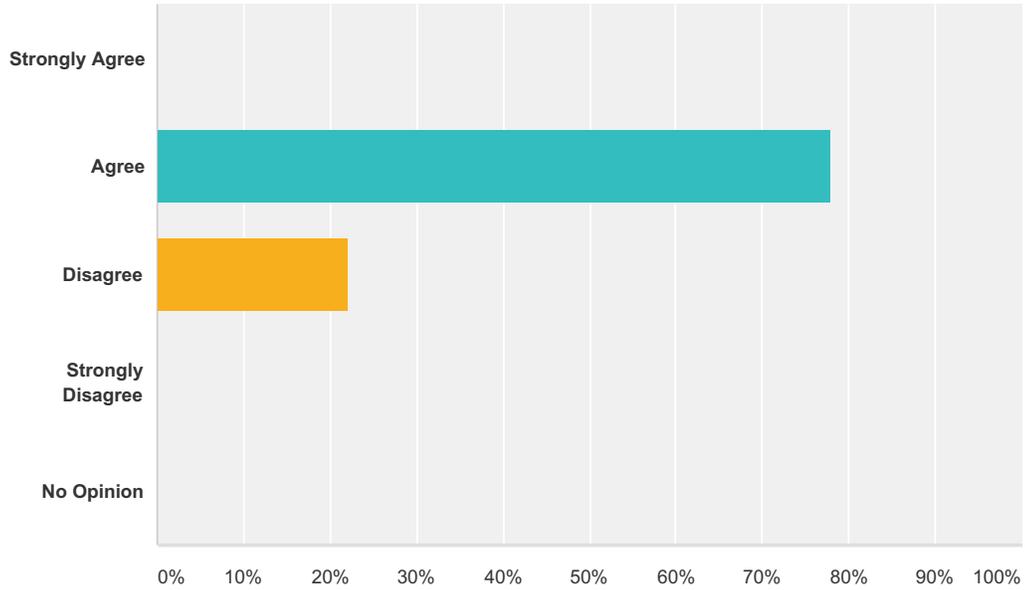
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**0.00%**	0
Agree	**77.78%**	7
Disagree	**22.22%**	2
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q4 The vision is far reaching, not limited by the walls of the school or the borders of the district

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
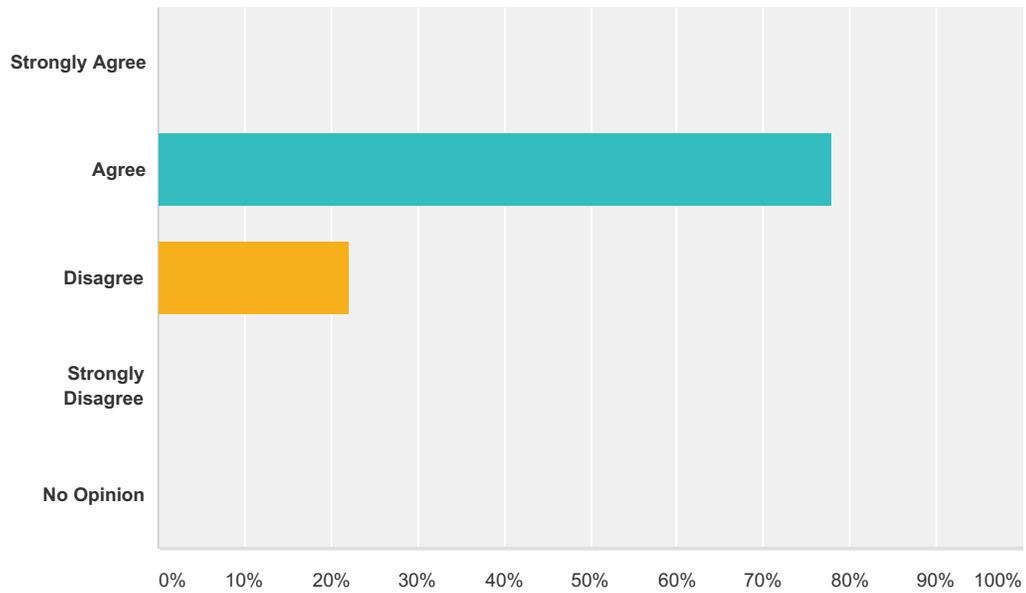
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**0.00%**	0
Agree	**77.78%**	7
Disagree	**22.22%**	2
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q5 The Board adopts and follows policies to ensure that school resources are used appropriately and effectively to meet district goals

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
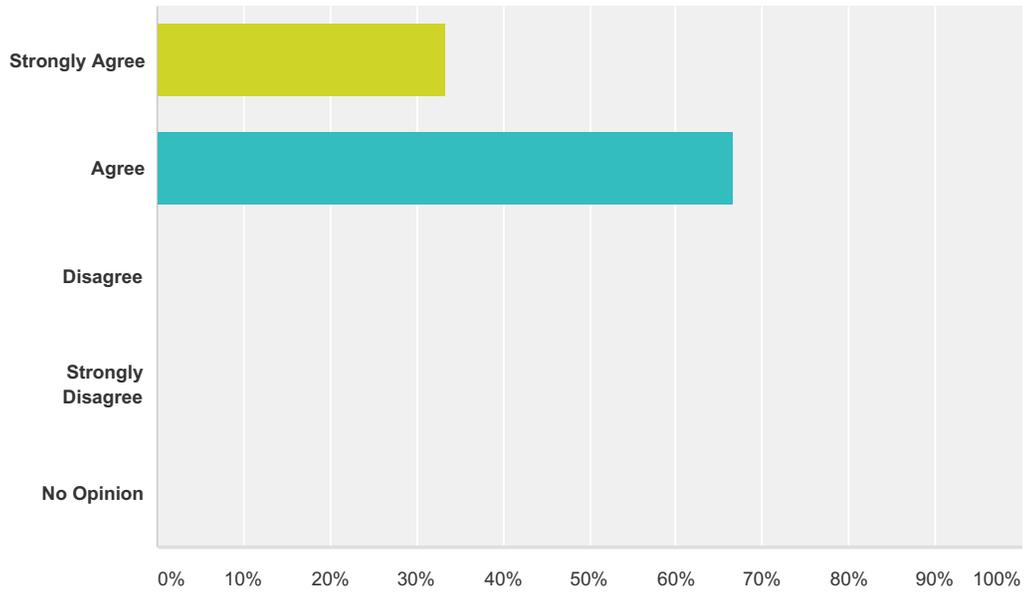
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**33.33%**	3
Agree	**66.67%**	6
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q6 There is a process for soliciting and responding to input from staff and community

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
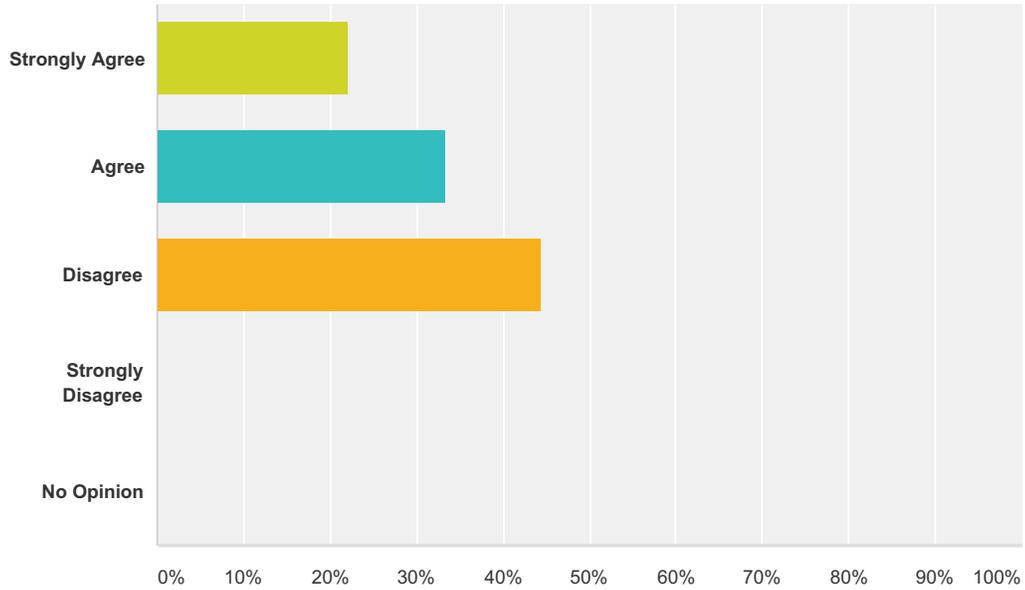
Answer Choices		Responses	
Strongly Agree		**22.22%**	2
Agree		**33.33%**	3
Disagree		**44.44%**	4
Strongly Disagree		**0.00%**	0
No Opinion		**0.00%**	0
Total			9

Q7 The board delegates responsibility for implementing policy to the administration

