

Ainsworth Community Schools
Board of Education
Board Self-Assessment Work Session & Retreat
District Office
August 3, 2026 - 6:00 PM

AGENDA

The Mission Slogan of Ainsworth Community Schools is "ACS CARES: We are Committed to Achieving Results for Everyone's Success"

In accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act 84-1407-14 the Open Meetings Act is posted on the south wall of the District Office Board Meeting Room.

1. Opening Procedure, Work Session or retreat of the Board
2. Announce Open Meetings Act Posting and Location
3. Work Session/Retreat Documents or Materials
4. Public Comment
5. Adjourn

The Board reserves the right to move into closed session to protect the public interest or needless injury to the reputation of an individual for any action item listed on the agenda. The Board may, at its discretion, change the order of the agenda to accommodate unforeseen issues related to an agenda item.



AINSWORTH COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

May 2026

BOARD IDENTIFIED AREAS OF STRENGTH:

1. ***Board Operations***
2. ***Board-Superintendent Relations***
3. ***Mission, Vision, and Goals***
4. ***District Resources***

BOARD IDENTIFIED AREAS OF GROWTH:

(to be addressed through goals)

1. ***Advocacy***
2. ***Professional Development***
3. ***Accountability and Student Achievement***

NASB PROPOSED BOARD GOAL:

Based upon the top identified area of need, Advocacy, NASB has developed one board goal for the district to consider. We recommend that the district utilize the other identified areas of need to develop additional goals going forward.

BOARD GOAL 1: The board advocates for children, public education, learning, and equity to support improved student outcomes for all students.

- 1(a) Appoint an advocacy committee to benefit and facilitate effective communication between the district and the state senator(s).
- 1(b) Adopt an advocacy calendar and belief statements to align advocacy efforts before, during, and after the annual Legislative Session.
- 1(c) At the close of the Legislative Session, analyze the work and effectiveness of the district's advocacy role during the session.



Scale: 5.00-1.00; 5.00=Strength; 1.00=Area for growth

	2026
HIGHEST BOARD SCORING STANDARD	Board Operations (4.87)
LOWEST BOARD SCORING STANDARD	Advocacy (4.00)

STANDARD I: MISSION, VISION, & GOALS

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.80
LOWEST INDICATOR	N/A – all indicators 4.8.

STANDARD II: POLICY GOVERNANCE

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.75
LOWEST INDICATOR	h. The board reviews and approves the contents of the District Annual Report. (4.3)

STANDARD III: STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.73
LOWEST INDICATOR	N/A – b, d, e, and f all 4.7.

STANDARD IV: ACCOUNTABILITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.68
LOWEST INDICATOR	a. The board engages in discussion related to the state standards and district assessments; c. The board reviews student achievement data to support the identification of priorities and allocation of resources. (both 4.5)

STANDARD V: ADVOCACY

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.00 – Lowest Standard
LOWEST INDICATOR	f. At the close of the Legislative Session, the board analyzes the work and effectiveness of the district's advocacy role during the session. (3.0)

STANDARD VI: DISTRICT RESOURCES

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.80
LOWEST INDICATORS	d. The board reviews and adopts a master facility plan to support a safe and effective learning environment districtwide. (4.2)



STANDARD VII: BOARD OPERATIONS

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.87 – Highest Standard
LOWEST INDICATOR	g. Each board member honors board decisions even when the vote is not unanimous. (4.7)

STANDARD VIII: BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONS

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.82
LOWEST INDICATOR	N/A – a, b, c, e, f, g, h, i, and j all 4.8.

STANDARD IX: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	2026
AVERAGE BOARD SCORE	4.48
LOWEST INDICATOR	f. The board reflects on board performance and learning through challenges through an annual board self-assessment. (3.3)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEXT STEPS:

- Schedule and advertise a board work session to review the results of the assessment
 - Discuss the success of the board and consider areas of growth
 - Establish goals to address areas of growth, define performance indicators to measure progress, and set timelines to review, update and amend goals as progress is realized
- Or,

If the board would value additional support from the NASB Board Leadership Department to facilitate the development of goals, a board retreat will be scheduled. A board retreat fee will be assessed plus reasonable travel expenses.





Ainsworth Community Schools Board Self-Assessment

May 2026



Board of Education

Brad Wilkins, President

Frank Beel

Crystal Dailey

Bryan Doke

Jake Graff

Jessica Pozehl

Collective Standard Averages

(listed highest to lowest)

4.87 - Standard VII: Board Operations

4.82 - Standard VIII: Board-Superintendent Relations

4.80 - Standard I: Mission, Vision, and Goals

4.80 - Standard VI: District Resources

4.75 - Standard II: Policy Governance

4.73 - Standard III: Stakeholder and Community Engagement

4.68 - Standard IV: Accountability and Student Achievement

4.48 - Standard IX: Professional Development

4.00 - Standard V: Advocacy

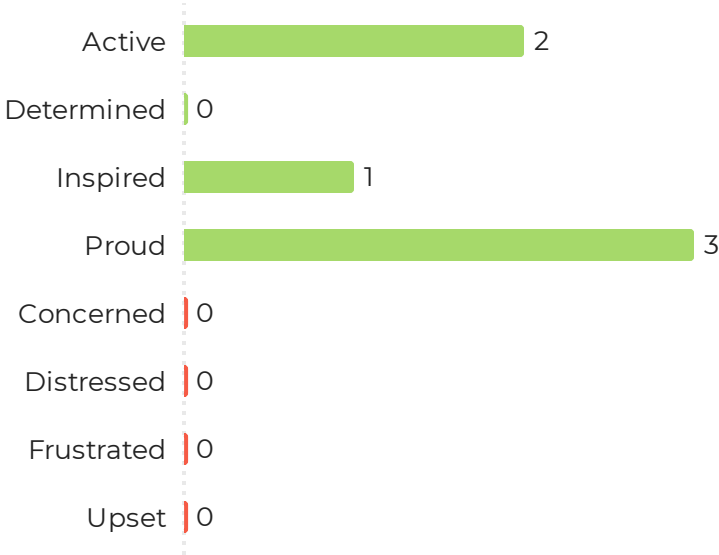
Averages range from 1.00-5.00 with averages closer to 5.00 indicating strengths and averages closer to 1.00 indicating areas for growth.

