

Academic Year
2014/15

Colorado School Superintendent Study

Colorado Association of School Executives
in cooperation with the
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs



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Final Report

Introduction

School superintendents from throughout Colorado were asked to participate in a study by completing a confidential questionnaire regarding their perspectives on an array of issues and concerns related to their professional duties and responsibilities. The survey was developed over several months and included focus groups with superintendents held in the summer and fall. The instrument was made available via the Internet in November and December of 2014. The study was spearheaded by Drs. Al Ramirez, Dallas Strawn, Wendi Clouse, and graduate student Patrick Radigan from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs and was overseen by Bruce Caughey, Executive Director Colorado Association of School Executives and Dr. Jed Bowman, President of the Colorado Association of Superintendents/Senior Administrators, while the board of Colorado Association of Superintendents/Senior Administrators served as advisors to the study. Many of the questions were linked to a similar 1999 study in an effort to compare education leaders' views over time. The authors do not assert the results are generalizable to all Colorado superintendents.

Topics of the study

Demographic information about superintendents	Perspectives on the condition of public education in Colorado
Career history	Student demographics
Future plans	Sufficiency of resources
Impact of the job on personal wellbeing and family	Availability, quality and effectiveness of personnel
Personal support from outside sources	Support for the school district from outside sources
Board/Superintendent relations	
Parameters of decision making	Perspectives on current policy issue

Summary

Four general themes and three policy issues emerged from the responses of several open-ended questions. The lack of time, limited district resources, increased regulatory pressures, and multi-dimensional issues with politics were all identified as barriers to effective and efficient leadership. Additionally, the state teacher and principal evaluation law, standardized testing obligations, and disparity of funding equity are viewed as relevant policy issues that need attention.

Overarching themes

- **Time.** Most responses indicate time is a factor in terms of how effective personnel can be when it comes to meeting leadership demands. While only a few superintendents cited excessive hours as a reason for departure, time was a large contributor to stress for both administrators and those they manage. Time appears to play a role in changing the focus of the district, as more time spent in one area left little to spend in another. Many spoke in terms of “either/or” when it came to time, and the lack of time to spend on “meaningful” goals (like student instruction).
- **Finances.** Almost every respondent mentioned financial difficulties as a primary concern of theirs, both on local and state levels. Some wrote this several times within the same response, and there was near unanimity that a lack of funding was their biggest obstacle. Financial concerns spread across multiple themes, including politics, public perception, classroom effectiveness, and especially staff recruitment, retention, and moral. Many respondents cited both sides of financial difficulties as problematic; meaning increased costs (due to staff needs, building requirements, state and federal mandates, etc.) were balanced by concerns regarding a lack of revenue (including specific references to taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR), the Negative Factor, funding schemes involving rural districts, local taxes, and state funding). “Unfunded mandates” was a particularly common combination in the responses, capturing both sides of the issue.
- **Regulation.** State and federal mandates were routinely cited as a cause of frustration and a drain on both time and financial resources. Erosion of local control was something respondents frequently cited as a cause of much concern and was usually coupled with criticisms of a “top-down” or “micro-management” approach to education. In particular, respondents seemed at odds with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) on many issues, but many also cited the CDE as a valuable asset of the educational landscape in Colorado. Generally, districts value the CDE when it provides support for common goals, but they also tend to resist change when the CDE (or the U.S. Department of Education, i.e. ED) mandates it.
- **Politics.** This theme was interesting in the sense that it was seen almost unanimously in a negative light, yet when the respondents agreed with policies they used words like “leadership” instead of “legislature”. Local and board politics dominated the responses that were district-specific, but state and federal politics dominated the more general responses. Intersecting with politics were very common expressions of frustration with public perception, cronyism, and special interest groups.

Quote – “Funding has to be at the top of the list because it affects so many things in school districts. Next, I would say the drama surrounding common core and state assessments. It is very hard to plan in this environment. We are forging ahead and it will be very disappointing if we go another direction. So many good things are happening in Colorado and the political rhetoric is just getting in the way. Lastly, finding quality teachers and administrators will always be a challenge. This is true in part because of the outside pressure and stress.”

Policy issues

- **Senate Bill 10-191 (SB191).** The state teacher and principal evaluation law. The respondents do not agree on this issue. Many expressed support for the legislation citing an increased focus on the evaluation process as a benefit. Some expressed satisfaction with an increase of dialogue surrounding the issue. Others were decidedly dissatisfied with the legislation and saw it as an incursion on local practices, ineffective, poorly-designed, and a drain on staff morale. Most did agree that it was difficult to implement effectively and created unrealistic time-constraints on administrators. A handful felt that it had no real effect on their districts. Overall, there was little consensus on SB191.
- **Testing.** Assessments were routinely cited as one of the biggest headaches for local administrators and a core problem of the educational system as a whole. Some respondents lamented lost time for classroom instruction, while others cited the cost of administering the tests as the primary problem. Respondents nearing retirement and those in rural districts were particularly critical of the time and money spent on testing. Many specifically cited the confusion that multiple testing waves has caused, and were frustrated by the lack of timely feedback that could lead to more effective classroom instruction.
- **Funding equity.** Several respondents cited very specific rules for funding as causes of their problems. TABOR and the negative factor were the most common policies cited as particularly problematic. Superintendents in rural districts also cited local economic and geographic conditions as a primary factor in their difficulties associated with recruiting and retaining qualified staff.

Methodology

The Colorado Superintendent Survey was administered in December of 2014 in a collaborative effort between the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) and the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, College of Education. The survey was administered electronically to all members of CASE (n=178) and there were 66 respondents (response rate of 37%). A disproportionate number of Superintendents from Rural School Districts (79%) completed the questionnaire. The following responses are more representative of our rural areas than as a profile for the state as a whole. The survey was administered with the assurance of confidentiality; therefore no direct contact was made to individuals who did not respond to the questionnaire. The survey contained 66 questions constructed as either open-ended or multiple choice questions. Multiple choice questions were built around a 6-point scale of agreement. Eleven questions were related to superintendent demographics; 13 questions addressed the perception of the Superintendency; eleven questions addressed the school district setting; and 31 questions addressed local, state, and federal governance. Descriptive statistics were derived from the completed response set.