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
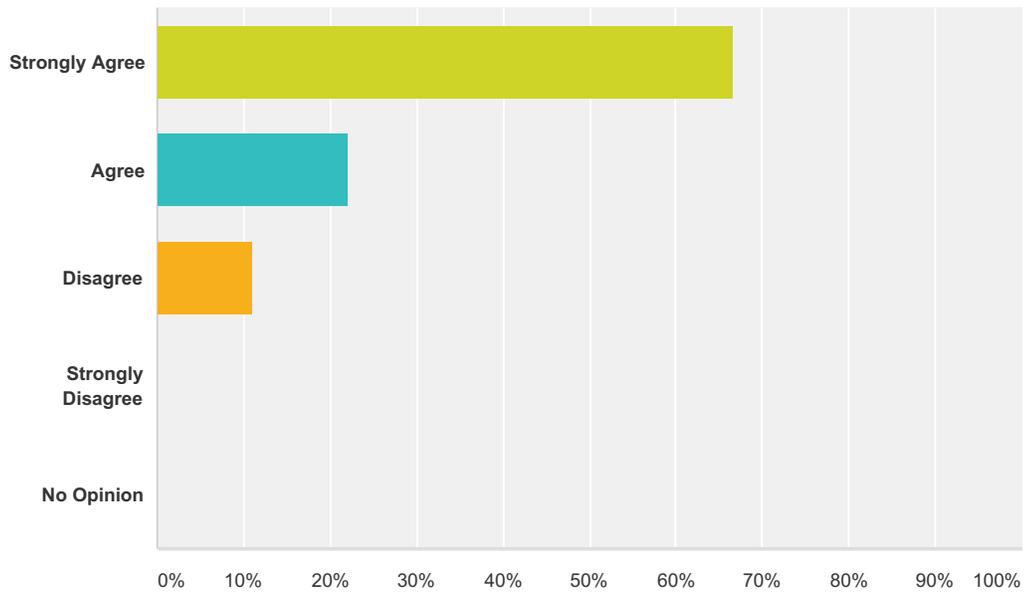
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**66.67%**	6
Agree	**22.22%**	2
Disagree	**11.11%**	1
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q8 The board has developed an ongoing system to review and update all policies every three to five years

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
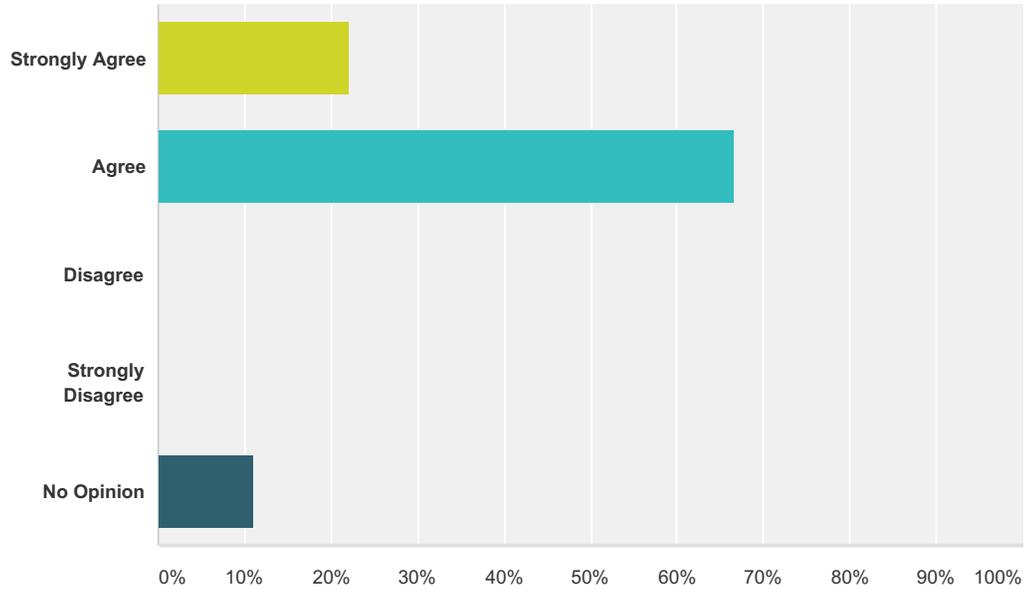
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**22.22%**	2
Agree	**66.67%**	6
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**11.11%**	1
Total		**9**

Q9 The board has established an excellent working relationship with the superintendent (either directly or through the SU Board)

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
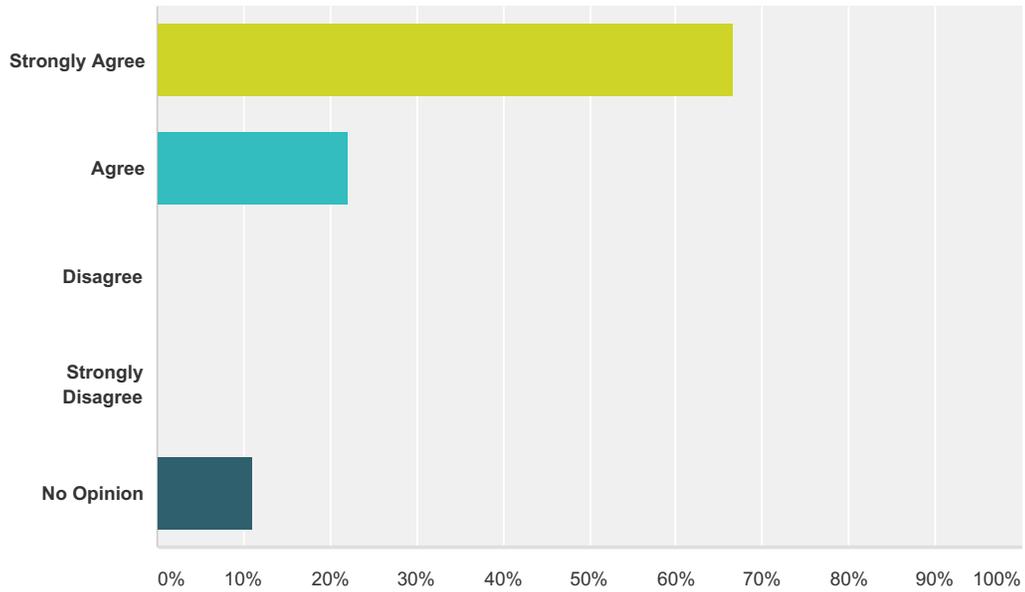
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**66.67%**	6
Agree	**22.22%**	2
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**11.11%**	1
Total		**9**

Q10 The board has established clear priorities and goals with/for the superintendent

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
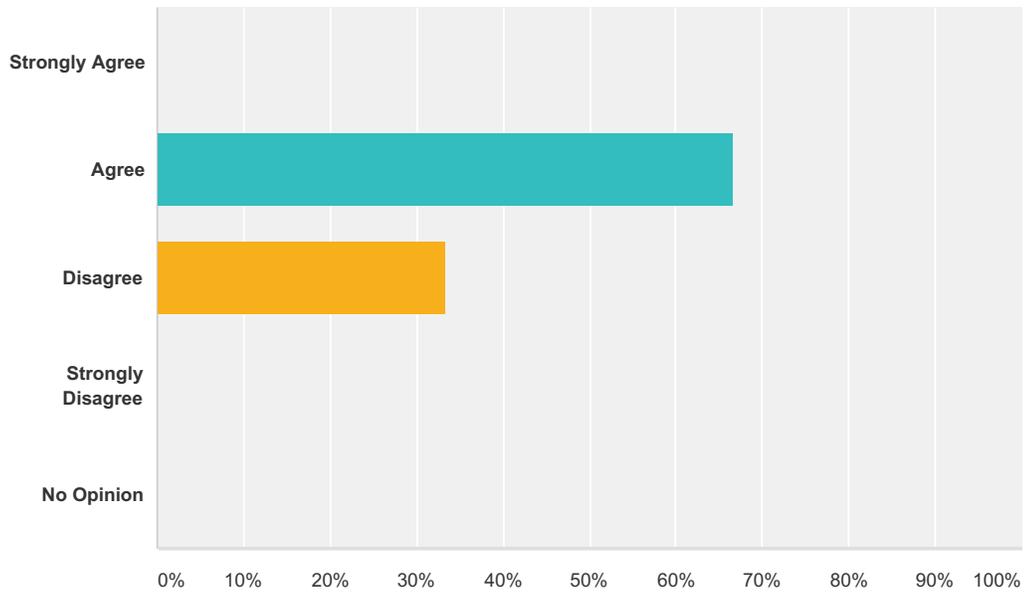
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	0.00%	0
Agree	66.67%	6
Disagree	33.33%	3
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
No Opinion	0.00%	0
Total		9

Q11 The board annually evaluates the superintendent's performance

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
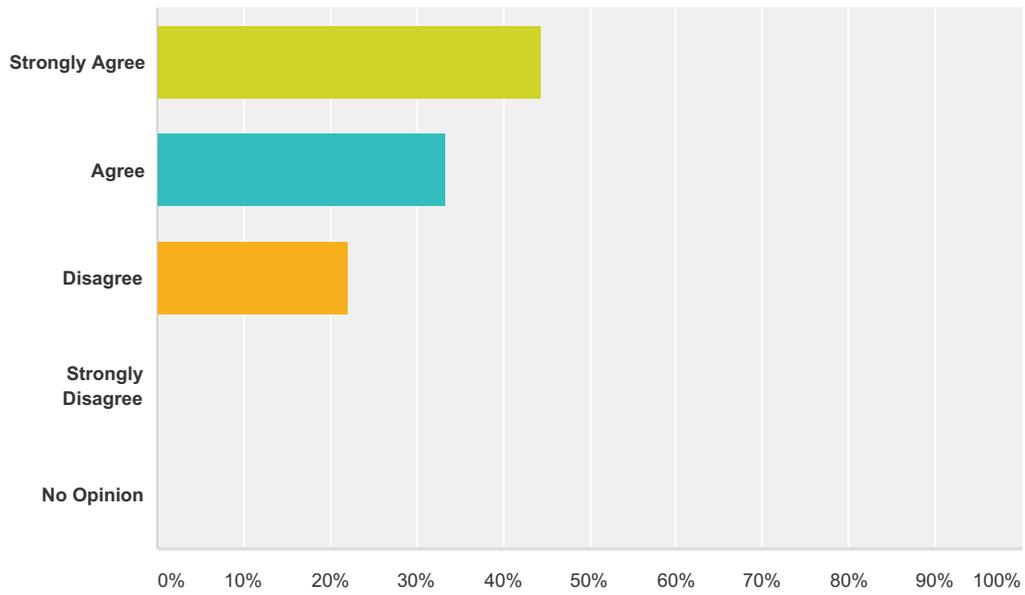
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**44.44%**	4
Agree	**33.33%**	3
Disagree	**22.22%**	2
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