Board Culture and Teamwork

What word would you use to describe the climate of the board:

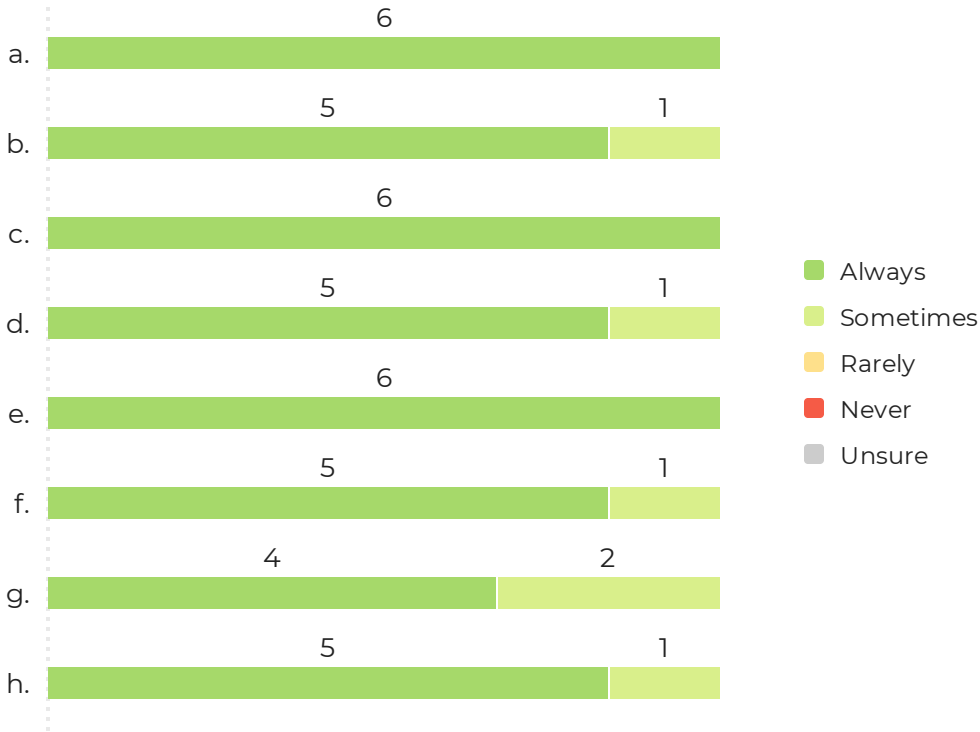


What word would you use to describe your general framework of mind following a board meeting:



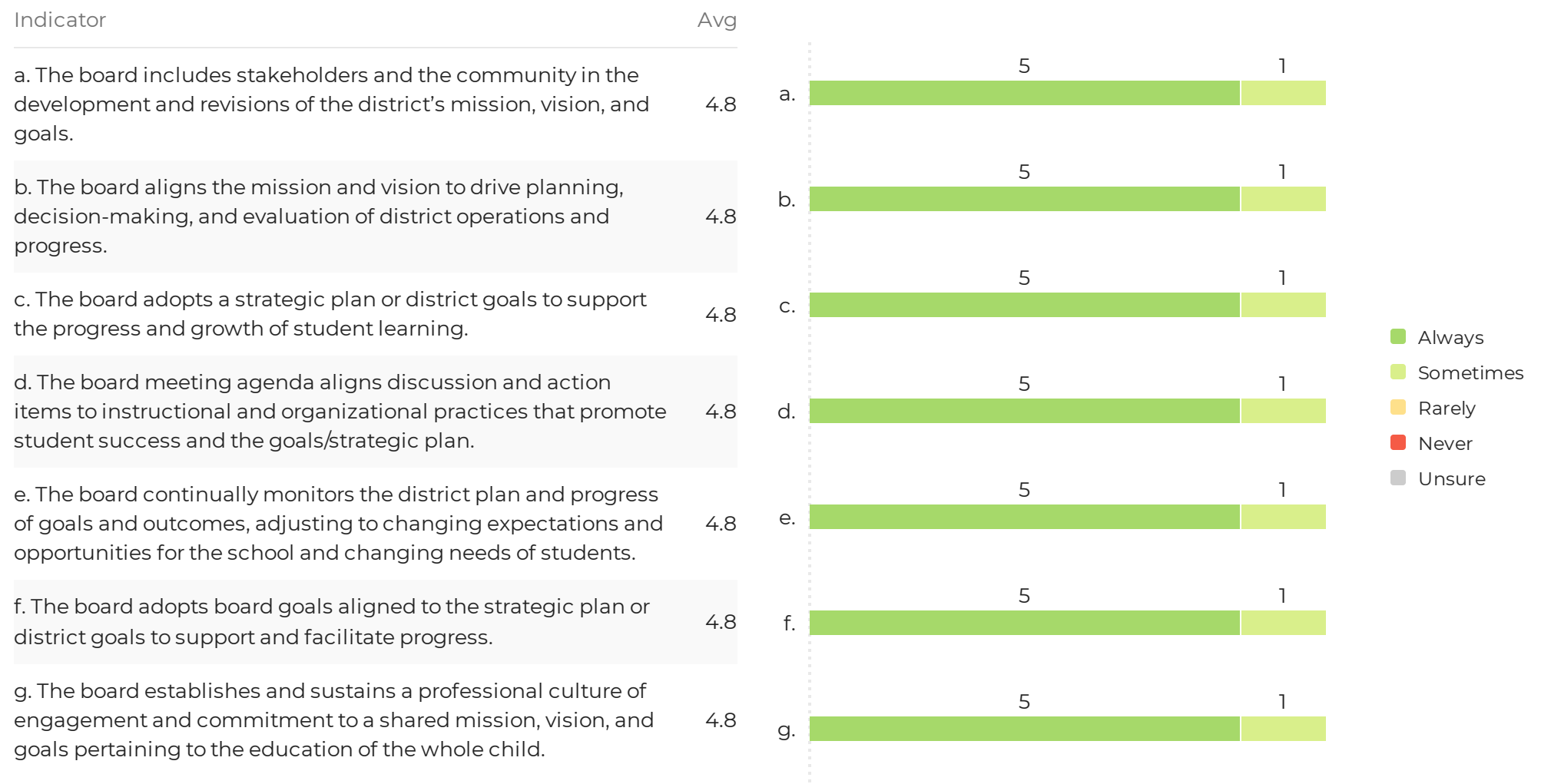
Board Culture and Teamwork

Indicator	Avg
a. There is cohesiveness and collaboration among board members.	5.0
b. There is respect for diverse viewpoints and cultures.	4.8
c. Board member decisions are based on the best interest of students and good stewardship of school resources.	5.0
d. There is effective conflict resolution among board members.	4.8
e. Communication among board members is respectful.	5.0
f. Communication among board members is effective.	4.8
g. Board members are well informed on issues related to the district.	4.7
h. Board members promote an environment of transparency, trust, learning, and continuous improvement.	4.8



Standard I: Mission, Vision, and Goals

Benchmark for Success: The board annually reviews the district’s mission, annually adopting board and district goals to support the long-term vision.



What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

Goal setting is collaborative amongst the group with a focus from everyone to achieve those goals.

Our board members spend the time to be prepared and prepare themselves through personal development.

The Board is aligned with new strategic plan. Communication with stakeholders is a challenge that we as a board are always looking for new ways to reach the community

We do strategic planning with our stakeholders.

We have just gone through a new strategic plan and revised our mission, vision and goals for this year so I think we are in a great place. I think in the past we could have done a better job of being more goal oriented and revisiting goals frequently.

We just updated our strategic plan. That plan is the driving force when talking about policy, curriculum, and student achievement.

What are the areas within this standard that the board needs to improve and grow?

We operate in a homogenous community that is becoming more diverse. I believe that we will grow as we become more aware of diversity.

One of the areas we need to grow and we continue to grow is board education

None

I know our board is on the right track, we just need to keep moving forward using the strategic plan to guide us.