Selected Responses to Open Ended Questions

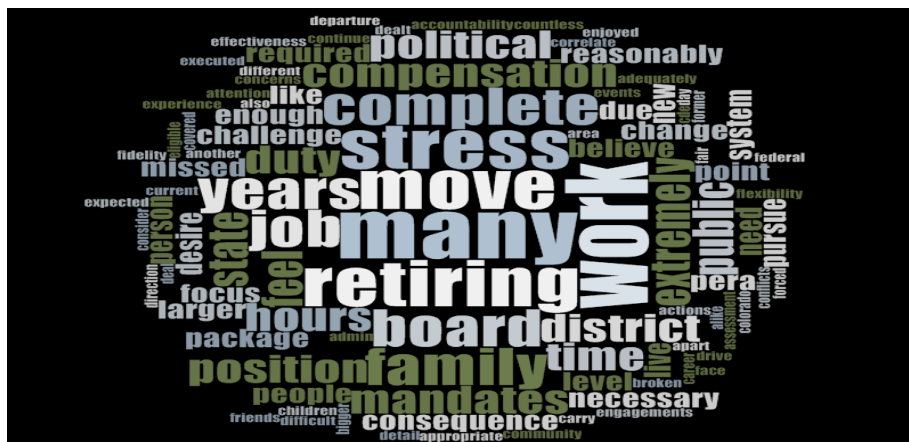
Several open-ended questions were included in the survey with the intention of providing an opportunity for respondents to voice their unique perception regarding their leadership role and the state of education in Colorado. Several representative responses are provided below:

- The positive changes I see happening in my district.
- I enjoy the challenges of leading by example, which means always learning and growing. The necessity to grow and learn every single day because the kids deserve the very best from all of us, provides the strongest sense of gratification for our work.
- I feel like I have personal, as well as, working relationships with our administrators and teachers that provide me a good deal of satisfaction.
- Observing student growth and attainment, in a community that does not support education, does not respect higher education and training, and sees the district as a local employment agency for those lacking ambition.
- Watching children grow into young adults and knowing that I am contributing to the person that they are becoming.
- Kids Kids Kids



Reasons for Departure

- I will have completed 36 years in public education. I no longer have the drive to work the hours necessary to fulfill duties that are required by the position. I do not believe in the direction public schools are being forced to go and will not lead people to do things I do not believe in.
- I feel that the politics in smaller districts (and large alike) are very stressful to deal with. I have dealt with the extreme political shifts within our Board and community over the past six years and I just do not feel that education is fair or right at this point.
- This is a very difficult job...too many moving parts, too many mandates from the state, too many broken families....
- My current compensation package does not adequately correlate with the hours work, the responsibilities successfully executed, and the level of stress inherent in the work.
- I have missed countless family engagements and have missed my own children's milestones as a consequence of my job.



Colorado Superintendent Survey Results: Descriptive Statistics

SURVEY RESPONSES

The status of superintendents

The average age of the group is 53 and they have been superintendents for an average of seven years, almost six in their current job. Ninety-one percent (91%) indicated they took a traditional path to the superintendency and 100% reported having at least one graduate degree. On average the responding superintendents expect to retire in seven years. Most superintendents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their job, despite the time demands, stress levels, family sacrifices, and concerns about burnout. Superintendents indicated they have a high degree of autonomy for decision making. They have access to professional support from colleagues and opportunities for professional development.

Survey Figures:

Table 1: Age

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT AGE?					
TO WHICH RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP(S) DO YOU MOST IDENTIFY?					
Age in Years	37.00 to 70	52.88	54	N	%
Not White				3	4%
Unknown				1	1%
White				63	95%

Table 2: Ethnicity

Table 3: Education

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF EDUCATION?		
	N	%
BA/BS	0	0%
Masters	39	59%
Ed Specialist	6	9%
Ed.D. or Ph.D.	21	32%
Total	66	100%

Table 4: Path to Position

MY PATH TO A SUPERINTENDENT POSITION WAS:		
	N	%
traditional (e.g. teacher, principal, assistant superintendent)	59	89%
non-traditional (e.g. limited experience in K-12 education)	7	11%
Total	66	100%

Table 5: Formal Training

DID YOU COMPLETE FORMAL TRAINING FOR YOUR SUPERINTENDENT POSITION?		
	N	%
Yes	51	77%
No	15	23%
Total	66	100%

Table 6: Years Employed

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION?					
	Range	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Years	1-20	5.85	4.00	4.62	66

Table 7: School Districts

HOW MANY DISTRICTS HAVE YOU SERVED AS A SUPERINTENDENT?					
	Range	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Districts	0 - 5	1.45	1.00	0.91	66

Table 8: Years Employed

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED AS A SUPERINTENDENT (IN ANY DISTRICT)?					
	Range	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Years	1.00-25.00	7.21	5.50	5.37	66

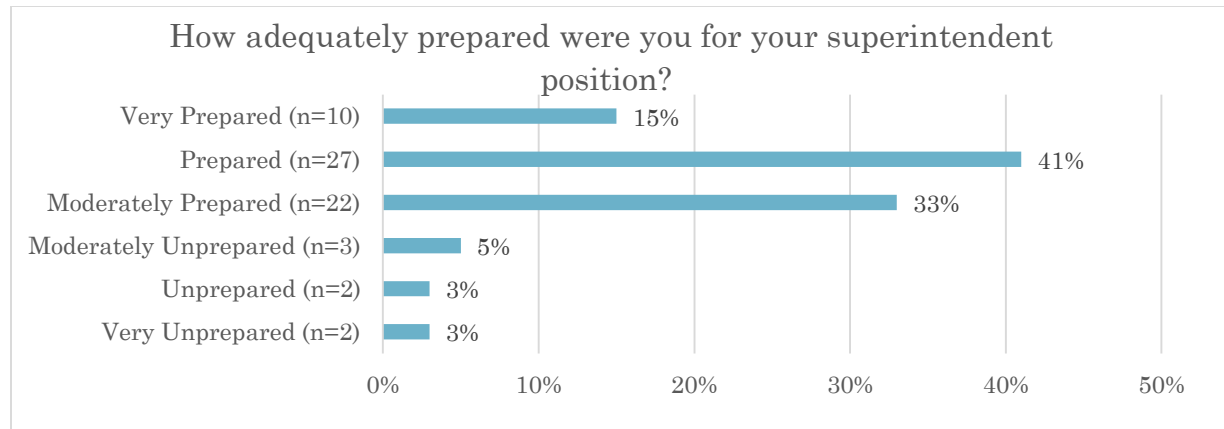


Figure 1: Preparation

Table 9: Retirement Plans

WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO RETIRE FROM YOUR CURRENT POSITION?	
Range	1-15
Mean	6.88
Median	6.00
Variance	20.82
S.D.	4.56