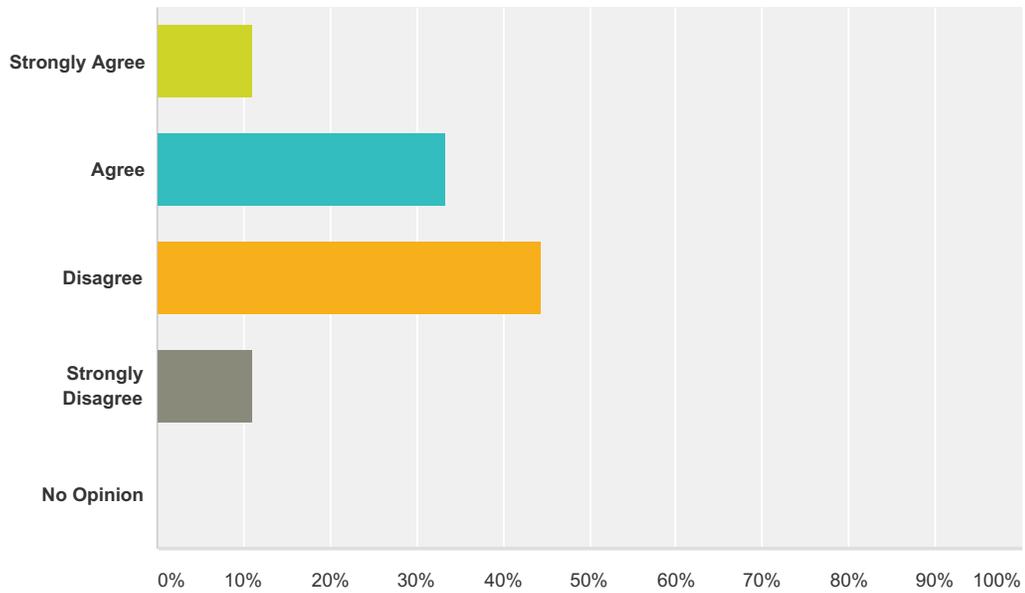## Q12 The board regularly evaluates progress toward meeting established school goals specific to student learning

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
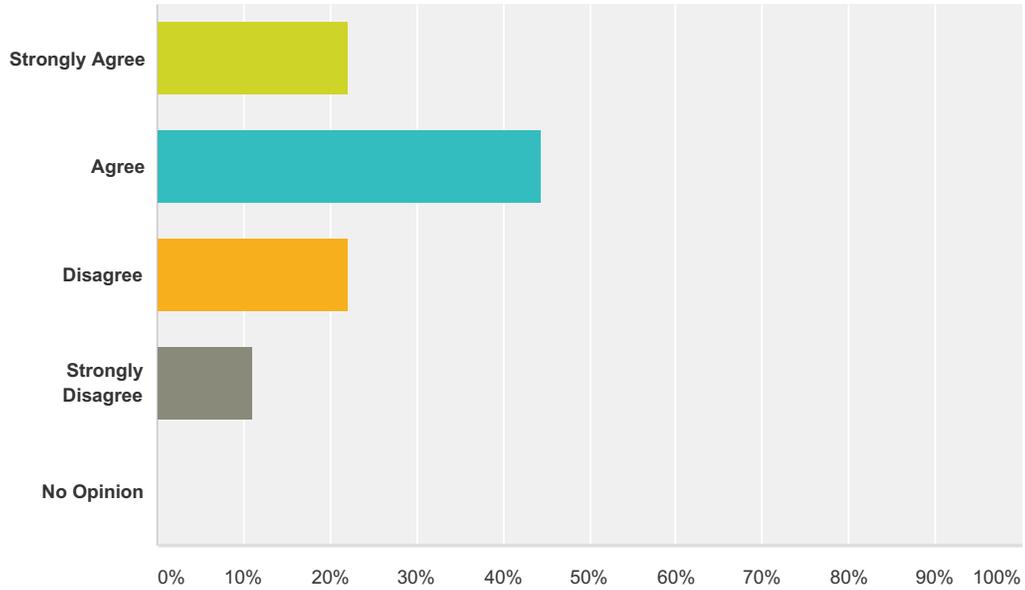
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**22.22%**	2
Agree	**44.44%**	4
Disagree	**22.22%**	2
Strongly Disagree	**11.11%**	1
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q13 The board regularly evaluates progress toward meeting established school goals specific to systems operations

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**33.33%**	3
Disagree	**44.44%**	4
Strongly Disagree	**11.11%**	1
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q14 The board regularly evaluates its performance in meeting established board goals

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
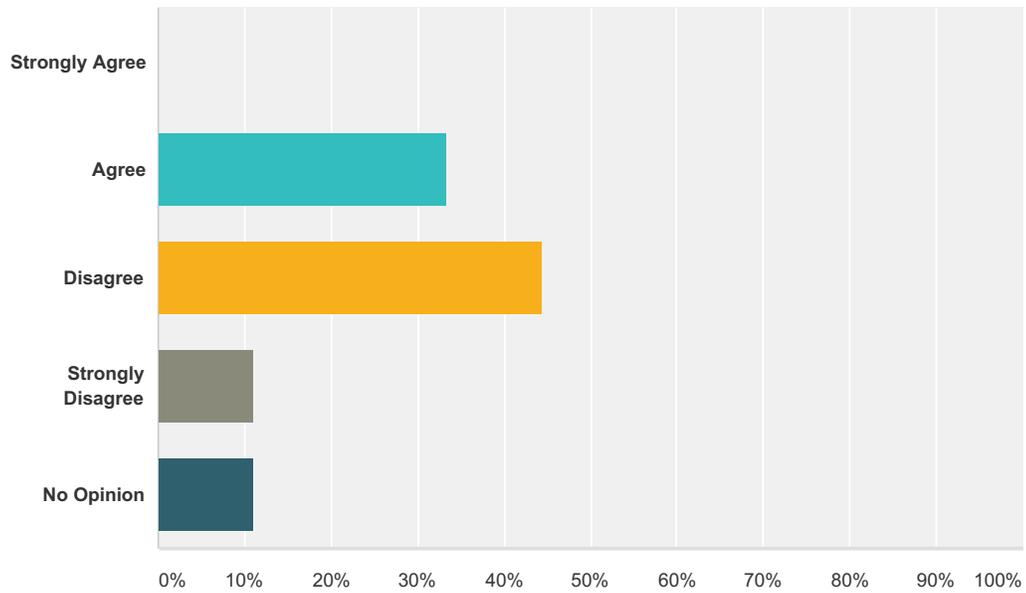
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**0.00%**	0
Agree	**33.33%**	3
Disagree	**44.44%**	4
Strongly Disagree	**11.11%**	1
No Opinion	**11.11%**	1
Total		**9**

Q15 The board ensures adherence to policy

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
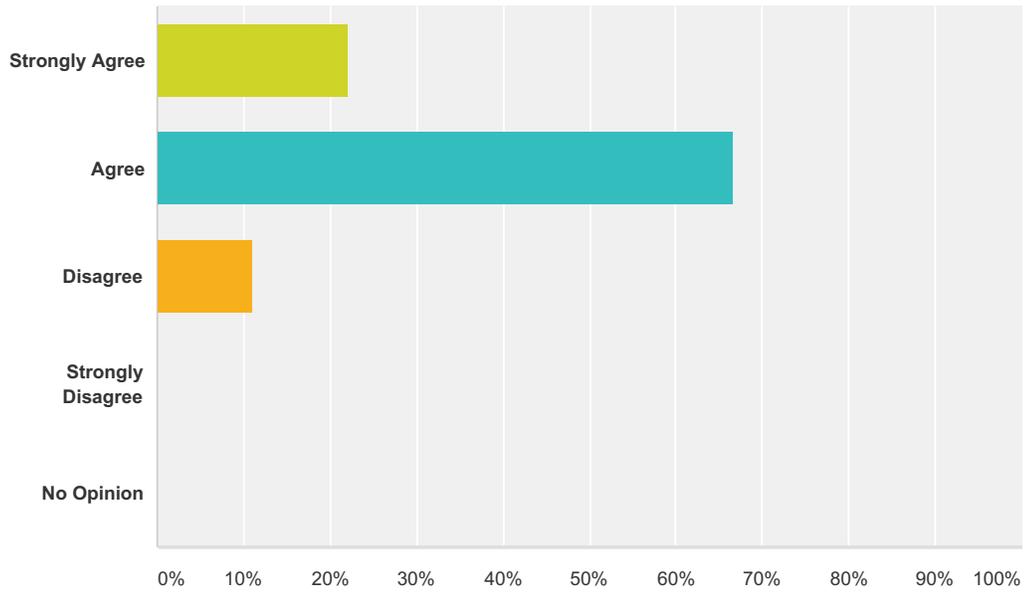
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**22.22%**	2
Agree	**66.67%**	6
Disagree	**11.11%**	1
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q16 The board develops a budget that focuses on programmatic priorities