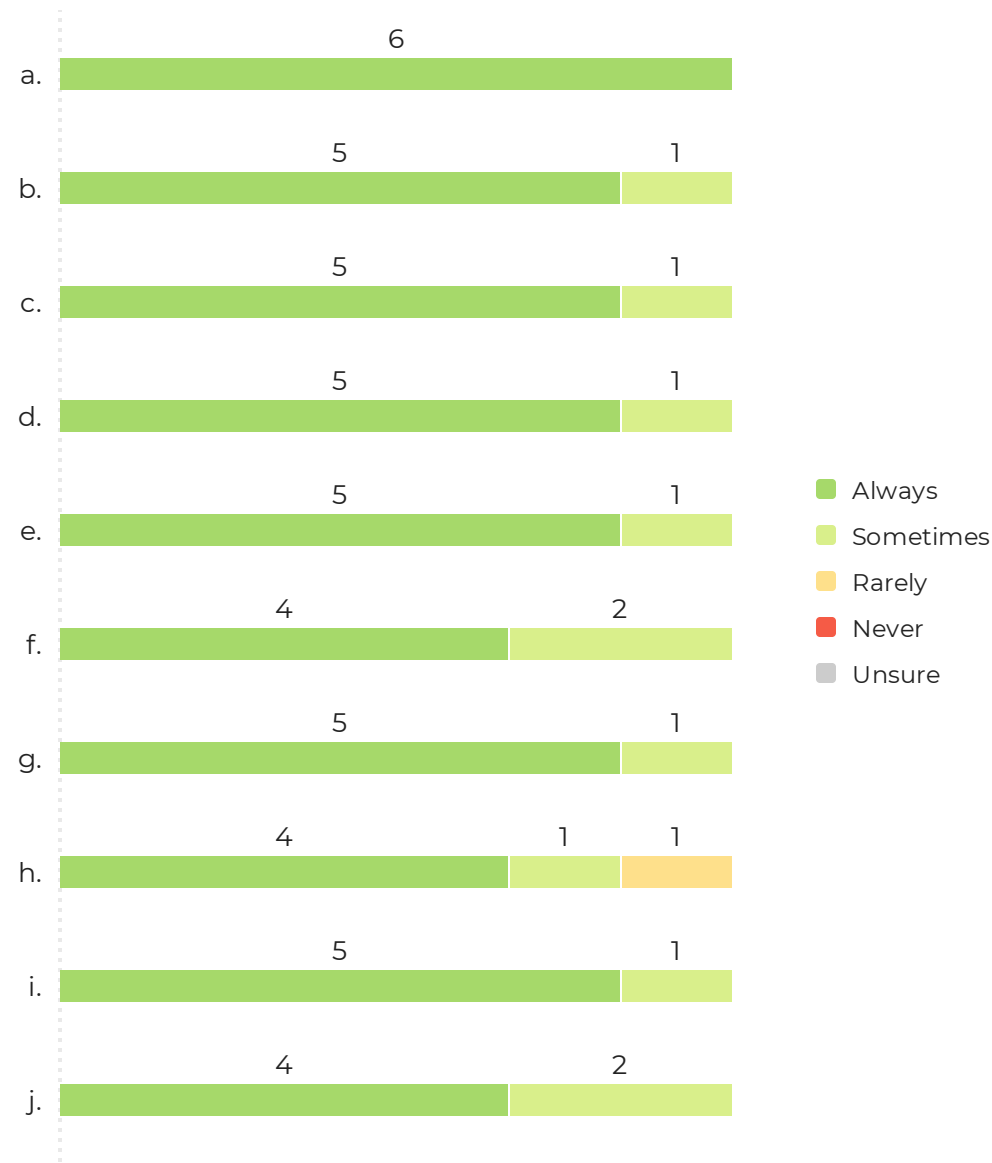
Continued progress towards goal achievement and never losing sight of student oriented goals and improving student experience.

Better monitoring of the the strategic plan or district goals. Sometimes we glance at them.

Standard II: Policy Governance

Benchmark for Success: The board continuously reviews, revises, and develops policies and procedures to ensure accountability focused on growth and student achievement.

Indicator	Avg
a. The board is committed to a defined process to ensure regular review, revision, and adoption of board policies.	5.0
b. The board adopts policies that support the mission and vision, provide structure, and support student success.	4.8
c. The board completes a full review of the policy manual within a one-to-three year period of time.	4.8
d. When developing and updating policies, the board considers recommendations from the superintendent, administrators, and district legal counsel/policy service.	4.8
e. The board ensures board policies are updated regularly according to state statute and accessible to the public.	4.8
f. The board follows an adopted policy for referring patrons with questions, concerns, comments, or feedback to the appropriate personnel.	4.7
g. The board evaluates the superintendent's implementation of policy as one factor in the superintendent's annual evaluation.	4.8
h. The board reviews and approves the contents of the District Annual Report.	4.3
i. The board develops policies and procedures that affect students and staff in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.	4.8
j. The district handbooks are aligned to district policy.	4.7



What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

Mr. Hafer is great about keeping us up to date on school policy and working with the recourses that we have to make sure that they are equitable and fair.

The Board does a great job listening to its patrons and helping guide them through the chain of command review of policy and making sure it fits for ACS

We are committed to developing and following policy which meets statute, expresses the values of the district, and incorporates input from our stakeholders.

The board is looking at policies every month to make sure they are up to date. We update policies as needed when the state mandates changes.

Policy is viewed as an important element for guidance.

What are the areas within this standard that the board needs to improve and grow?

Continued focus on following policy and aligning it with our goals and visions.

We are on the right track with our policies.

We are working to better align our handbooks and administrative regulations to district policies. Policy implementation that is fair and flexible can be tricky. Seldom are issues clearly black or white.

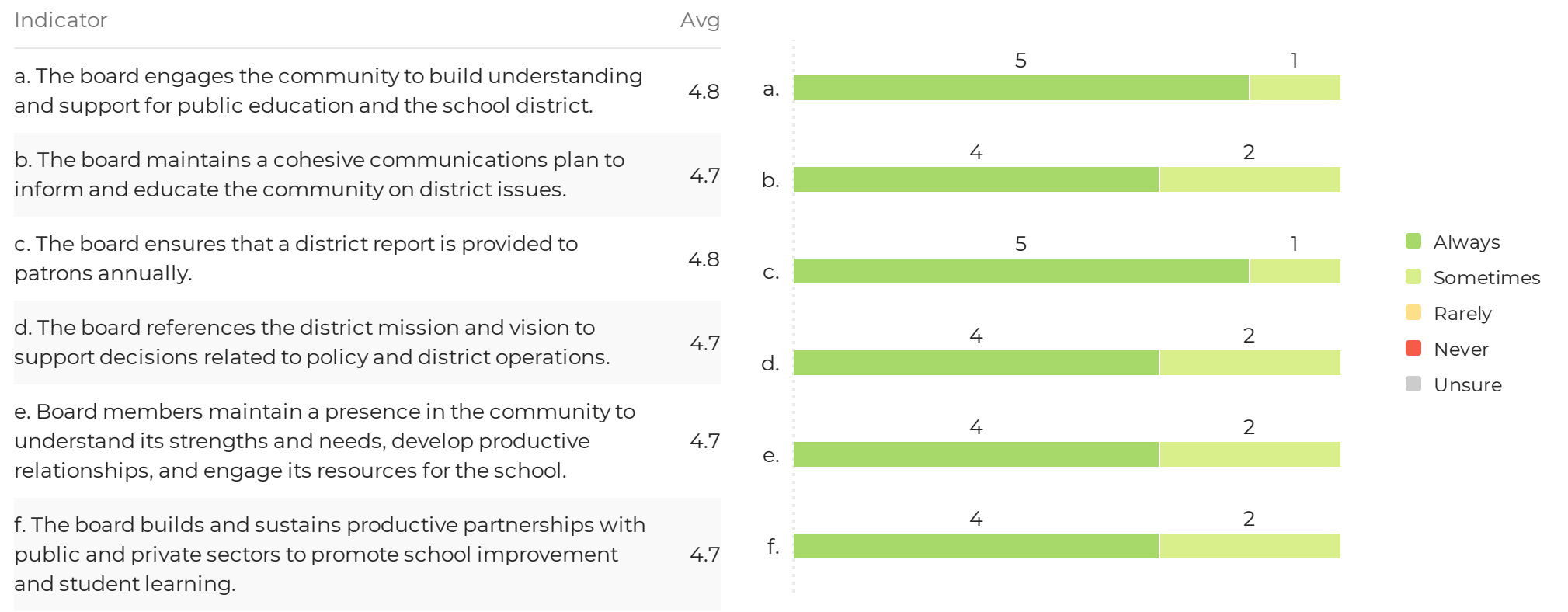
We don't approve the annual report.