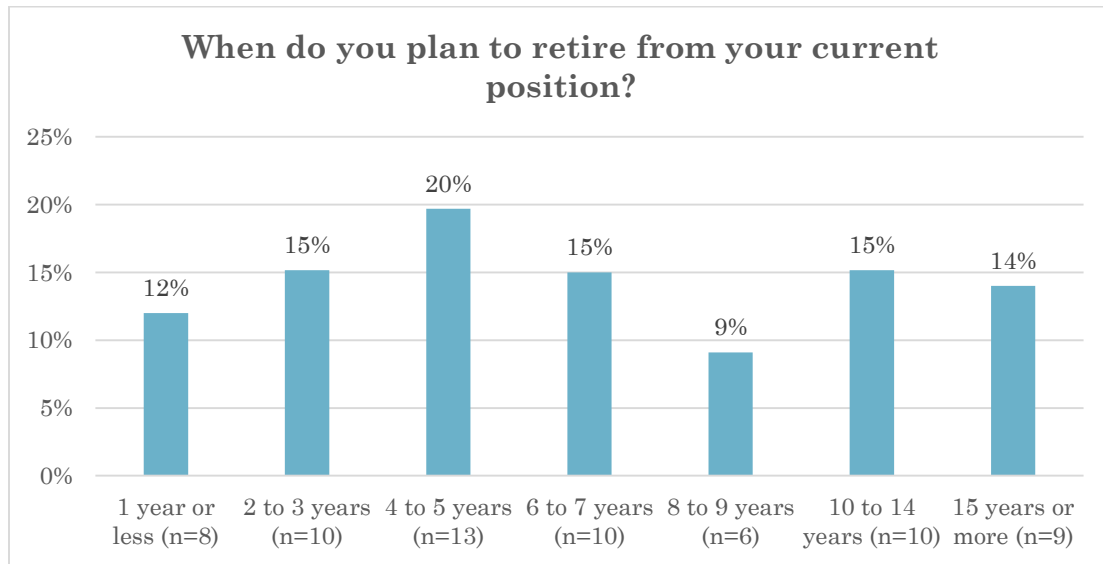


Figure 2: Retirement Plans

Table 10: Satisfaction

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING:									
	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N	Mean	Median
Your job as a whole	0	2	1	13	34	16	66	4.92	5.00
Your current compensation package	0	2	10	21	27	6	66	4.38	4.50
Your work/life balance?	3	7	13	25	18	0	66	3.73	4.00

Table 11: Work Hours per Week

ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU WORK PER WEEK?					
	Range	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Hours	37.00-97.00	59.85	60	10.23	66

Table 12: Work Balance

HOW MANY DAYS DURING THE PREVIOUS MONTH DID YOU MISS A FAMILY OR SOCIAL OBLIGATION BECAUSE OF WORK?					
	Range	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Missed Events	0.00-14.00	4.59	4.00	3.12	64

Table 13: Stress Level

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF STRESS AS IT RELATES TO THE FOLLOWING (WITH 0 INDICATING NO STRESS AND 10 INDICATING EXTREME STRESS):					
	Range	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Your overall position as a superintendent	2.00-10.00	6.81	7.0	1.77	63
Your experience as a superintendent in relation to other leadership/executive positions	2.00-10.00	6.50	7.0	2.29	52

Table 14: Burn-out

HOW CLOSE ARE YOU TO EXPERIENCING "BURN-OUT"?		
	N	%
Very Unlikely	3	5%
Unlikely	21	32%
Somewhat Unlikely	9	14%
Somewhat Likely	15	23%
Likely	13	20%
Very Likely	4	6%
Total	65	100%

Table 15: Career-Move

DO YOU PLAN ON MAKING A CAREER MOVE OR CHANGE WITHIN THE NEXT 1 TO 5 YEARS?		
	N	%
No	36	56%
Yes, I plan on pursuing a career outside of P-12 education	9	14%
Yes, I plan on moving to a larger and/or more challenging district	8	13%
Yes, I plan to seek a similar position elsewhere	9	14%
Yes, I plan to return to a principalship or a lower-level executive position	2	3%
Total	64	100%

Table 16: Time to Departure

WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO MAKE THIS CHANGE?	Value
Range	1-6
Mean	2.41
Median	2.00
Variance	1.75
Standard Deviation	1.32
Total	29

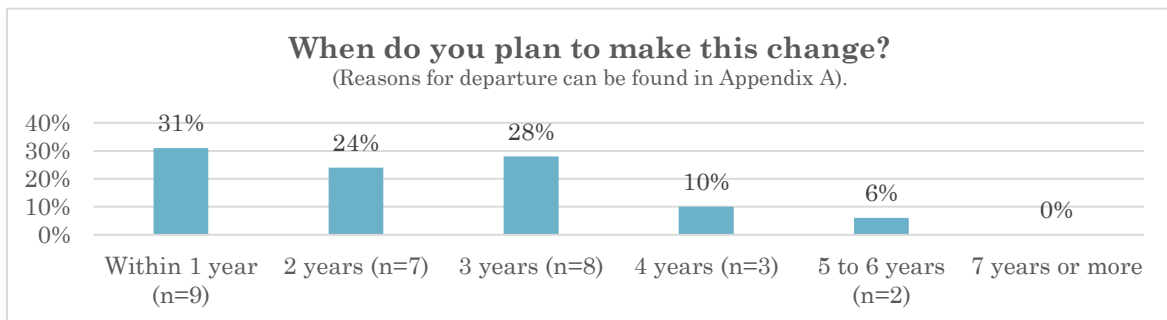


Figure 3: Time to Departure

Table 17: Contract Length

WHAT IS THE LENGTH OF YOUR CURRENT CONTRACT AS A SUPERINTENDENT (IN YEARS)?				
	N	%	Statistics	Value
1	19	31%	Range	1-5
2	15	24%	Mean	2.24
3	24	39%	Median	2.00
4	2	3%	Variance	1.07
5	2	3%	S.D.	1.04
6 or more years	0	0%		
Total	62	100%		