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
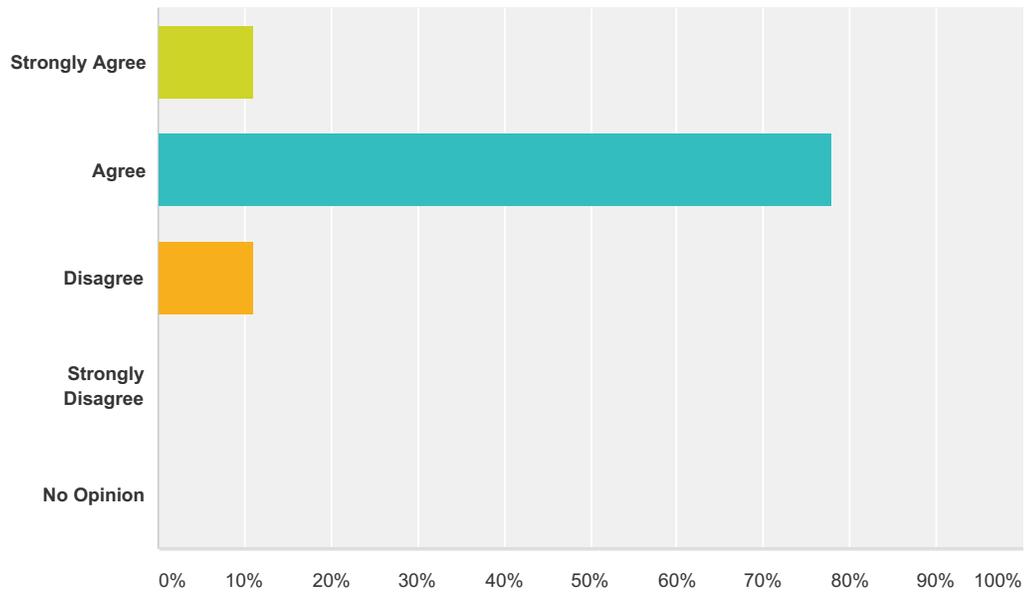
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**77.78%**	7
Disagree	**11.11%**	1
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

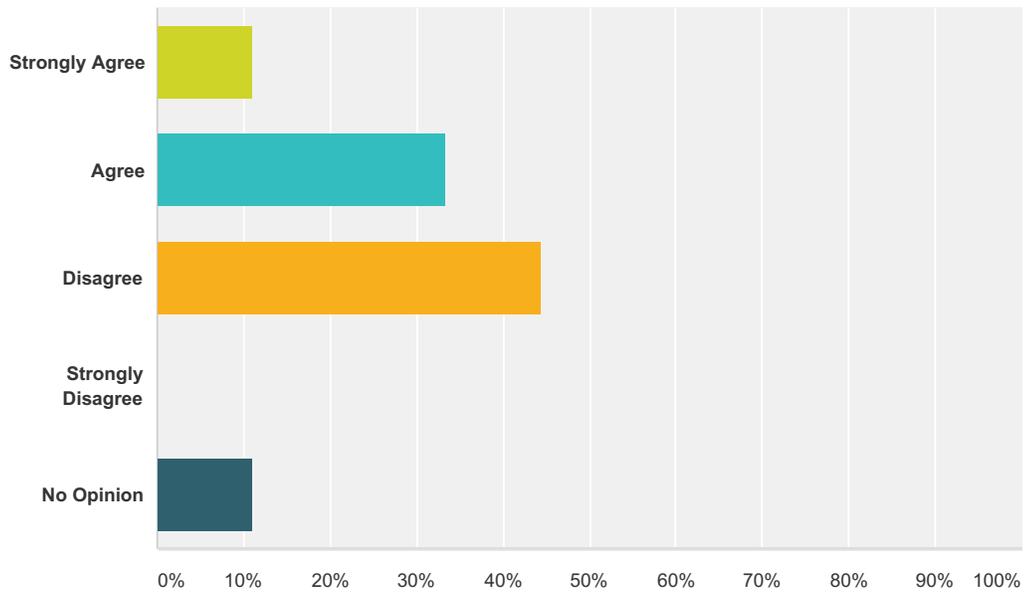## Q17 The board develops broad budget parameters and expects the administration to create the line item details

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
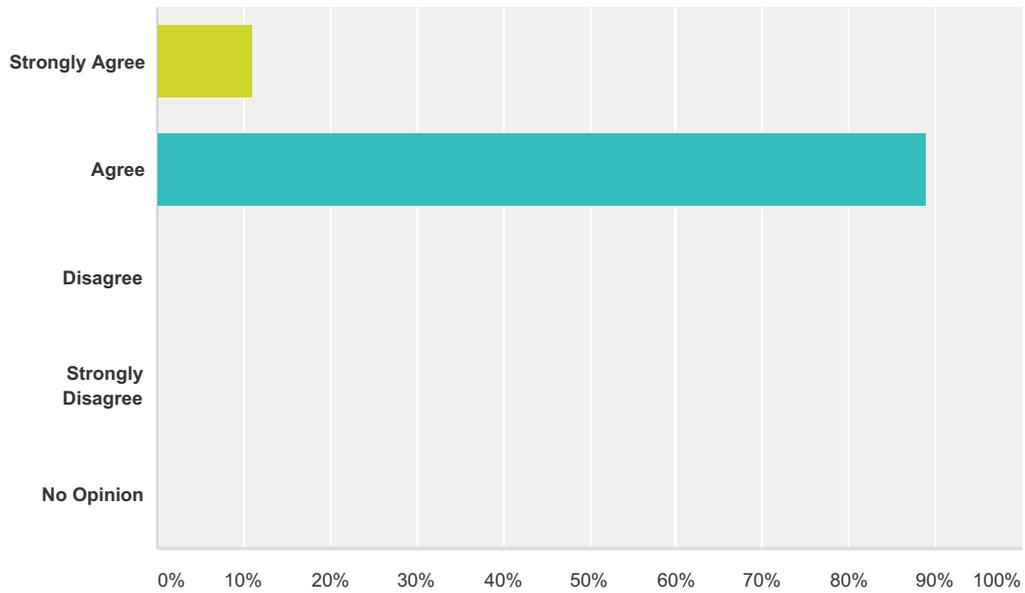
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**88.89%**	8
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		9

Q18 The board engages the community in setting budget priorities

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**33.33%**	3
Disagree	**44.44%**	4
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**11.11%**	1
Total		**9**

Q19 The board is attentive to the district's ability to pay

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
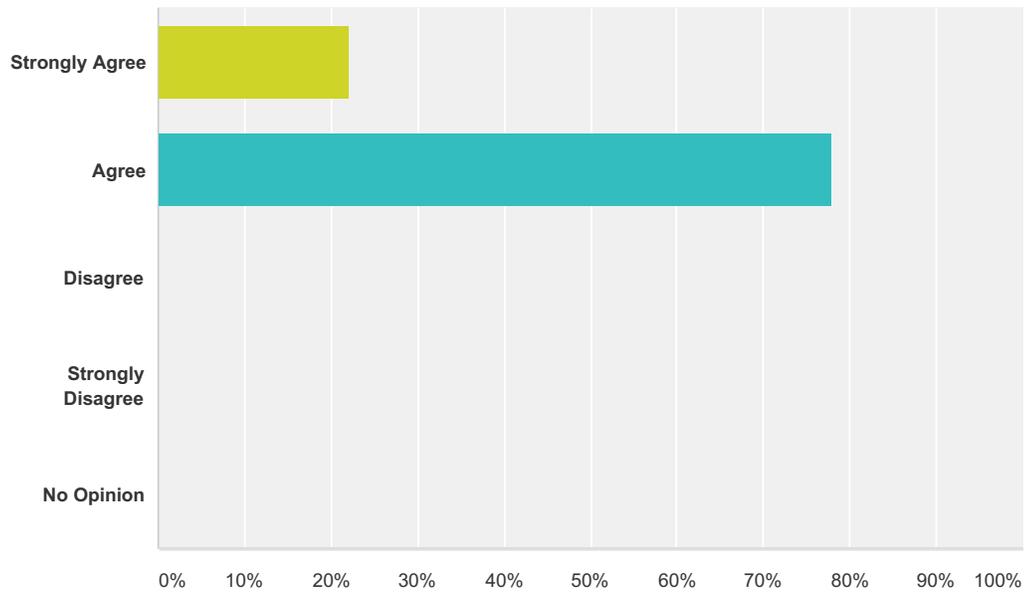
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**22.22%**	2
Agree	**77.78%**	7
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q20 The board assures that internal controls are in place to protect public funds