na

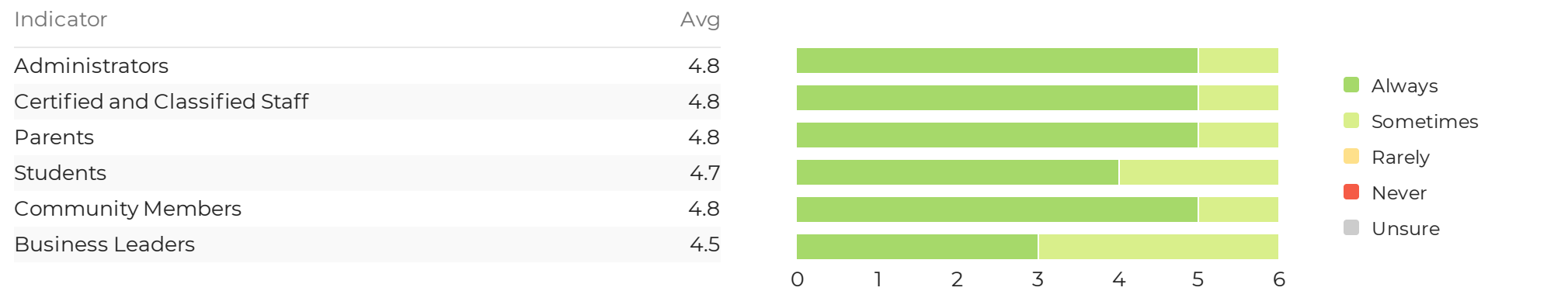
I think clearly defining if a patron has an issue with a policy what steps are necessary to be heard and possible change a policy. In that same breath communicate with patrons as to why things can not be changed.

Standard III: Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Benchmark for Success: The board establishes effective communications with internal and external stakeholders to promote the district's image, and to build and sustain long-term partnerships that serve education.



The board seeks input when setting goals from internal and external stakeholders, including:



What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

District report is always done and formatted so its easy to comprehend

In our most recent strategic plan we engaged with everyone possible to get input.

Public communication with our patrons.

Teamwork and shared decision making for the overall outcomes of the school.

We are committed to the process of engaging our community and stakeholders.

We do a good job of asking input from a large number of stakeholders.

What are the areas within this standard that the board needs to improve and grow?

maybe utilize our business leaders in some committees (not board committees) to get an outside view

We do ask the community for input when it comes to the school, policies, etc. The feedback and follow through from the public isn't always there how we would like.

We can always continue to work on communication with stakeholders. This is a difficult area for improvement - always.

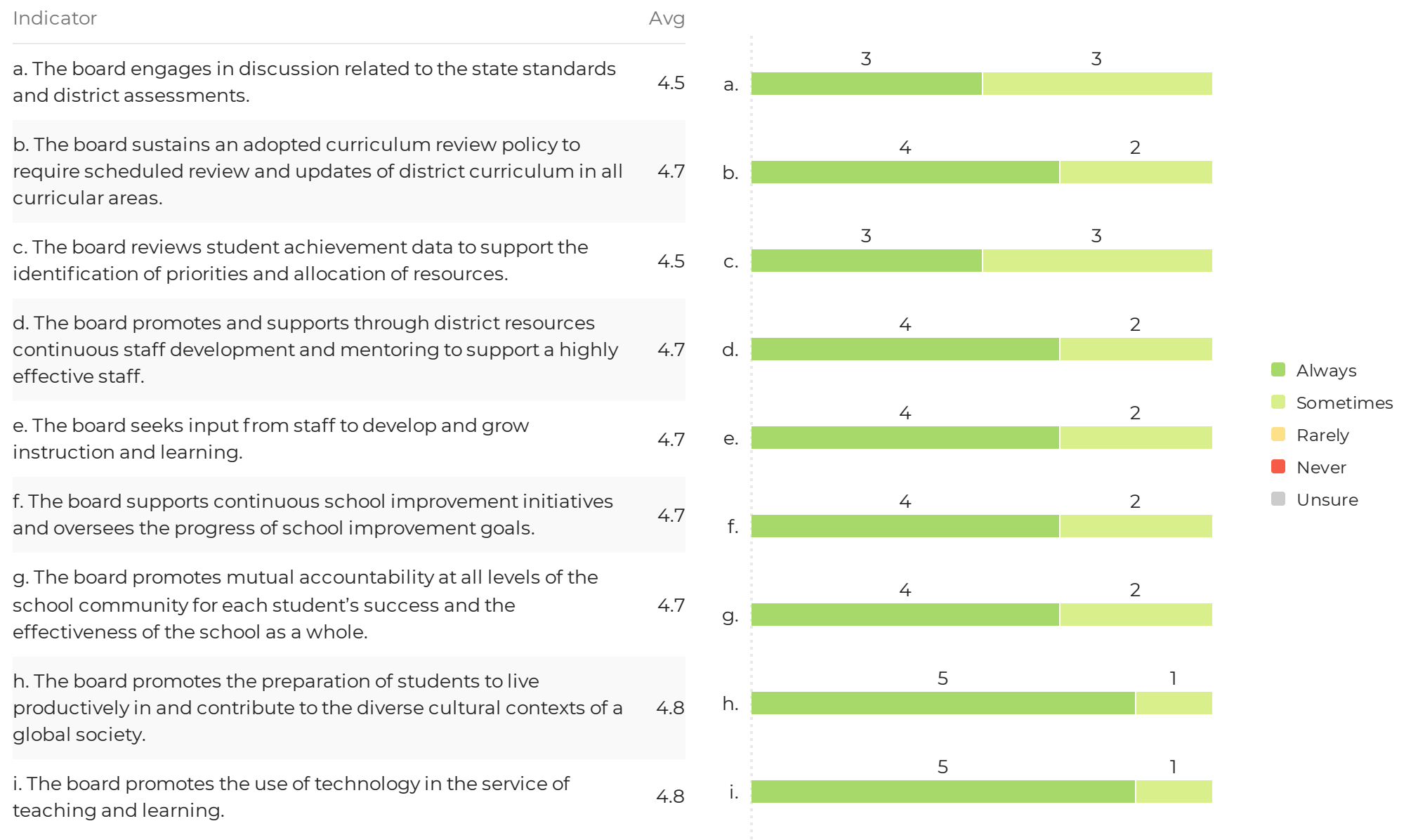
Personally I think continue to engage with the public more in a positive manor and promote the school could be helpful. It seems that I only engage with public if there is an issue or a concern.

