WCUUSD School Board Self Evaluation

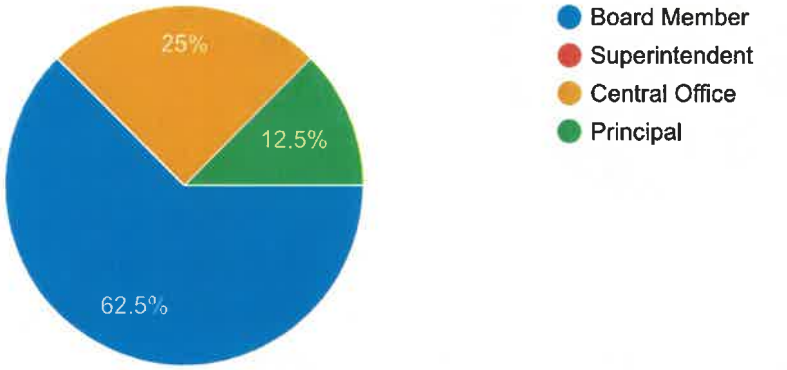
16 responses

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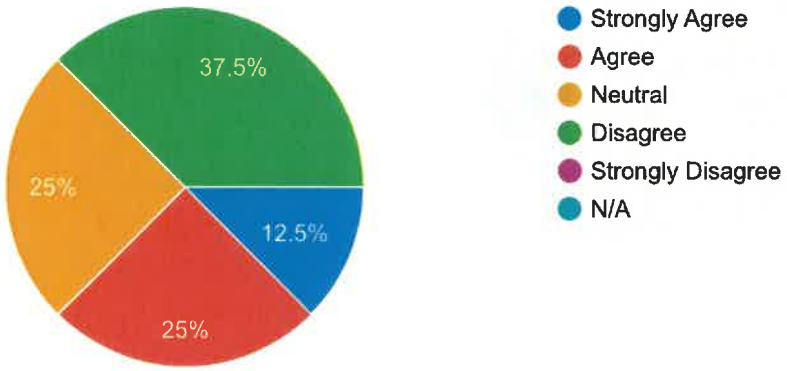
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The board understands the roles and responsibilities of the board chair , the full board, and the superintendent

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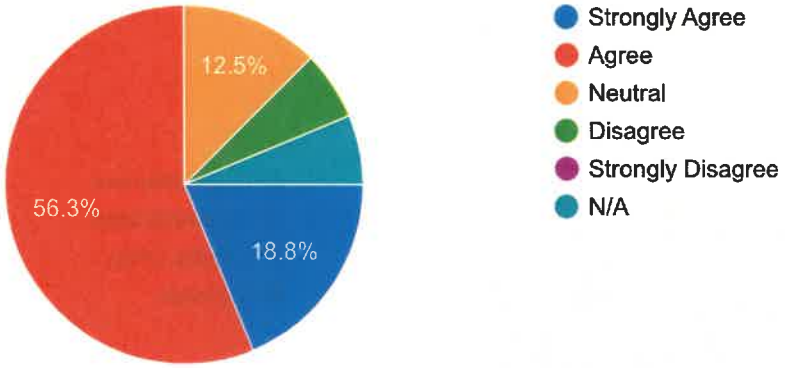
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The Board understands the legal and regulatory requirements for the evaluation of the superintendent and has a clear process to ensure its completion

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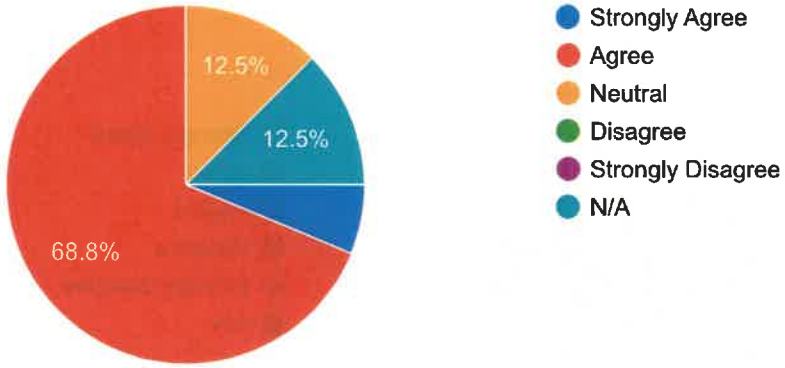
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The Board ensures that expectations are clear: the superintendent's contract includes specific details about the annual evaluation, including the timeline, method, measures, and intended outcome.