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
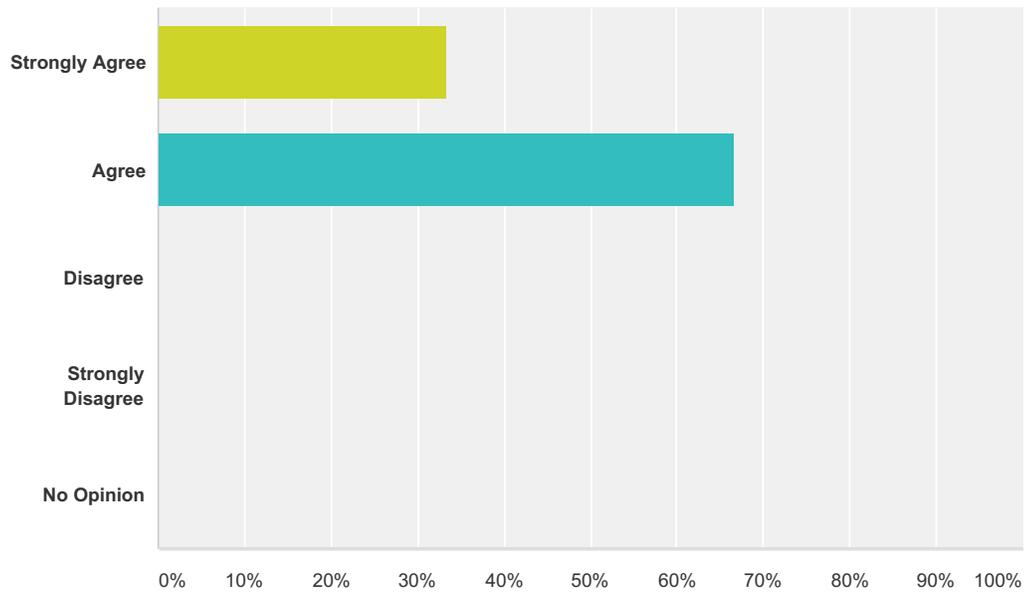
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**33.33%**	3
Agree	**66.67%**	6
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q21 The board carefully monitors expenditure reports and assures the administration is addressing issues with revenue and expenditures

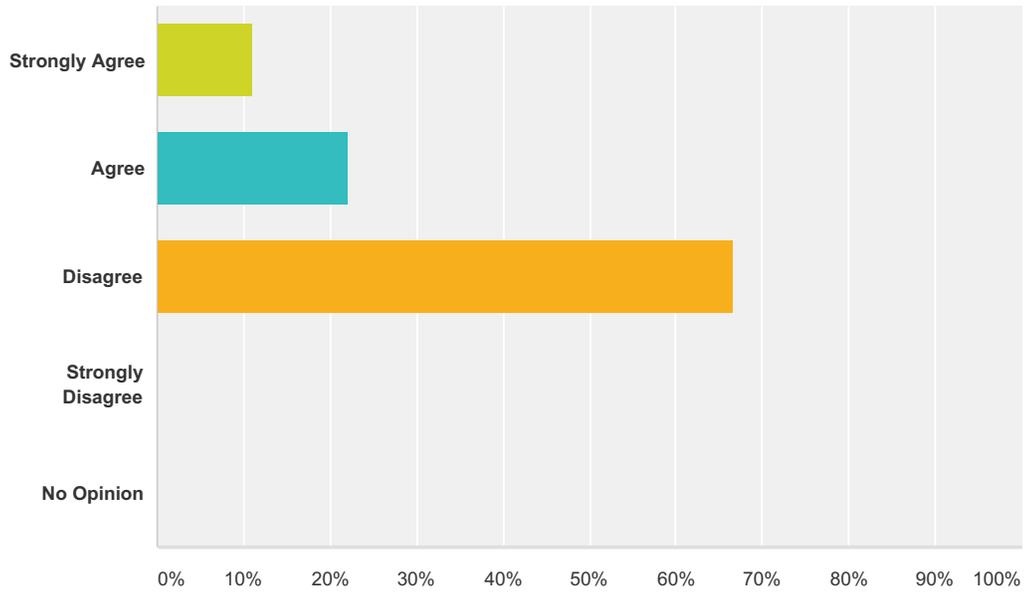**Answered: 9   Skipped: 0**
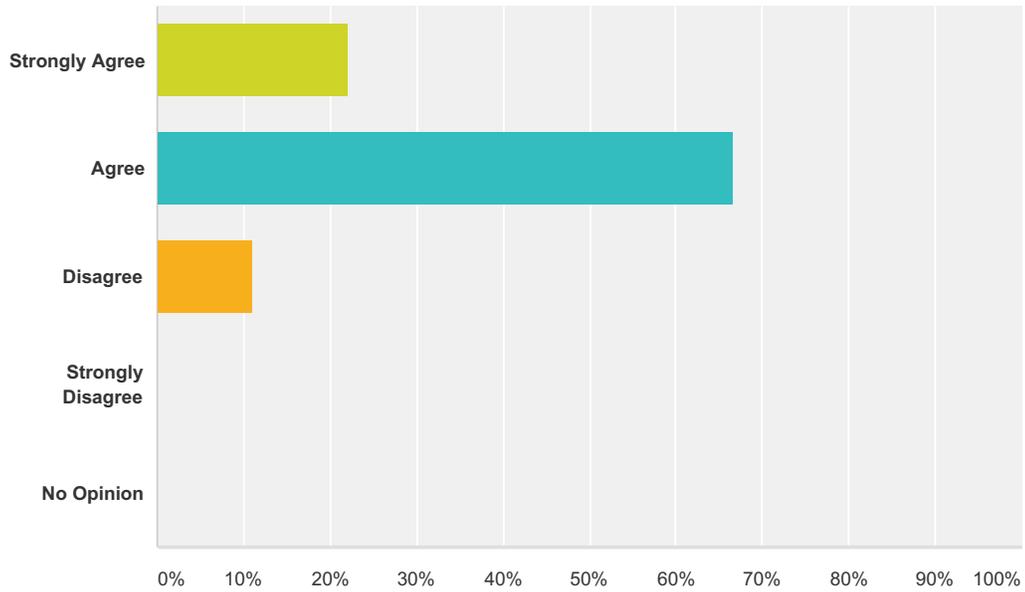
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**22.22%**	2
Agree	**66.67%**	6
Disagree	**11.11%**	1
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q22 The board engages the community meaningfully in understanding changes in the education system needed for the 21st century

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
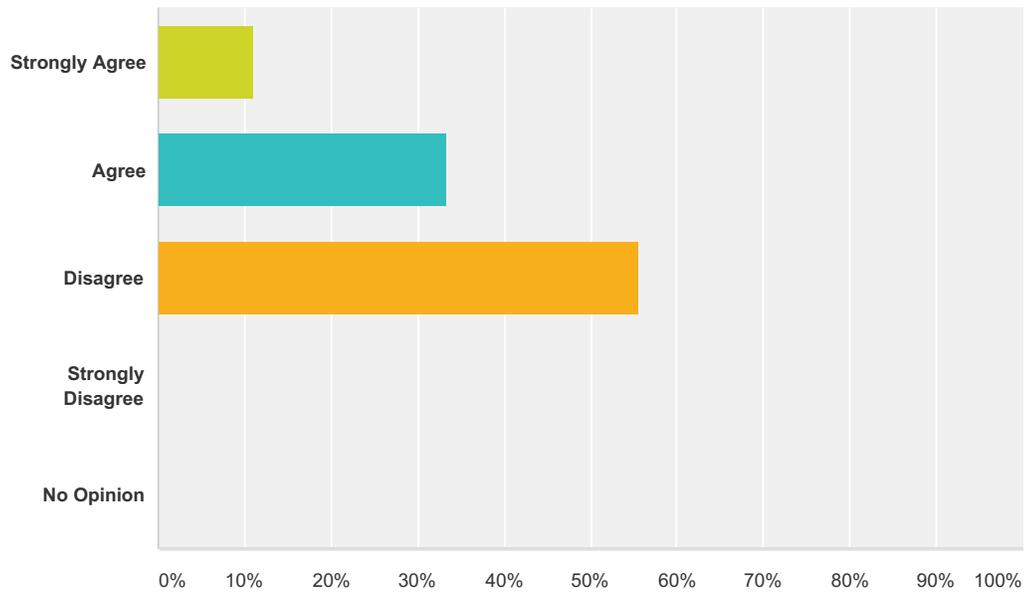

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**22.22%**	2
Disagree	**66.67%**	6
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q23 The board keeps the community informed of district performance

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**33.33%**	3
Disagree	**55.56%**	5
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q24 The annual school budget passes on the first try