I would like to see us work to improve relations with our business in the area not just in the COE program but also in job placement to fill local needs and Keep kids in our community

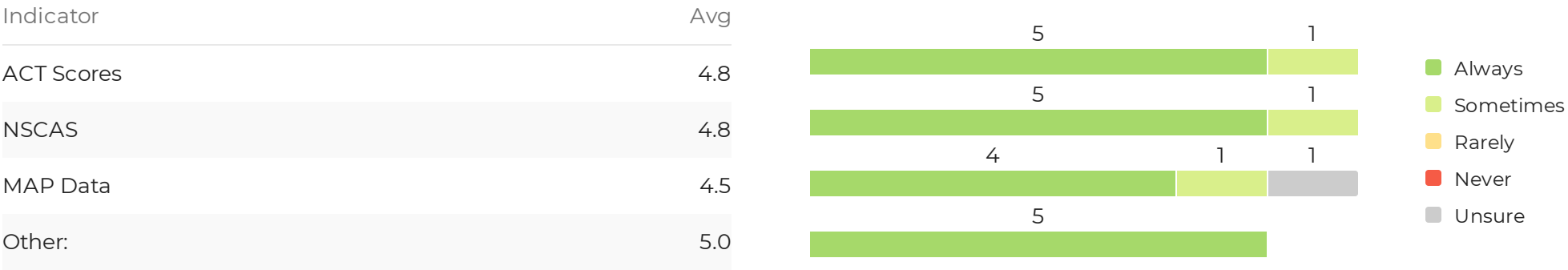
I believe that we could improve our recruitment and solicitation of community members and business leaders to more effectively engage them in the education process.

Standard IV: Accountability and Student Achievement

Benchmark for Success: The board continuously monitors the progress of district goals utilizing data to support growth and promote shared accountability for maximizing student achievement.



The board reviews data to monitor and assess the progress of student learning. Data may include:



The response "N/A" is not accounted for in the average score.

Other:
Fastbridge
fast bridge
na

Who are the underrepresented groups in your school district?

None

Underrepresented students in our district may include those pursuing workforce, trade school, military, agriculture, or other non-four-year college pathways, as well as gifted and high-achieving students who need additional academic challenge. Both groups deserve intentional support, opportunities, and representation in school planning.

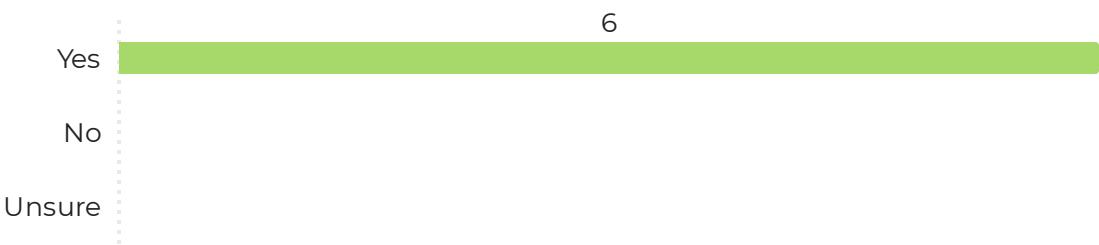
I believe that ESL learners and their families, and those dealing with poverty, are the most underrepresented groups in the district.

the silent majority

ESL students and possibly the straight to workforce students.

Home school students and how they can utilize the school system for part of their learning. Our hispanic students.

Has the district intentionally engaged stakeholders who are members of the underrepresented groups?



What are the district initiatives that address diversity, equity, and inclusion with students and staff?

Hiring paras with Spanish speaking backgrounds has been very helpful. Working towards and with NECC to promote certification programs and finding ways to engage all students through different programing.

na

Not sure?

We have translators available and have sought to engage members of minority groups.

We offer a wide variety of services and activities to include as students as possible.

There is dedicated support for diverse populations although the the make of these groups are always changing.

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes?

Stakeholder engagement and involvement.

Time, money and where we're located

Often times those in the underrepresented groups try to avoid engagement. Perhaps that could be legal status or not wanting to identify as someone with financial needs.

We have values.

na

Staffing, time, and recourses.

What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

The culture of the school and the board continues to be focused on education and the achievement of higher standards of education.

We just held a data retreat to see how our students are doing. Teachers get to test drive new curriculum and have a big input on what we adopt.

I love the fact that at the last data retreat we had board members asking staff what they need from the board to improve student outcomes. Our board really looks for drivers to student success in the data.

We want students to thrive in the world after graduation.

na

I feel the board is all in agreement that things like staff development, student achievement, and student readiness after graduation are our priority.

What are the areas within this standard that the board needs to improve and grow?

As a board, I feel like we are always looking for the next thing that may push our students more academically and get them more ready for work force but we have not fully be able to get behind it yet.

we as a board can dig deeper into student needs in the classroom by looking at individual scores seeing where we can improve. we do look at scores and we are headed down the right path but need to reach further

The test scores are available to us but do we actually hold staff accountable if the scores are low or do we continue to blame Covid .

We need to keep looking at what is moving the needle on student performance. We also want to continue to challenge ourselves to evaluate whether we are looking for the right outcomes. Are we sacrificing career readiness for college readiness?

I would like to see some of our curriculum in action in the classroom.

Continued information sharing with the students, parents and community on benchmarking, data regarding our students and requirements.

Standard V: Advocacy

Benchmark for Success: The board advocates for children, public education, learning, and equity to support improved student outcomes for all students.



What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

We are very in tune with what is happening in the Legislative .

Our board president is very involved and up to date with legislative issues and keeps the board involved.

na

I believe that we members of the board and administrators who are engaged in the advocacy process. Board members are informed regarding legislation that may effect our district.

As a board, we do stay up to date with what's going on in the legislature

-

What areas of growth did you identify within this standard? Why?

na

an advocacy committee maybe a good idea

Personally, I could be more involved in the legislative process and keep better informed on legislative issues that might affect the district.