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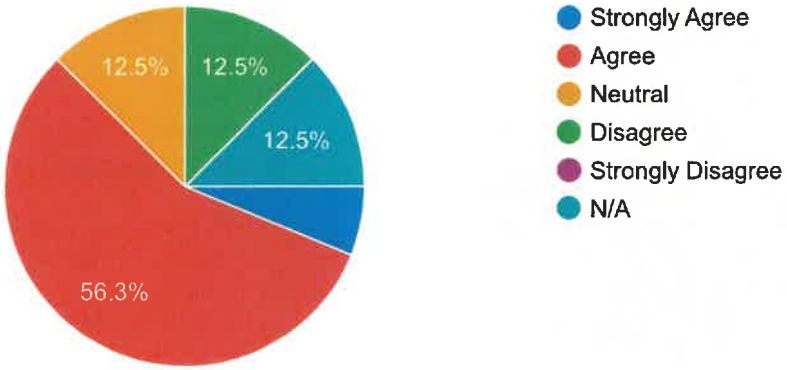
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The Board enters into the superintendent evaluation process with positive intent and the goal of building a stronger relationship with the superintendent .

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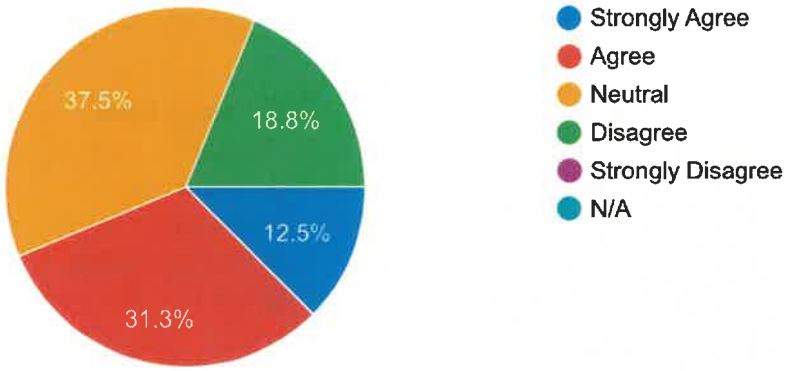
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The Board practices positive communication strategies that foster mutual respect, trust, and collaboration with the superintendent. The board is open to constructive feedback.

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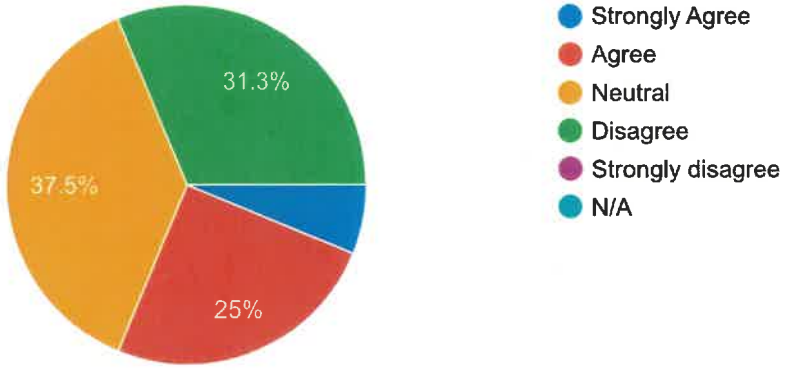
16 responses



The Board utilizes group norms and has a well understood chain of communication when issues arise.

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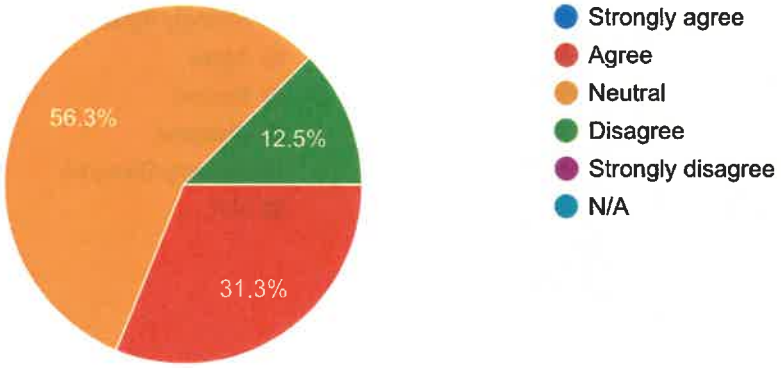
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Communication is fair, transparent, and focused on finding solutions. Disagreements are addressed as they arise rather than waiting for the annual formal evaluation.