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
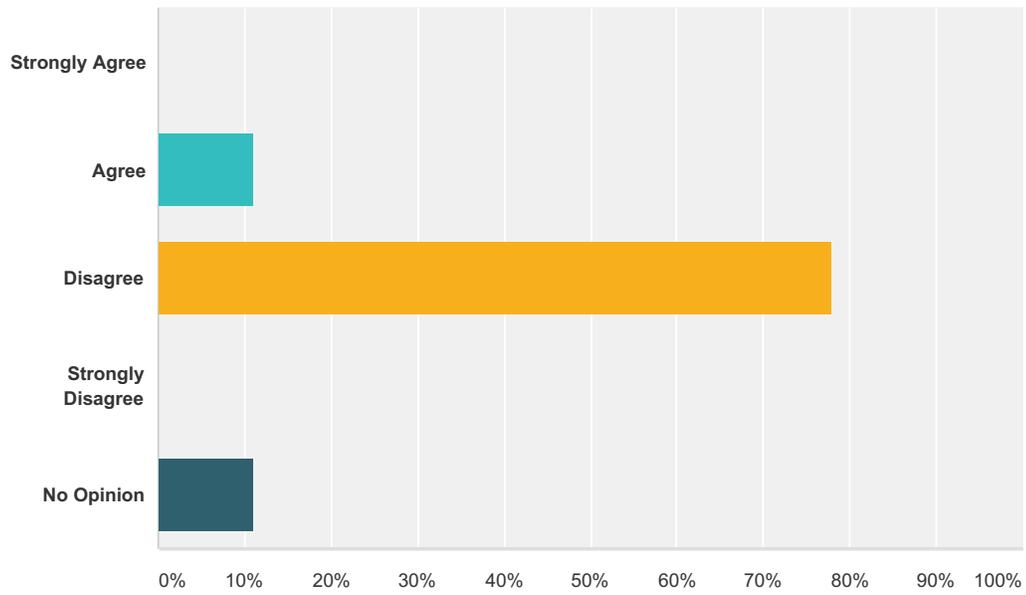
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**0.00%**	0
Agree	**11.11%**	1
Disagree	**77.78%**	7
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**11.11%**	1
Total		**9**

Q25 The board stays out of staff and student challenges which may result in quasi-judicial hearings before the board
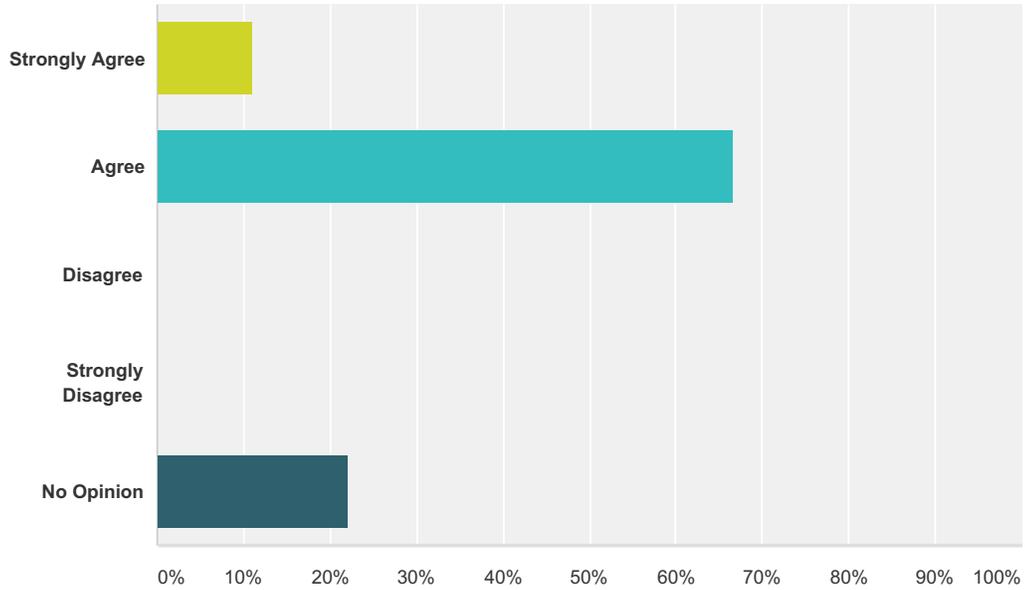
Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
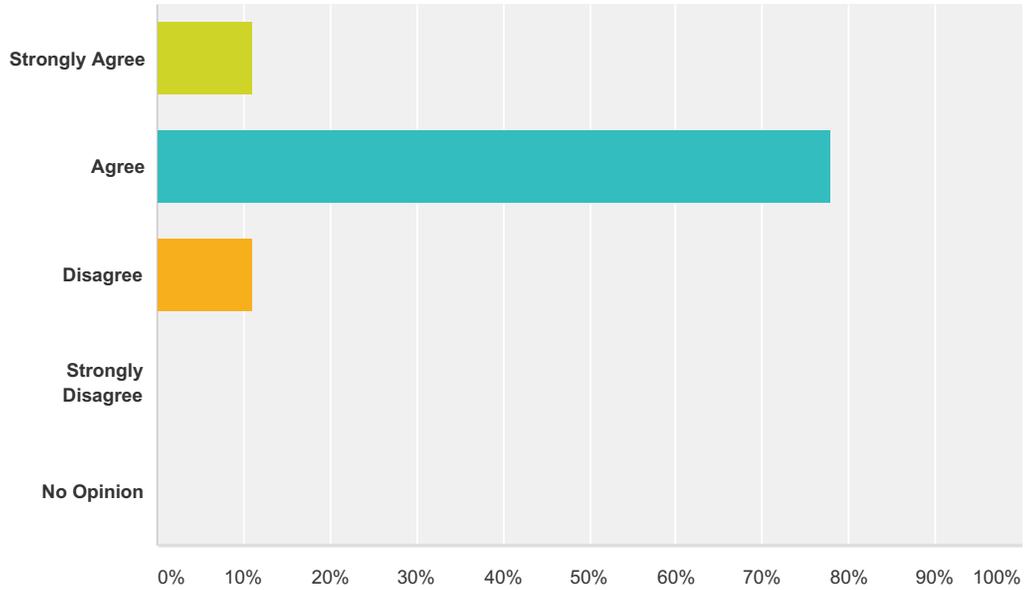
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**77.78%**	7
Disagree	**11.11%**	1
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		9

## Q26 The board handles quasi-judicial hearings in a fair and orderly fashion and arrives at clear, fair conclusions

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices		Responses	
Strongly Agree		**11.11%**	1
Agree		**66.67%**	6
Disagree		**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree		**0.00%**	0
No Opinion		**22.22%**	2
Total			9

Q27 The board handles collective bargaining responsibilities effectively, seeking to find the proper balance between assuring a highly qualified and motivated workforce, and recognizing the local taxpayer ability to pay
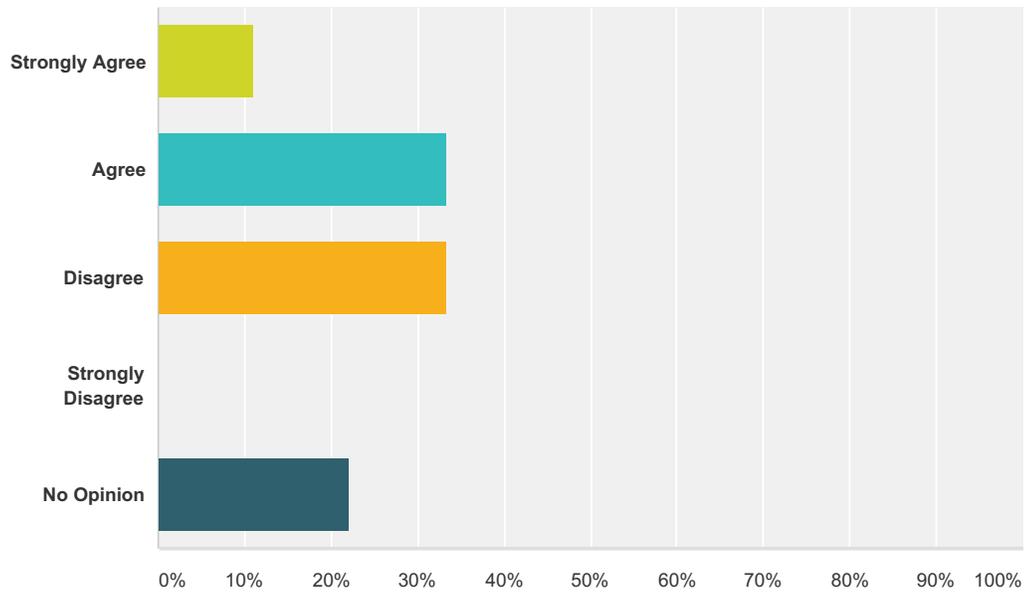
Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
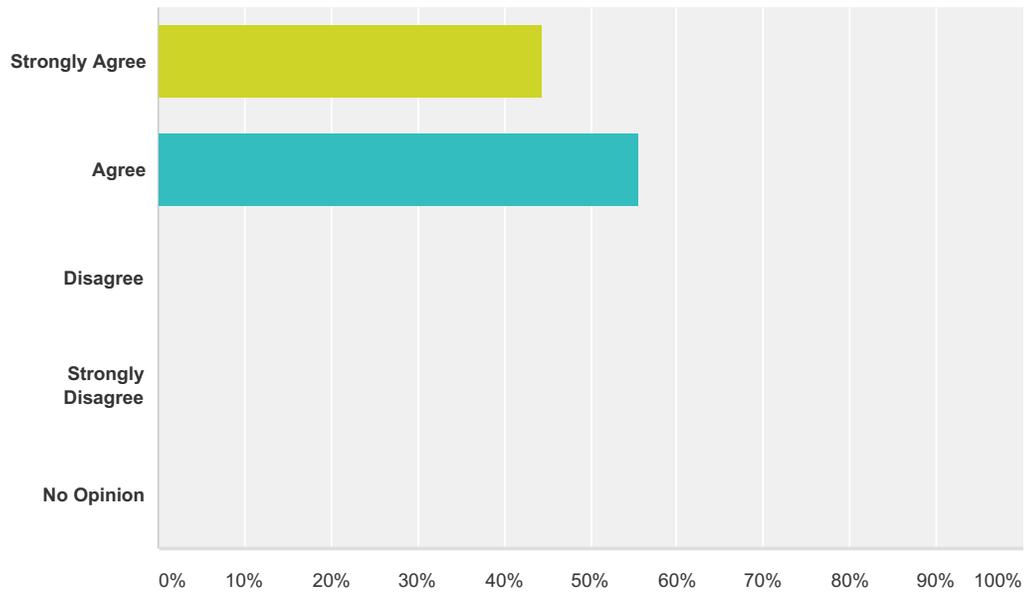
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**44.44%**	4
Agree	**55.56%**	5
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		9