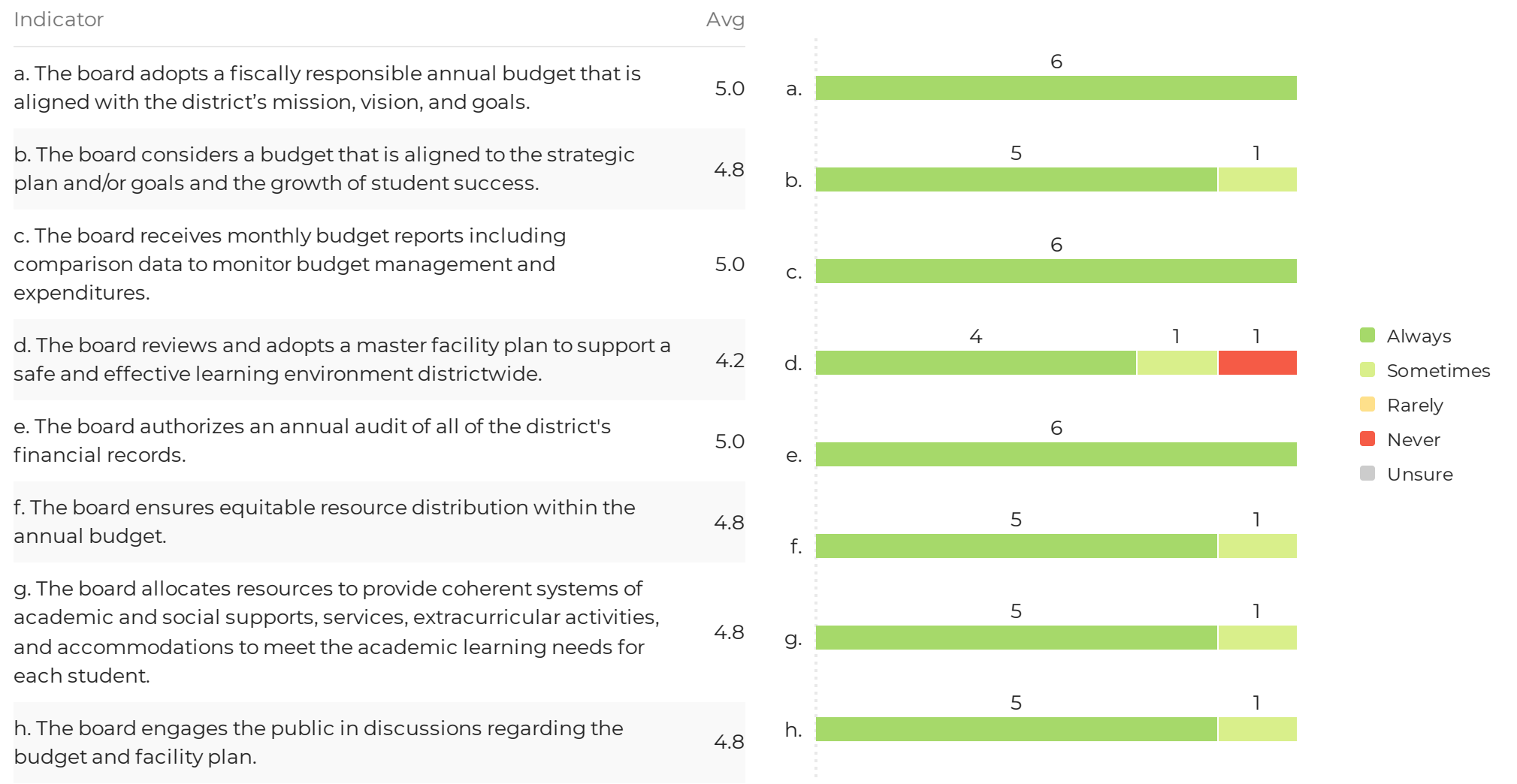
Making sure that all members of the board are briefed about pending legislation and sharing information with the entire board may improve our advocacy efforts.

Do we actively ensure that all students are set up for success?

-

Standard VI: District Resources

Benchmark for Success: The board aligns and manages district resources in a responsible manner to meet goals and to promote growth of student achievement.



What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

Budget retreats are open to the public.

I feel we do a good job of trying to support all forms of academic learning from a budget perspective.

we work very hard with the Mr Hafer to maintain and understand the budget for our school and its patrons

I believe that our administrators do a great job preparing options for our annual budget. Our board has done a great job in being conservative while seeking to avoid any sharp increases in tax asking.

We talk about the budget at every board meeting.

-

What are the areas within this standard that the board needs to improve and grow?

-

A master facility plan.

I believe that we fight the tendency to be too conservative. Failing to invest on a regular basis can put you behind in facility maintenance.

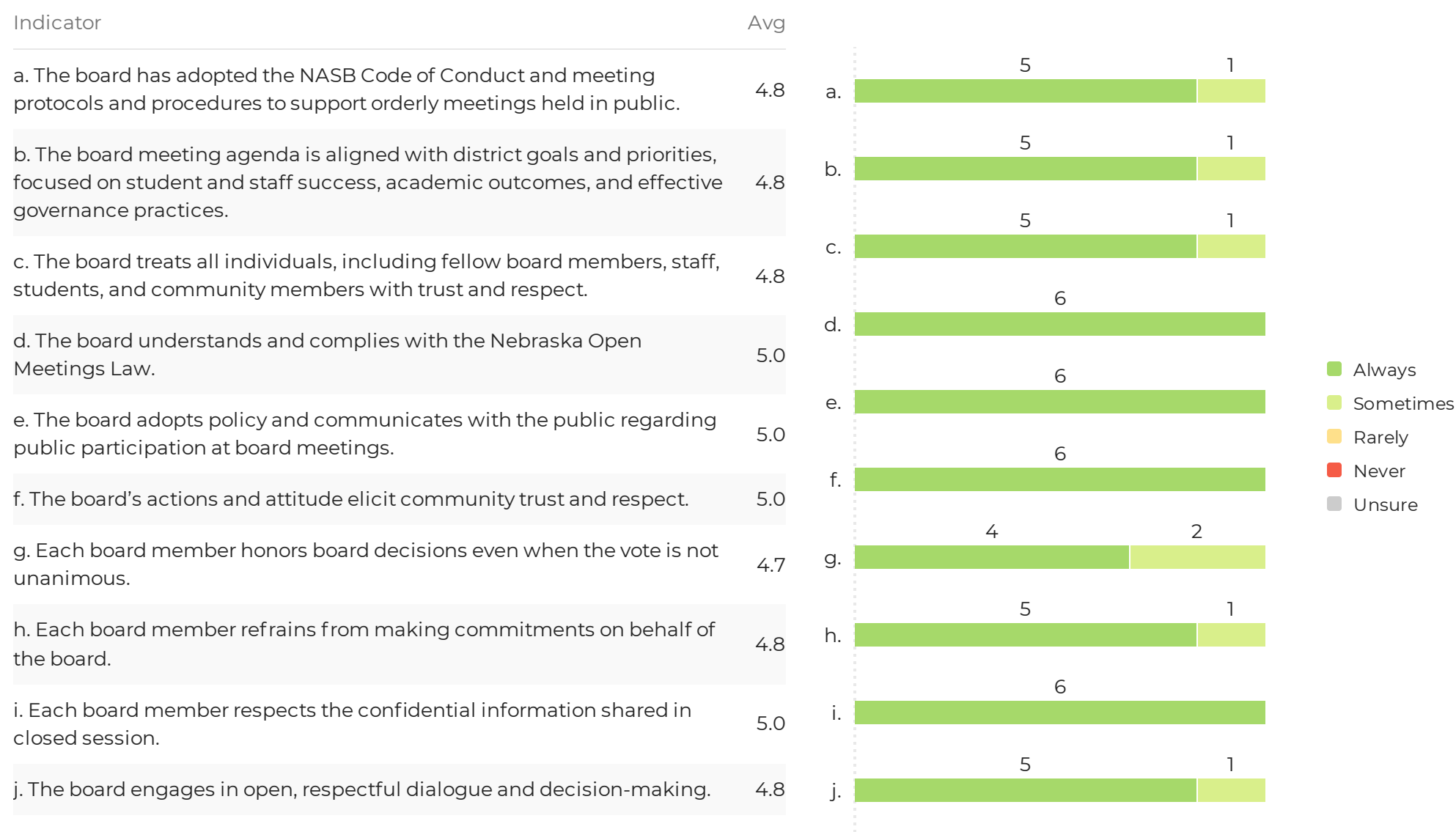
It would be interesting to see more input from staff and as far as budgeting to see if they feel like sufficient recourses are being given to meet the needs in their content area to meet the students needs.