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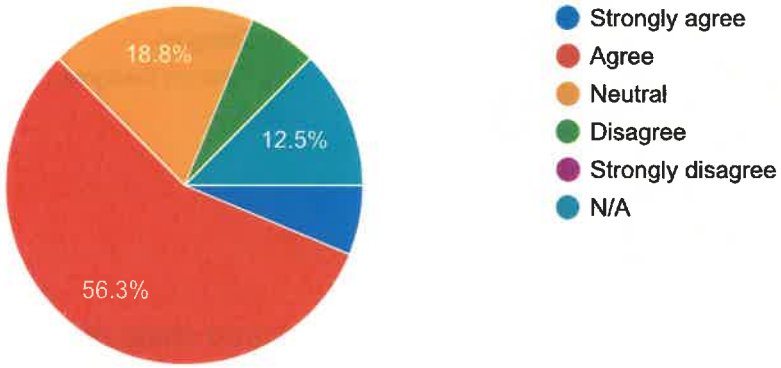
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The Board actively partners with the superintendent to adopt performance goals for the district that align with the vision, mission, and strategic plan for the school district; the board monitors progress toward those goals throughout the year and provides a summative evaluation annually.

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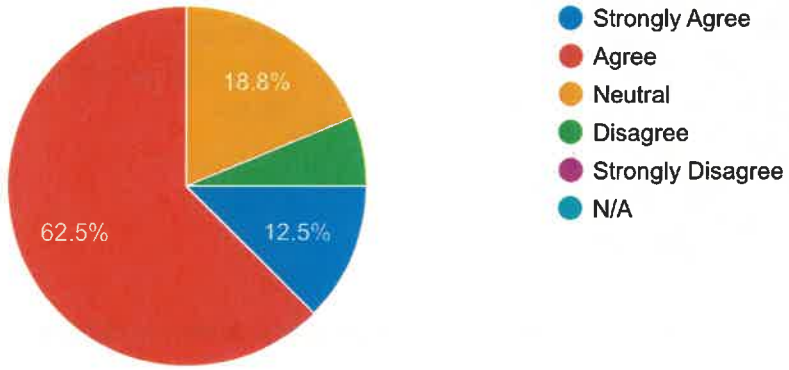
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The Board approves school continuous improvement plans and reviews data through regular performance reports as provided by the superintendent. The evaluation is focused on what the data shows/doesn't show in order to focus on student learning/outcomes.

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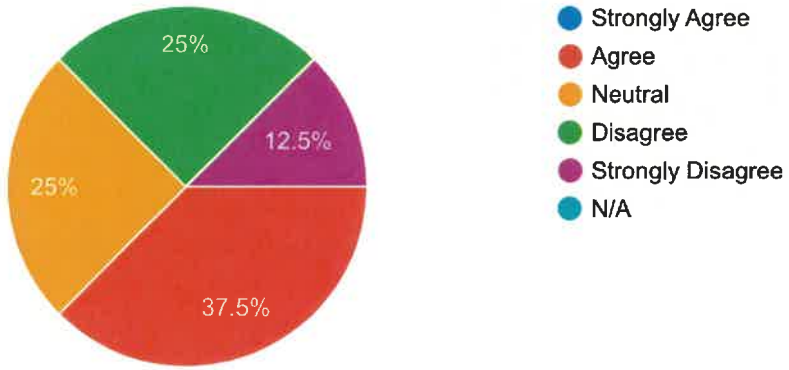
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The Board holds the superintendent accountable for developing a strategy and education work plan to achieve District goals, while refraining from involvement in daily operations/micromanagement.