Table 18: Employment Contract

ARE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING STIPULATED IN YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT?		
	N	%
performance goals related to teacher retention	2	4%
performance goals directly tied to student academic achievement	9	19%
rolling contract (e.g. 1-year contract extension for each successful year on the job)	31	65%
Buy-out provision	26	54%
nondisclosure clause upon termination for reasons other than cause	10	21%
financial incentives tied to standardized test results	1	2%
financial incentives tied to academic achievement derived from measures other than standardized test results	1	2%
other (not listed above)	6	13%

Other reasons not listed in the table above include: Leadership goals; Compensation tied to personal evaluation; longevity incentive (annual); medical, dental, and vision coverage

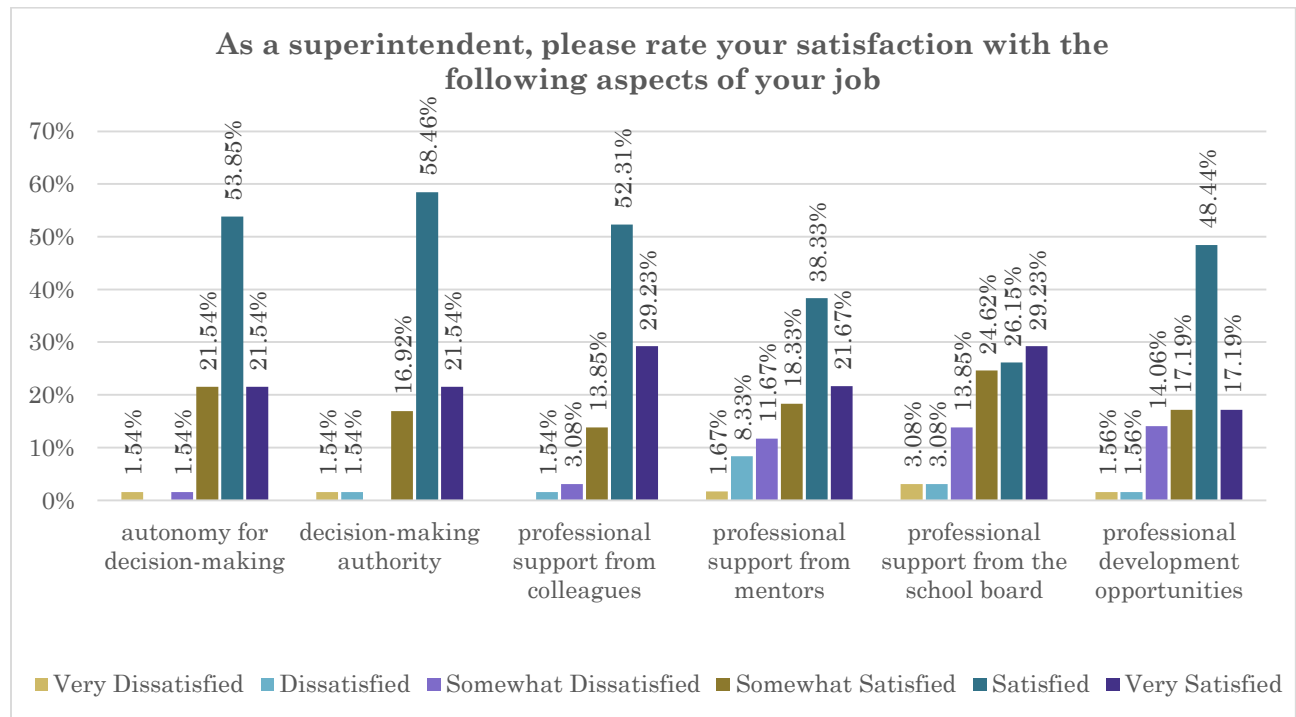


Figure 4: Job Satisfaction 1 of 2

Table 19: Job Satisfaction 1 of 2

AS A SUPERINTENDENT, PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB						
	autonomy for decision-making	decision-making authority	professional support from colleagues	professional support from mentors	professional support from the school board	Prof. dev. opportunities
Range	1-6	1-6	2-6	1-6	1-6	1-6
Mean	4.91	4.94	5.05	4.48	4.55	4.61
Median	5	5	5	5	5	5
Variance	0.74	0.78	0.7	1.64	1.69	1.16
S.D.	0.86	0.88	0.84	1.28	1.3	1.08
N	65	65	65	60	65	64