## Q28 The board adopts and has signed a Code of Conduct that outlines expectations and commitments

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**33.33%**	3
Disagree	**33.33%**	3
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**22.22%**	2
Total		**9**

Q29 Board members respect the fact that they have no official power outside of the actions of the full board

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
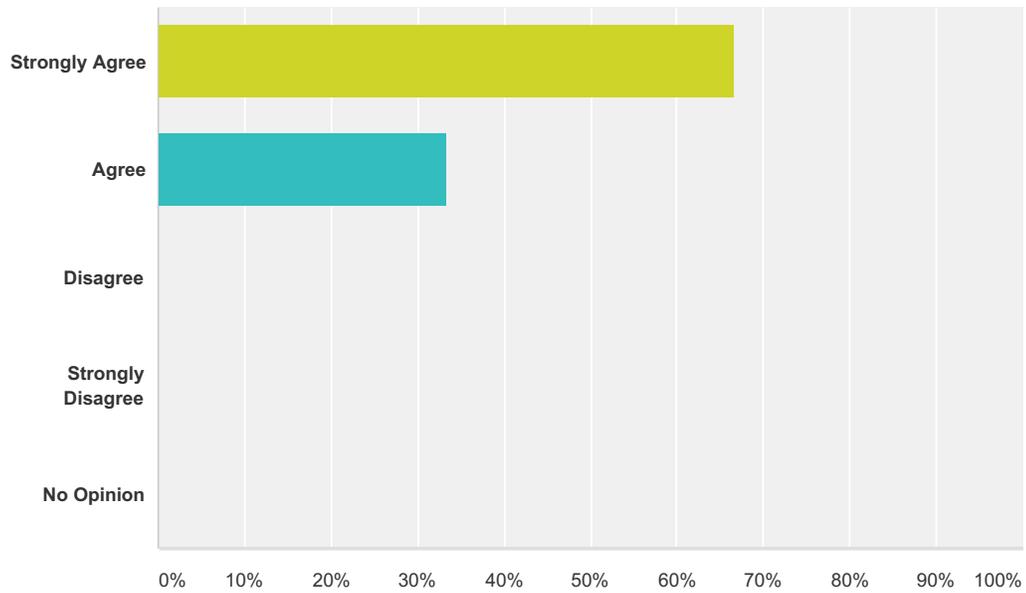
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**66.67%**	6
Agree	**33.33%**	3
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

## Q30 The board adheres to the open meeting law and carefully follows statutory guidelines for executive session

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0
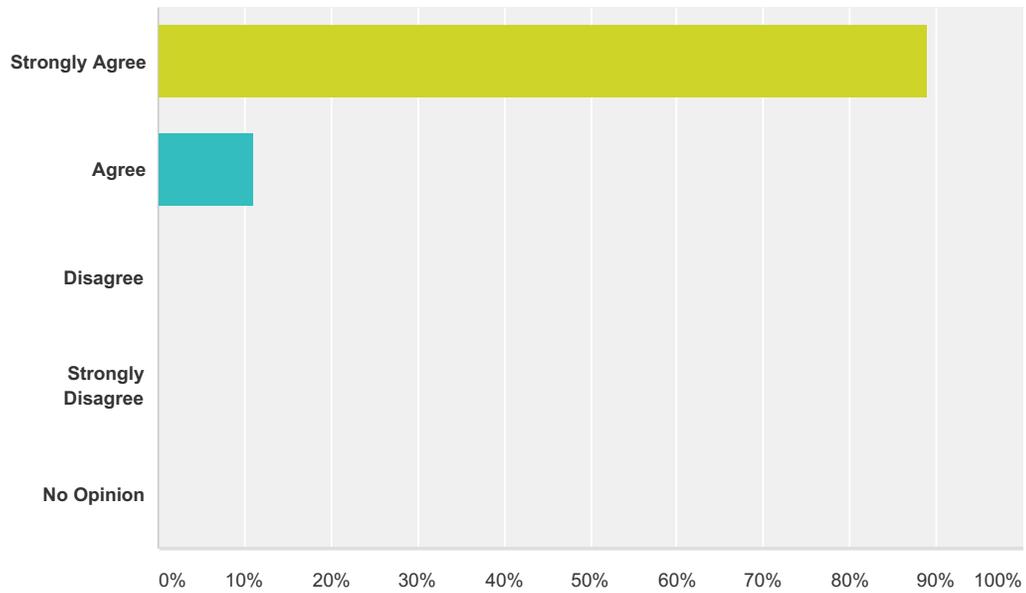
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**88.89%**	8
Agree	**11.11%**	1
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		9

Q31 Board members are respectful to other board members, administrators, staff, and visitors
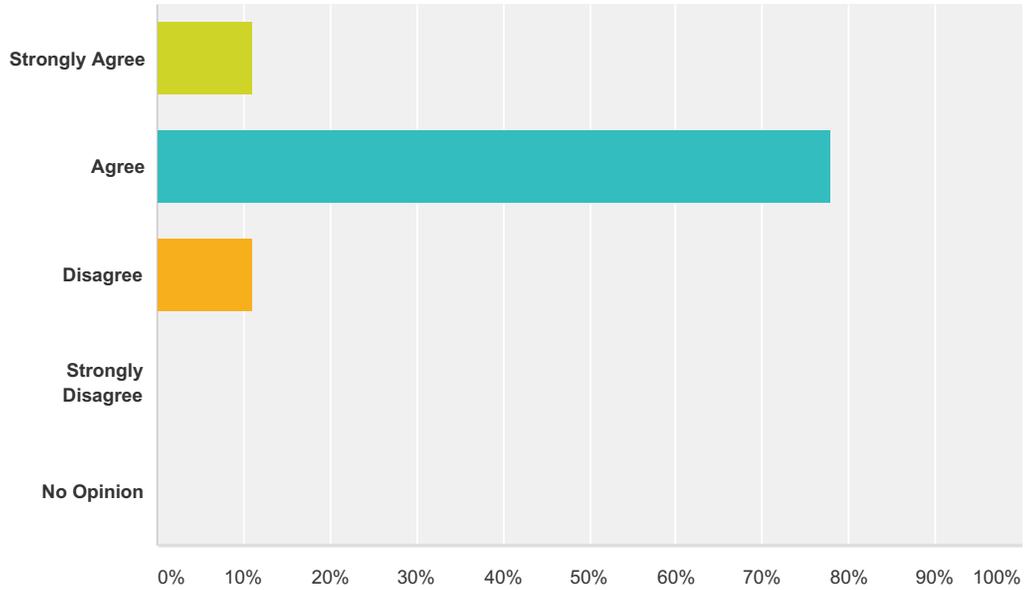
Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
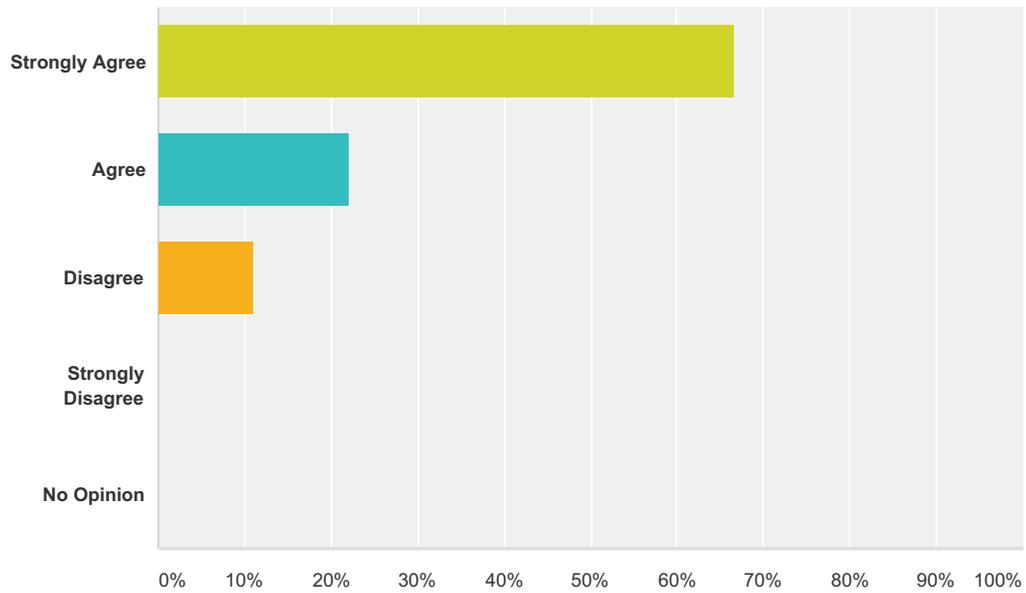
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**66.67%**	6
Agree	**22.22%**	2
Disagree	**11.11%**	1
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		9