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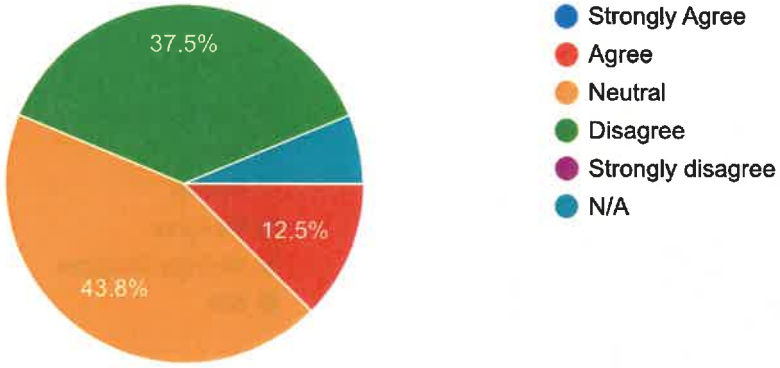
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The Board seeks ongoing learning opportunities to promote the most successful board-superintendent relationship.

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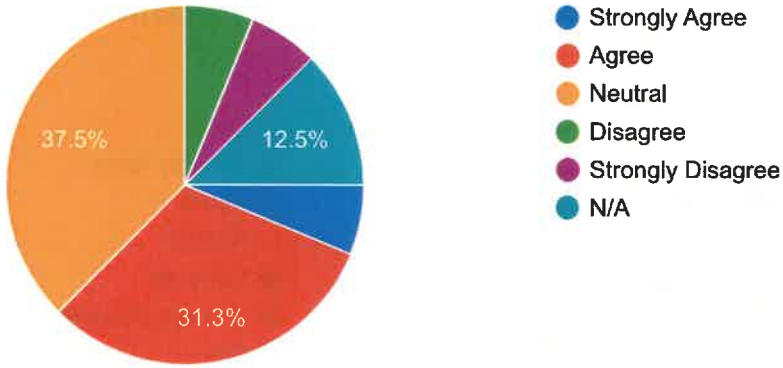
16 responses



The Board provides orientation of new board members which includes an overview of the superintendent evaluation cycle.

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16 responses



Please share any additional comments, reflections, or feedback on any of the questions above. If there is anything we may have missed or anything else you would like to share, we welcome your thoughts

7 responses

This is really a survey of how the board works with the superintendent. We also need to evaluate how the board works internally (how well board members work with each other, whether board members honor their obligations to represent all citizens and work towards the interests of all kids, etc). I see significant issues there, but that wasn't touched on at all.

I am not sure that we are all on the same page as to what is the purview of the board vs. admin/superintendent. While daily operations are not in our scope, it is our role to ensure quality education at all of our schools, so we need to hold admin accountable for the decisions they make if they result in lack of quality at any one of our schools. And if, budgetarily, it becomes impossible to ensure quality education for ALL of our students, we need to encourage reconfiguration or staff changes as needed to meet the needs of our children - even if it means challenging decisions of the admin or going against popular town opinions. I don't think we have good oversight of the elementary schools, even in ed quality committee. I don't recall being presented with or approving continuous improvement plans for the individual schools.

Additionally, I think we need to do a better job orienting new board members, and doing meaningful board trainings.

We need to improve clarity of roles and processes, and we need to truly dedicate ourselves to increased transparency.

To ensure the District's continued progress, it is vital that we focus on strengthening the partnership between the Board and the Superintendent. Currently, misalignments regarding operational boundaries and a lack of unified confidence are creating hurdles in our collective work. By recommitting to a culture of mutual trust and high-level strategic oversight, we can better provide the stable leadership our students and faculty deserve.

As a board member, I am actively working to expand my knowledge about the board roles and responsibilities. At one of the recent board meetings, an administrator shared that they weren't sure when or what they could share with the board and appreciated being asked to share. I feel that in order for our board members to do their job to the best of their ability we must be more connected with our administrators. I appreciated the retreat we had last year and think we should be doing that at least 3 times a year.. at the beginning of the year, during budget time and at the end. It is so important to be able to understand the whys behind our administrators decisions, choices and perspectives, not to challenge them but rather to be able to more actively support their positions. This is really important and will be important as we work to find a more sustainable future and work to heal our relationship with our communities.