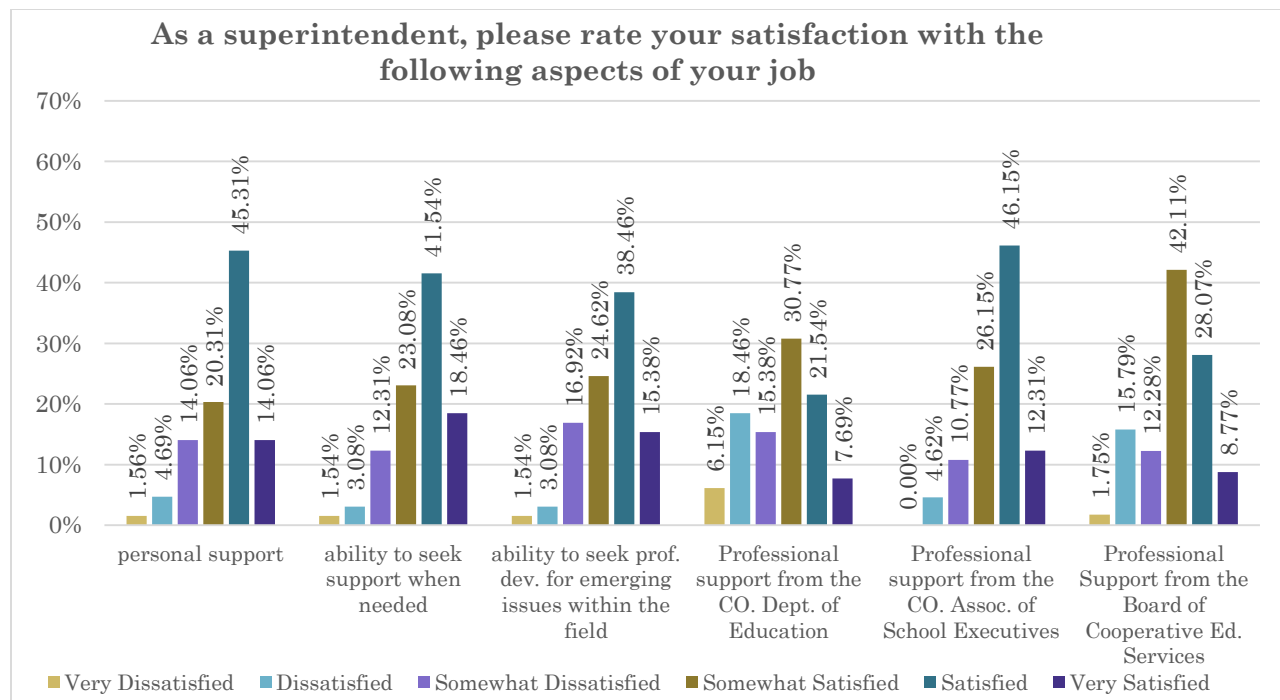


Figure 5: Job Satisfaction 2 of 2

Table 20: Job Satisfaction 2 of 2

STATISTICS: AS A SUPERINTENDENT, PLEASE RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB						
	personal support	ability to seek support when needed	ability to seek prof. dev. for emerging issues within the field	Professional support from the CO. Dept. of Ed.	Professional support from the CO. Assoc. of School Executives	Professional Support from the Board of Coop. Ed. Services
Range	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	2-6	1-6
Mean	4.45	4.55	4.42	3.66	4.51	3.97
Median	5	5	5	4	5	4
Variance	1.3	1.25	1.28	1.88	1	1.44
S.D.	1.14	1.12	1.13	1.37	1	1.2
N	64	65	65	65	65	62

Table 21: Master Agreement

DO YOU HAVE A MASTER (UNION) AGREEMENT IN YOUR DISTRICT?		
	N	%
Yes	7	11%
No	55	89%
Total	62	100%

Table 22: Teacher Association

THE TEACHER ASSOCIATION IN MY DISTRICT IS A POSITIVE INFLUENCE:		
	N	%
Not Applicable	16	27%
Disagree	8	13%
Somewhat Disagree	5	8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	11	18%
Somewhat Agree	6	10%
Agree	11	18%
Strongly Agree	3	5%
Total	60	100%

Table 23: District Setting

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SETTING:		
	N	%
Denver Metro	0	0%
Urban-Suburban	5	8%
Outlying City	3	5%
Outlying Town	5	8%
Rural	48	79%
Total	61	100%

Table 24: Number of Superintendents

DURING THE PAST 10 YEARS, HOW MANY SUPERINTENDENTS HAVE SERVED IN YOUR DISTRICT?				
	N	%	Statistic	Value
1 or fewer	11	18%	Range	1-7
2	20	32%	Mean	2.82
3	13	21%	Median	2.50
4	12	19%	Variance	2.28
5	2	3%	S.D.	1.51
6	1	2%		
7 or more	3	5%		
Total	62	100%		

Table 25: District Enrollment

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR TOTAL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT?				
	N	%	Statistic	Value
Less than or equal to 100	5	8.06%	Range	45-31000
101 to 200	7	11.29%	Max	31000
201 to 400	10	16.13%	Mean	2099.90
401 to 600	7	11.29%	Median	827
601 to 999	5	8.06%	Mode	200
1001 to 1500	11	17.74%	S.D.	4438.78
1501 to 2000	3	4.84%		
2001 to 5000	7	11.29%		
5001+	7	11.29%		
Total	62	100%		

Table 26: District Profile

PLEASE PROVIDE THE APPROXIMATE ENROLLMENT OF THE LARGEST SCHOOL WITHIN YOUR DISTRICT:				
	N	%	Statistic	Value
One campus or other	5	8.47%	Range	1312.56
150 or fewer	15	25.42%	Mean	436
151 to 400	12	20.34%	Median	100
401 to 600	13	22.03%	Mode	5494.04
601 to 1000	6	10.17%	S.D.	40-40000
1001 to 2000	5	8.47%		
2001 or more	3	5.08%		
Total	59	100%		

ESTIMATE THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITHIN YOUR DISTRICT THAT...						
	Min	Max	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
May be eligible for free or reduced lunch.	16.00	88.00	53.03	53.50	19.52	62
Have I.E.P.s?	0	26.00	12.18	12.00	5.30	62
Are English Language Learners?	0	50.00	10.71	7.00	11.45	58
Receive free or reduced lunch?	10.00	100.00	47.18	48.50	19.15	62
Have 504 plans	0.00	24.00	4.26	3.00	4.65	58

Table 27: 3rd Grade Assessment

WHAT PERCENT OF YOUR 3RD GRADE STUDENTS SCORED PROFICIENT OR BETTER ON THE MOST RECENT STATE ASSESSMENT FOR:						
	Min	Max	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Reading	26.00	100.00	76.53	78.00	13.36	59
Writing	0.00	95.00	58.75	61.00	20.38	59
Mathematics	25.00	100.00	72.36	74.00	16.37	59

Table 28: 8th Grade Assessment

WHAT PERCENT OF YOUR 8TH GRADE STUDENTS SCORED PROFICIENT OR BETTER ON THE MOST RECENT STATE ASSESSMENT?						
	Min	Max	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Reading	32.00	100.00	69.29	70.00	14.52	58
Writing	0.00	97.00	58.83	59.50	17.29	58
Mathematics	13.00	100.00	55.22	54.00	20.06	58

Superintendent and School Board Relations

School Board and superintendent relationships and cooperation were rated good, overall, although a small number expressed disappointment with the quality of candidates running for board positions and training opportunities available for board members. A large percentage of the group said board members were prepared for meetings, that meetings lasted two and a half hours and they met less than two times per month, averaging 1.6 meetings. There was a high level of consensus with regard to board support for the superintendent’s leadership agenda and 79% felt responsibilities between board and superintendent are clearly delineated. They also felt board decisions are, with few exceptions, made in the best interest of students and free from political ideology. A global question about relevancy of school boards today garnered a wide distribution from very irrelevant to very relevant.