We hold a board budget retreat every year but very few stakeholders ever attend

na

Standard VII: Board Operations

Benchmark for Success: The board ensures meetings are effective, efficient and orderly; focused on policy, proper board governance, and conduct.



What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

I feel like communication is open and honest enough that if we don't always agree we can come up with the best solution for the student of this school.

na

We come prepared and are effective in our meetings.

Our board governs as a board. No one member sees themselves as bigger than the board. I believe this is an important part of our success.

As a board, we like to hear from stakeholders and make time for them to bring up topics during the meetings

The board is well organized, meetings are well run.

What are the areas within this standard that the board needs to improve and grow?

-

I believe as a board we are fairly strong in this area but there's always room for improvement

Perhaps we can engage committee members in more effectively in reporting committee work to the full board. We may rely on the administrator more than we should.

Don't tell other board members there is seniority in the board room and your voice doesn't count as much.

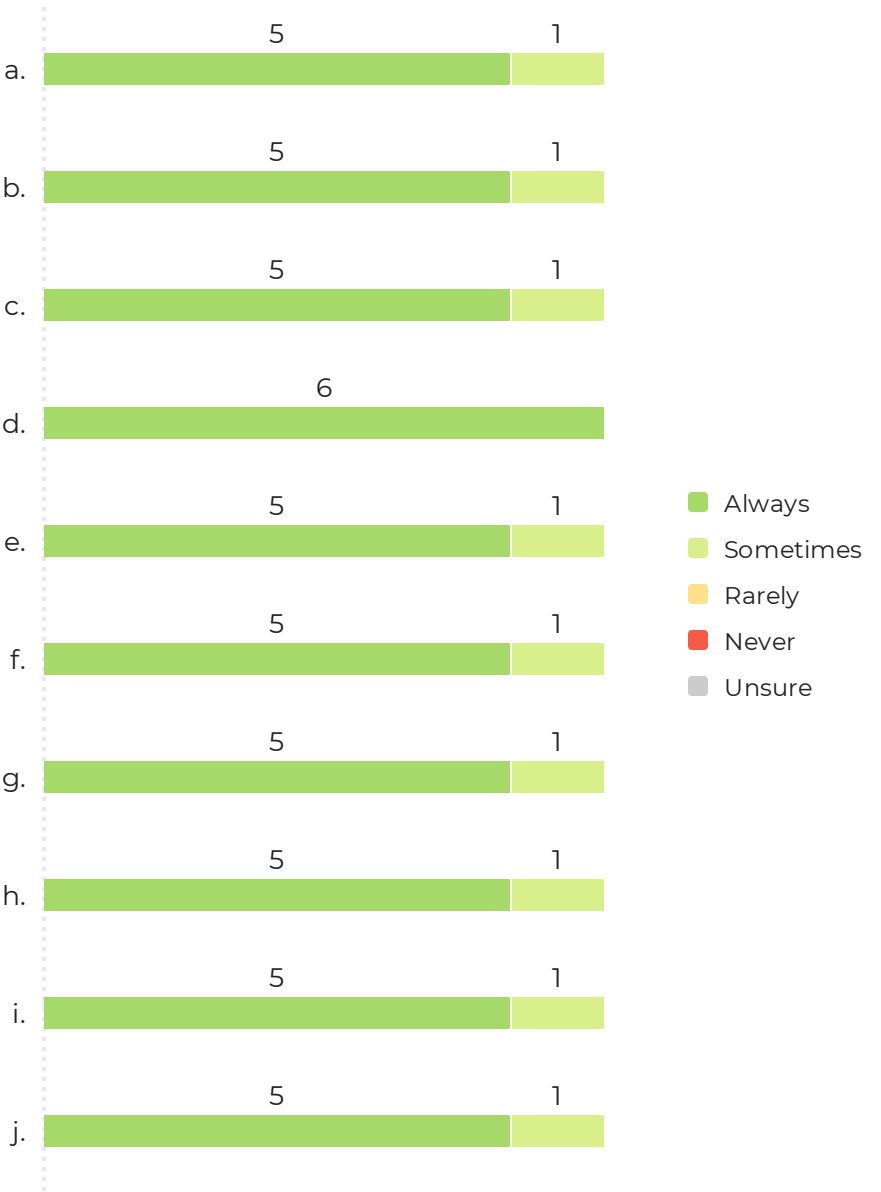
na

I would hope we have community trust and respect but when we get little input from the community I sometimes wonder?

Standard VIII: Board - Superintendent Relations

Benchmark for Success: The board and superintendent establish and sustain a professional and collaborative working relationship to support and advocate for growth and student achievement.

Indicator	Avg
a. The superintendent's job description states expectations, clarifies authority, is consistent with policy, and is reviewed by the board regularly and revised as needed.	4.8
b. The board and superintendent have clearly defined roles and accountability.	4.8
c. The board provides clear expectations for the superintendent's performance, collaboratively sets annual performance goals, and evaluates the superintendent accordingly.	4.8
d. The superintendent's contract renewal and deadline process are clear and the board and superintendent honor the appropriate dates to comply with the contract.	5.0
e. The board works with the superintendent to achieve mutual trust and commitment to each other through teamwork and clear communications.	4.8
f. The board empowers and motivates the superintendent to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement.	4.8
g. The board promotes the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of the superintendent.	4.8
h. Using policy, the board delegates authority to the superintendent to manage district operations and implement policy.	4.8
i. The board and superintendent demonstrate collaborative problem solving and decision-making.	4.8
j. The board thoughtfully consider the superintendent's recommendations prior to making decisions.	4.8



What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

-

Our board and superintendent work well together and have clear expectations of each other's roles.

We have a great working relationship with our administrator. I feel like we are all working together for the good of the district and our students.

We have a great relationship with Dale.

Superintendent Hafer does a great job working with the board and helping guide us on major Decisions for the district

We have a great superintendent and he has the schools best interest and the kids best interest in mind.

What are the areas within this standard that the board needs to improve and grow?

Setting measurable goals in addition to general goals.