I believe the Board understands roles and responsibilities. Some members do not honor them. I understand and appreciate the desire of the Board to not simply rubber stamp recommendations. Yet, I find the Board to be repeatedly swayed by a few strong voices, voices that lack the full perspective and understanding of the issues at hand. It is the Board's role to hire and evaluate the superintendent. It is the superintendent's role to hire, supervise, evaluate, and leverage a strong professional team. When the Board takes actions that directly oppose the recommendations of the leadership team, they, at best, undermine the ability of the leadership team to do its work. There have been occasions when the Board sets parameters, the leadership team does work that adheres to the parameters, the Board makes decisions that do not align to its parameters, and then the Board blames the superintendent and/or leadership team for its work. How can we work better together? The Board and the leadership team have a huge responsibility to the students in our district. How can the leadership team and the Board provide information to each other, communicate with each other, and establish and maintain trust so that we can work more effectively with each other and within our respective roles and responsibilities?

This fall the Board chose to spend hours focused on a personnel issue (athletic coach) which was absolutely not in their purview. Worse, the hours that the Board spent on the issue resulted in hours that the Board did not spend on its budget or configuration, the two most critical bodies of work it was facing this fall.

There is a difference between local engagement and local control. One thing that I love and appreciate about our school community is its commitment to our schools, and I appreciate the Board's desire to engage our local community. And, this year especially the Board has erred on the side of extending public comment at the expense of engaging in its important work. Receiving Education Quality Committee reports at 9:00 p.m., engaging in superficial and cursory first readings of policies, etc. are not conducive to effective board work. Are there other structures that would better serve the Board's commitment to public engagement and need to effectively and thoroughly do its work? And, how can the Board engage more members of the community? There are many folks who, for many reasons, will not or cannot access board meetings. Some board members have made a concerted effort to visit schools, attend community events, etc. where they are able to engage with a broader cohort of school community members. I believe these experiences have been mutually beneficial.

I have appreciated the Board's efforts to engage with each other more civilly when there are differences of opinion among members. I remember last year one of the student representatives encouraged board members to take a deep breath and treat each other more kindly, and I have seen evidence of improvement in this regard. I am so grateful. Please continue to support the broader community to do the same. I can think of two recent examples of behavior from community members that I would characterize as deplorable and unacceptable (the public criticism and characterization of the board chair as unfit and despicable during the athletic coach debacle and the beating of an actual drum during a board meeting about budget and configuration). In instances such as these, and in much less egregious moments as well, it is vital that members of the board take a stand for civility and public decorum. Thank you for the times you have done so. I hope you collectively make this part of your routine practice when necessary (which I hope is less and less often).

By and large, I believe the committee structure is working well. I appreciate the work that is

accomplished in committee meetings. I believe that one change that might make the work even more effective is establishing a way to ensure that each committee is routinely considering the ways in which its work might impact other committees and the board's work overall. In this way, I think there is the potential to create more synergy and coherence in the system.

Thank you for your service on the board. Serving as a school board member is a huge responsibility, requires a significant time commitment, and can be utterly thankless at times. Thank you, too, for the opportunity to provide feedback.

One of the challenges we face as a board is that we do not always stay in our lane, even when we understand our role. We are a strong board with dedicated members, but at times we struggle to consistently follow the leadership structures we have in place.
The board generally understands its responsibilities and governance role; however, when there is pressure from the community or from teachers, we do not always follow through in the way we should. In those moments, decisions can become influenced by the immediate "temperature" of the room rather than by the data, the long-term goals, and the expertise of the professionals and school leaders present.
Strengthening our discipline around governance, trusting the data, relying on expert guidance, and maintaining clarity about our role, will help ensure we make decisions that best serve the district over the long term.

The Board has maintained systems for monitoring continuous improvement plans and student achievement, and it has a five-year capital improvement plan that addresses building needs and prevents deferred maintenance. The Board has also demonstrated the ability to hold civil discussions on contentious issues.
At the same time, the Board has at times engaged in operational decision-making rather than remaining in its governance role. This has contributed to trust issues between the Board and the Superintendent, and between the Board and the administrative leadership team. There are gaps in understanding related to open meeting laws, the respective roles of Board members and the Superintendent, and expectations for functioning as a unified governing body, even when members disagree with the outcome of a vote.
The focus on configuration has required significant time and attention, and Board development work has not progressed. Clear and transparent communication remains a concern frequently raised by the public, and the Board may wish to consider engaging a consultant to support public relations and communication efforts.

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