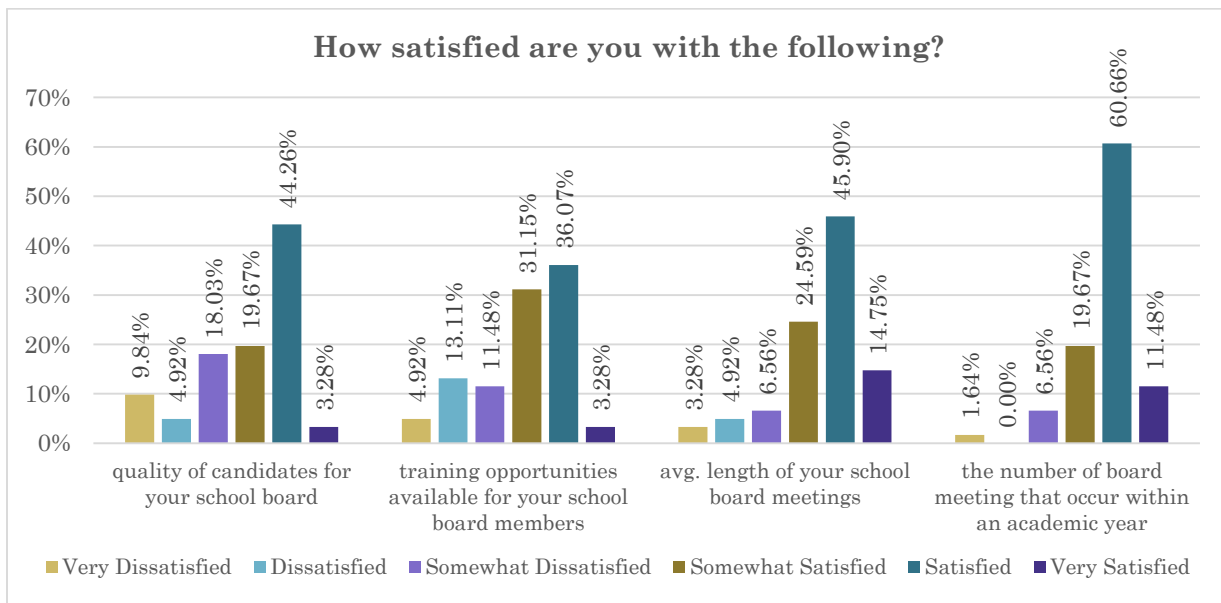


Figure 6: Candidate Satisfaction 1/2

Table 29: Candidate Satisfaction 1/2

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING?						
Statistic	the quality of candidates for your school board	the training opportunities available for your elected school board members	the average length of your school board meetings	the number of school board meeting that occur within an academic year		
Range	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6		
Mean	3.93	3.9	4.49	4.72		
Median	4	4	5	5		
Variance	1.86	1.59	1.39	0.77		
S.D.	1.36	1.26	1.18	0.88		
N	61	61	61	61		