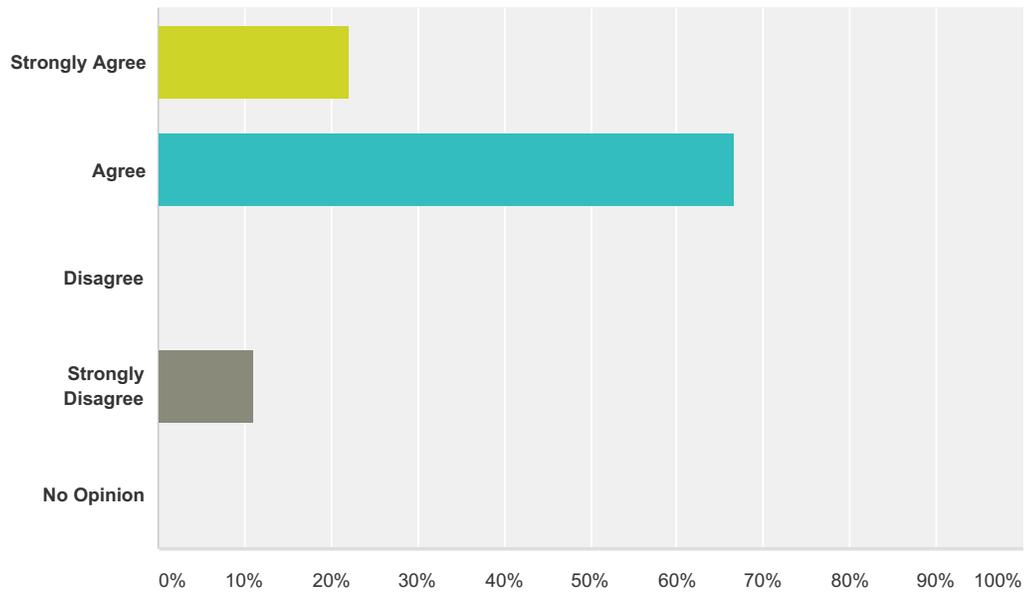## Q32 Board members have the information needed to make informed decisions and understand their potential impact

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**11.11%**	1
Agree	**77.78%**	7
Disagree	**11.11%**	1
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		9

Q33 Regular board meetings are efficient and generally last no more than 2-3 hours

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**22.22%**	2
Agree	**66.67%**	6
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**11.11%**	1
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**

Q34 Once a board decision is made, dissenting board members respect the board's decision even if they continue to disagree

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
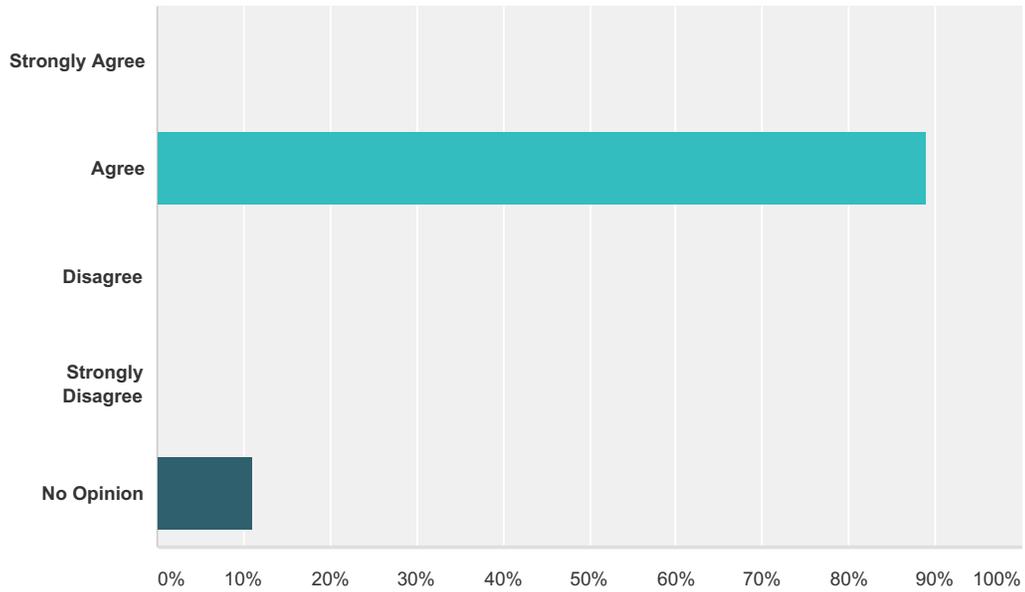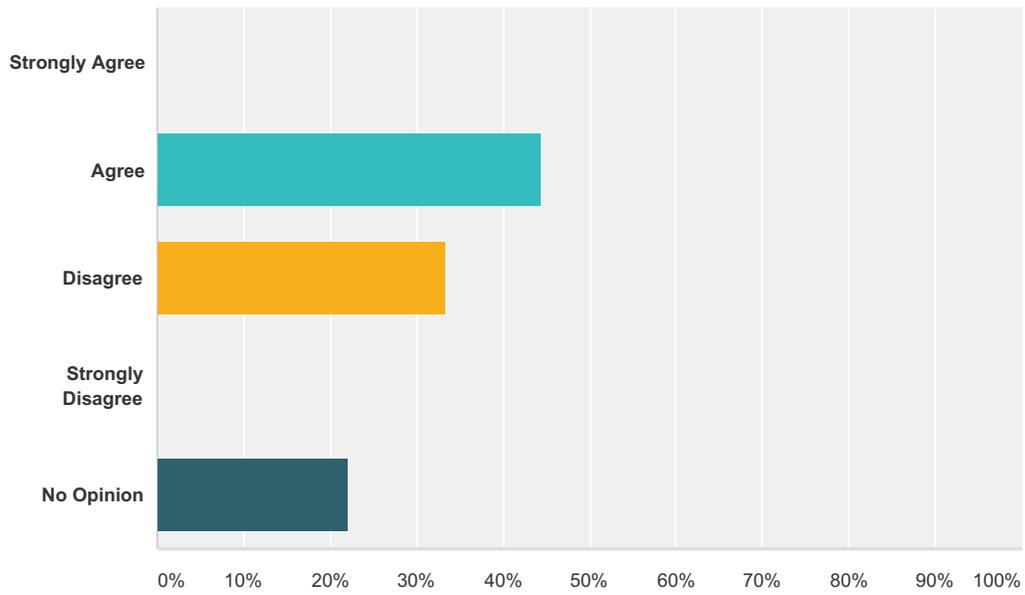

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**0.00%**	0
Agree	**88.89%**	8
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**11.11%**	1
Total		**9**

Q35 Board members annually participate in board development activities

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**0.00%**	0
Agree	**44.44%**	4
Disagree	**33.33%**	3
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**22.22%**	2
Total		**9**

Q36 Board members understand that they are community trustees to assure quality education and that taxpayers get a great return on investment, and that they are not the operators of the school

Answered: 9   Skipped: 0
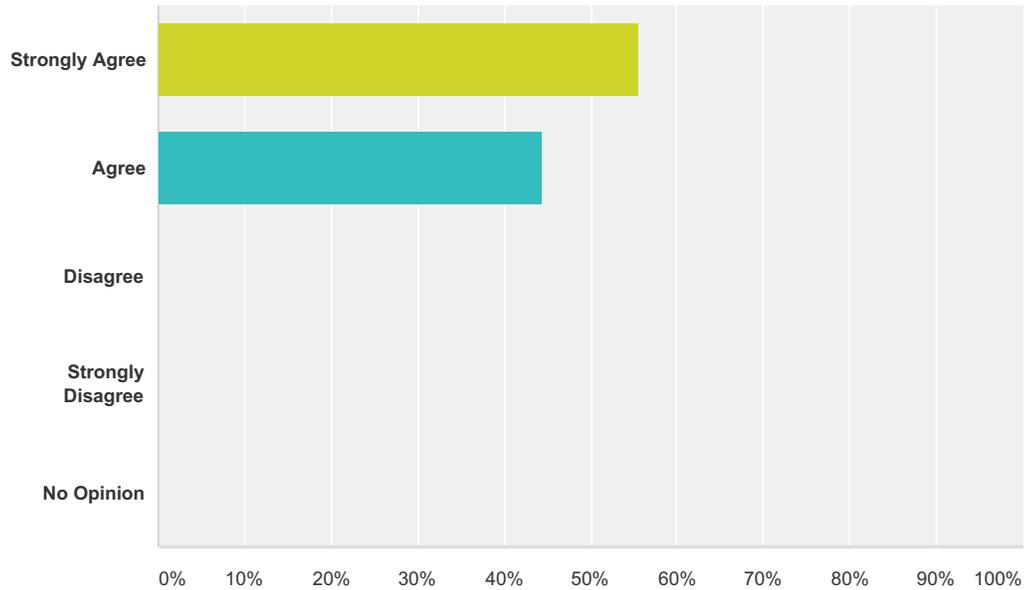
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly Agree	**55.56%**	5
Agree	**44.44%**	4
Disagree	**0.00%**	0
Strongly Disagree	**0.00%**	0
No Opinion	**0.00%**	0
Total		**9**