I hope we are promoting a good work-life balance for Mr. Hafer but as we are getting some turnover in administration and within the building I know we need to be mindful of Mr. Hafer not doing too much.

na

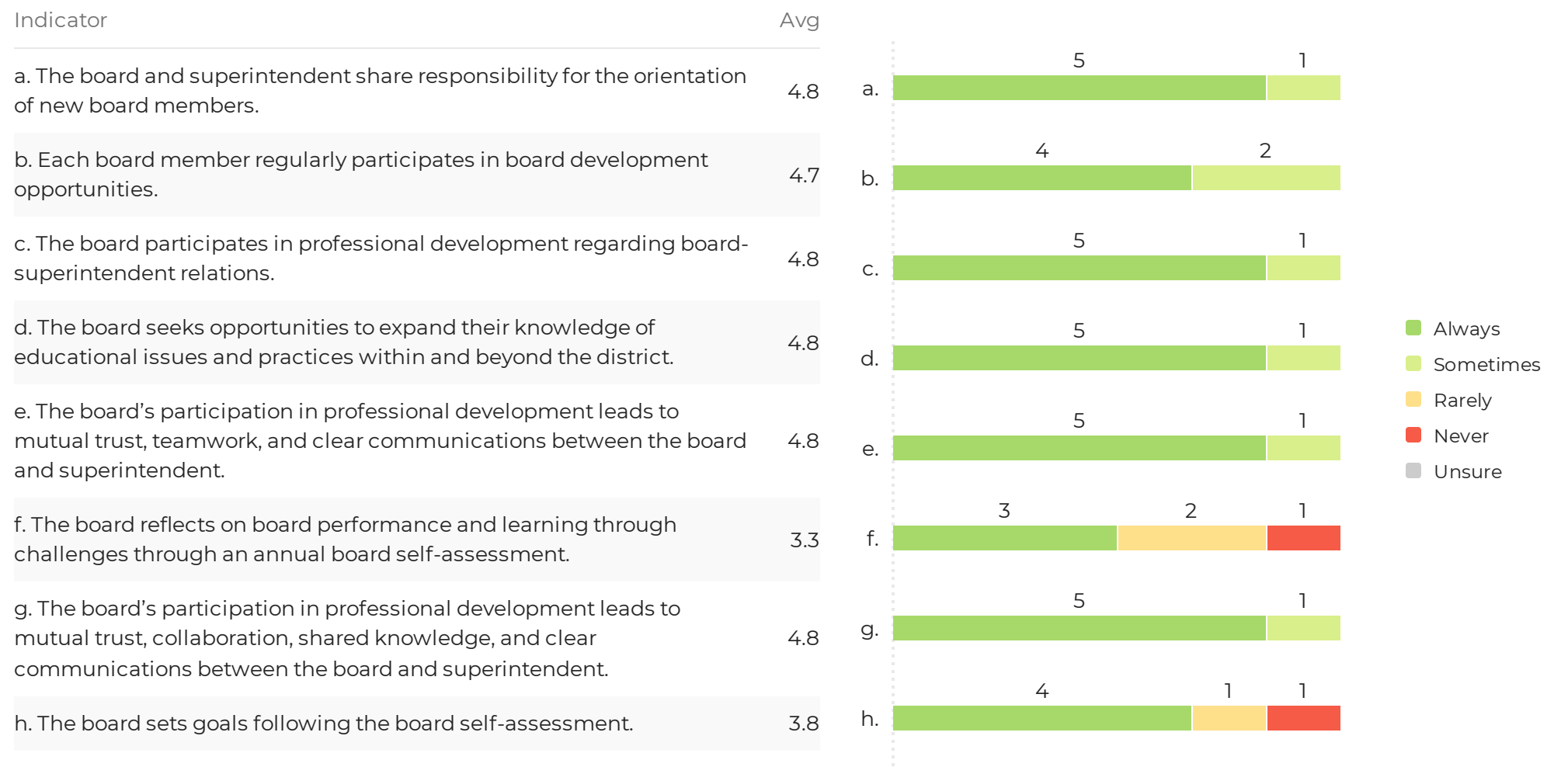
Perhaps the board could take a larger roll in educating the public about our strategic plan and initiatives. We may rely too much on just the administration and staff for our public relations effort.

Again, I think we are strong in this area but no one is ever perfect at it.

-

Standard IX: Professional Development

Benchmark for Success: The board and superintendent participate in continuous and appropriate training and professional development to build shared knowledge and values.



What areas of strength did you identify within this standard? Why?

The board is awesome in professional development and other opportunities for growing as board members.

We are all active in our community and we are willing to cont to work on development through board retreats and continuing education.

the board is always looking and participating in development training

Our board is extremely committed to personal professional development as well as the development of administrators and staff. We are a board of excellence for numerous years in a row. It isn't the award that is important but the outcomes. Our district is better because our board members invest in development.

Our board is very active when it comes to development opportunities

-

What are the areas within this standard that the board needs to improve and grow?

-

This is our first board self assessment since I've been on. I'm curious to see where this leads us.

Our new initiative is providing unique development opportunities to for our staff. We want to empower them to grow.

Setting measurable goals for the board. Accountability.

na

This is our first real board self-assessment

Conclusion

From the board perspective, what is the greatest student need in your district?

- to be resilient, have the skills necessary to be productive in the work force, leadership ability, student participation in extracurricular activities, motivation, not addicted to their phones or social media.
- Providing strategies and opportunities for students to become leaders and have a level of engagement that goes beyond just attendance.
- na
- We need to be able to meet every student where they are at. What can we do as a board to make sure that every student is engaged in their education and future?
- The greatest student need in our district is helping every student find a successful path after graduation.
- A positive culture for learning.

Are there areas about the culture/climate of the board that you have not had the opportunity to address in the above questions?

- We have a great board that works together not only for the students but for the patrons of the district. I think we are well respected and trusted for the work we do.
- None
- na
- Answering the questions makes me thankful for the board members that I serve with.
- Overall, I think our board works well together. Our committees are active and that helps take some of the pressure and time commitment off of the rest of the board.
-

Policy No. 8346 - Public Participation at Board Meetings

Internal Board Policies - Methods of Operation

A. Attend

Members of the public shall be permitted to attend and to speak at Board meetings. They will not be required to identify themselves as a condition for admission to the meeting.

The Board may allow advisors, consultants, and other persons who are not Board members to appear at the meeting via telephone or other similar means.

The President has the authority to assure that people conduct themselves in an orderly manner at the meeting. Undue interruption or other interference with the orderly conduct of business will not be allowed. The President may order persons who are disorderly to be removed from the meeting.

B. Hear

The Board will, upon request, make a reasonable effort to accommodate the public's right to hear the discussion and testimony presented at the meeting.

C. Record

Members of the public may use recording devices (phone, video camera, etc.) to record any part of a board meeting, except for closed sessions. The President may control the placement of the recording device so the device does not obstruct the view of Board members or other members of the public attending the meeting and does not otherwise interfere with the meeting.

D. Access to Written Materials

At least one copy of all reproducible written material to be discussed at an open meeting will be made available at the meeting for examination and copying by members of the public.

E. Speak

Members of the public will be permitted to speak at Board meetings. Members of the public may also speak when invited to make a presentation or when recognized by the President.

The board has the discretion to limit the amount of time set aside for public comment. The board president shall specify the total amount of time available for public comment prior to opening the public comment period. If public comment is allowed prior to individual agenda items, that limit on the total comment period should also be defined. Individual comments will be limited to 5 minutes for each participant. The

board president will recognize these individuals to make their comments at the appropriate time. Only those speakers recognized by the board president shall be allowed to speak. Comments by others are out of order. If disruptive, the individual making the comments or another individual causing disruption may be asked to leave the board meeting. The President may implement other reasonable requirements for public comment, consistent with the Open Meetings Act.

Any member of the public desiring to address the body shall be required to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented by such person, unless the address requirement is waived to protect the security of the individual.

Speakers will be permitted to address the Board consistent with free speech rights. However, offensive language, defamatory remarks, and hostile conduct will not be tolerated. Further, charges or complaints against a school employee shall not be made for the first time at a public Board meeting without having followed the school's complaint procedure.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. Sec. 84-1412

Date of Adoption: Wednesday, May 6, 2026