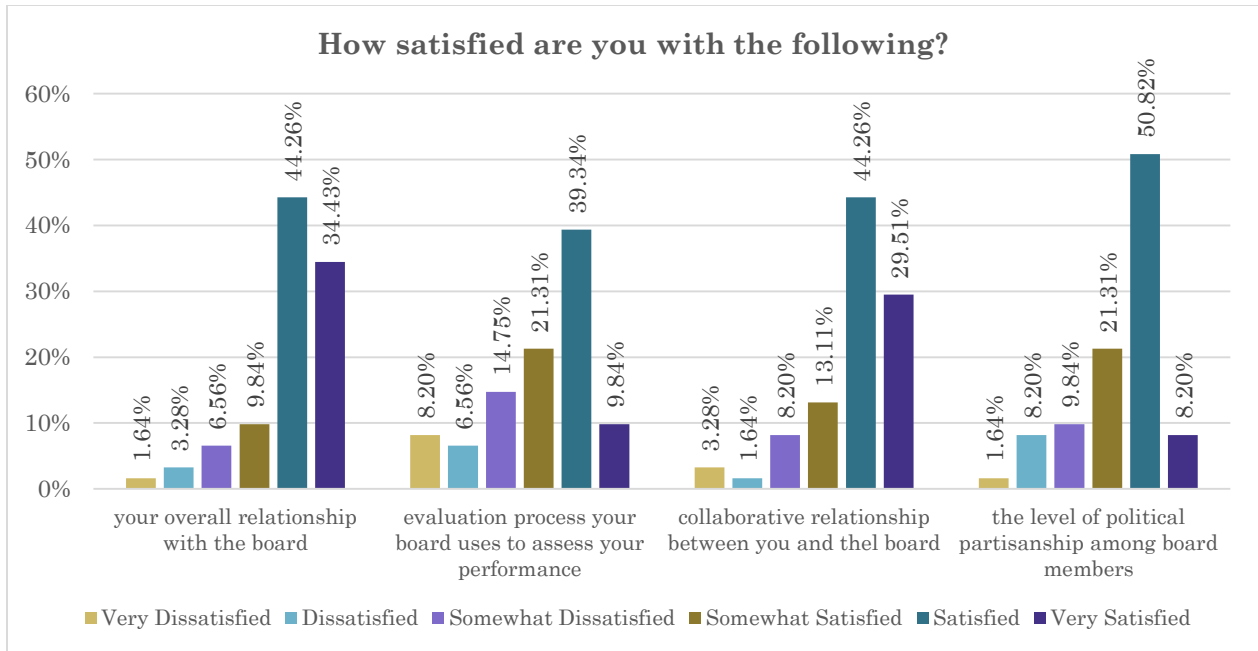


Figure 7: Candidate Satisfaction 2/2

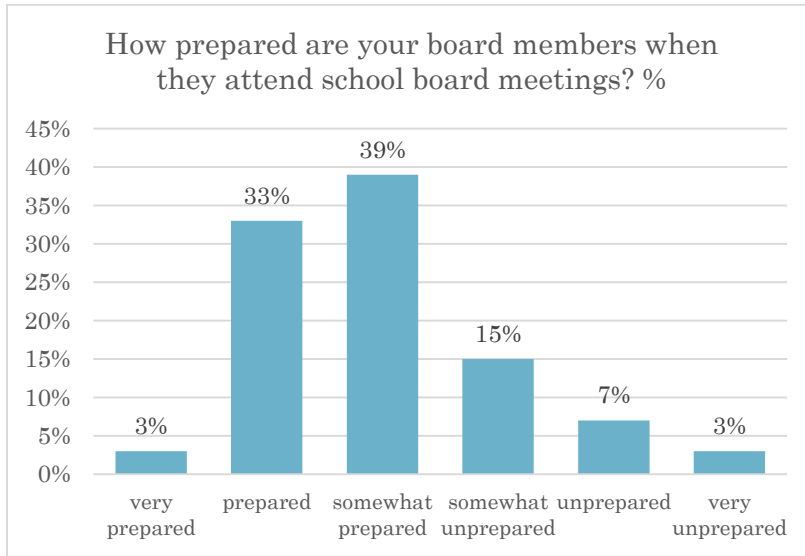
Table 30: Candidate Satisfaction 2/2

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING?						
Statistic	your overall relationship with the school board	the evaluation process your board uses to assess your performance	the collaborative relationship between you and the school board	the level of political partisanship among board members		
Range	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6		
Mean	4.95	4.07	4.82	4.36		
Median	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00		
Variance	1.28	1.96	1.42	1.30		
S.D.	1.13	1.40	1.19	1.14		
N	61	61	61	61		

Table 31: School Board

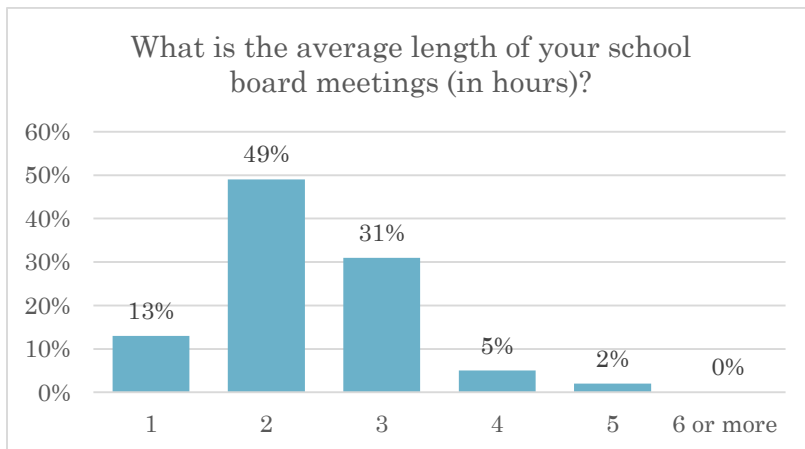
Do You Have School Employees or Relatives of School Employees on Your School Board		
	N	%
Yes	47	77%
No	14	23%
Total	61	100%
Does having schools employees or their relatives on the school board present a conflict of interest?		
Yes	33	70%
No	14	30%
Total	47	100%

Table 32: Board Members



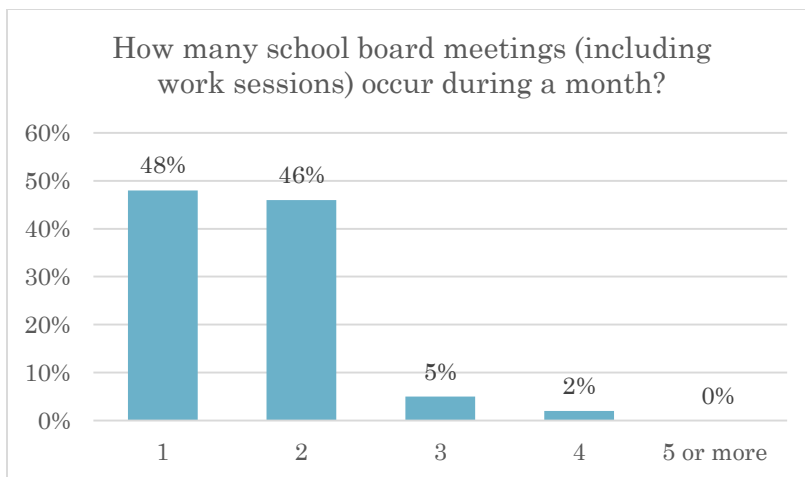
Statistic	Value
Range	1-6
Mean	2.98
Median	3.00
Variance	1.18
S.D.	1.09

Table 33: School Board Meetings



Statistic	Value
Range	1-5
Max	5
Mean	2.33
Median	2.00
Variance	0.69
S.D.	0.83
N	61

Table 34: Number of School Board Meetings



Statistic	Value
Range	1-4
Mean	1.61
Median	2.0
Variance	0.44
S.D.	0.67
N	61

Table 35: Leadership Agenda

MY SCHOOL BOARD SUPPORTS MY LEADERSHIP AGENDA:		
	N	%
Strongly Disagree	1	2%
Disagree	1	2%
Somewhat Disagree	1	2%
Somewhat agree	11	18%
Agree	33	54%
Strongly Agree	14	23%
Total	61	100%

Table 36: Position Alignment

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MY POSITION ARE CLEARLY DELINEATED:		
	N	%
Strongly Agree	6	10%
Agree	29	48%
Somewhat Agree	13	21%
Somewhat Disagree	7	11%
Disagree	3	5%
Strongly Disagree	3	5%
Total	61	100%

Table 37: Time Expenditures, School Board

How much of your time per week is spent taking care of individual board member requests and/or working with individual board members (in hours)?						
	Min	Max	Mean	Median	S.D.	N
Hours	0.00	21.00	5.28	4.00	4.71	61

Table 38: Political Ideology: School Board

MY BOARD PROMOTES POLICIES THAT ARE ROOTED IN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY:		
	N	%
Never	7	12%
Rarely	21	36%
Occasionally	21	36%
Often	9	15%
Very Often	1	2%
Always	0	0%
Total	59	100%

Table 39: Student Interest, School Board

MY BOARD PROMOTES POLICIES THAT ARE BASED IN THE BEST INTEREST OF STUDENTS:		
	N	%
Never	0	0%
Rarely	1	2%
Occasionally	6	10%
Often	20	33%
Very Often	22	36%
Always	12	20%
Total	61	100%

Table 40: School Board Relevance

ARE SCHOOL BOARDS TODAY AS RELEVANT AS THEY WERE IN THE PAST?		
	N	%
Very irrelevant	5	8%
Irrelevant	7	11%
Somewhat irrelevant	10	16%
Somewhat relevant	11	18%
Relevant	20	33%
Very relevant	8	13%
Total	61	100%

Table 41: Role of Board

AS THE LEADER OF YOUR DISTRICT, IDEALLY, WHAT ROLE WOULD YOU WANT THE SCHOOL BOARD TO PLAY		
	N	%
Hire and fire the superintendent	54	89%
Financial oversight	49	80%
Teacher dismissals	9	15%
Expulsion hearings	19	31%
Liaison with the community	49	80%
Other: Please specify:	15	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy: policy creation, policy approval, policy adoption, policy oversight • Strategic planning/guidance/direction of the organization/ provide vision/Governance • Serve in an advisory role rather than supervisory or punitive role • Budget oversight/adoption 		

Resources Needs

Questions about resources were consistently scored low with the exception of classroom space. These low ratings included insufficient resources for: meeting new academic standards; maintaining school facilities; building new schools or expanding existing facilities; managing state mandates; and, attracting and retaining high quality personnel. Superintendents also felt state level resources are not distributed equitably.

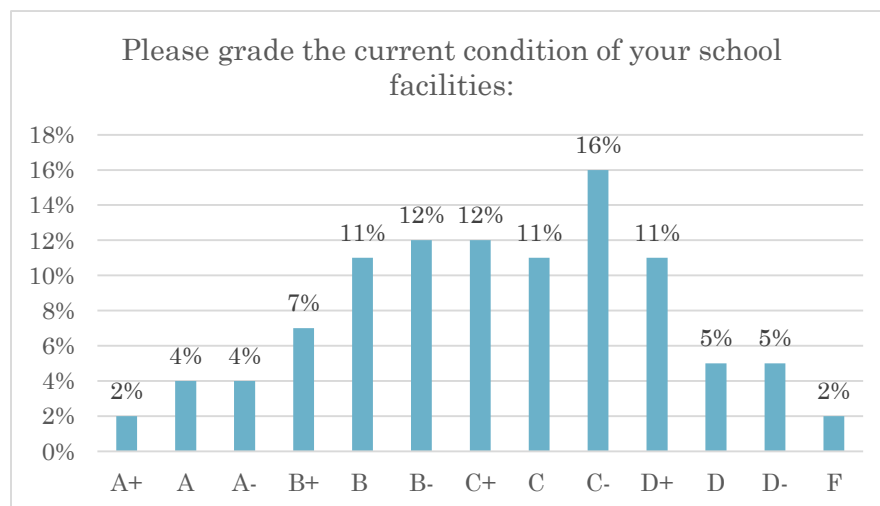


Figure 8: Condition of School Facilities

Table 42: Condition of School Facilities

Statistic	Value
Range	1-13
Mean	7.35 (C+)
Median	7.00 (C)
Variance	7.73
S.D.	2.78
N	57

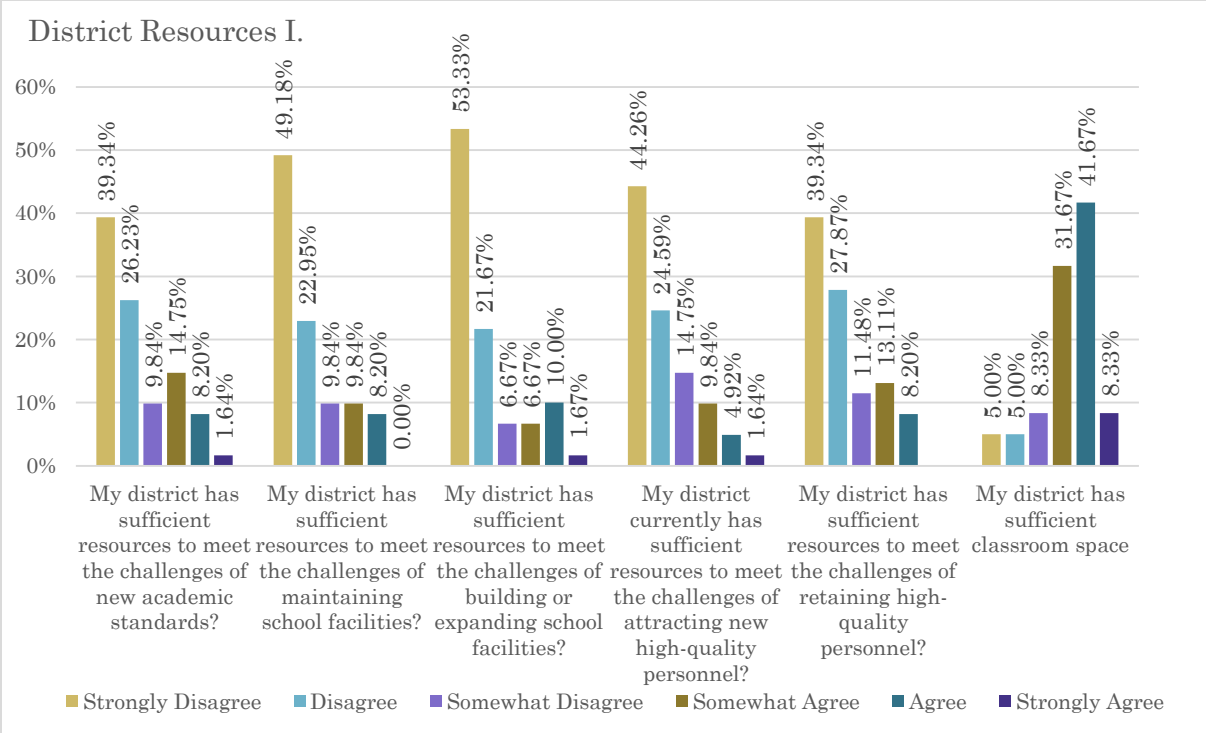


Figure 9: District Resources I

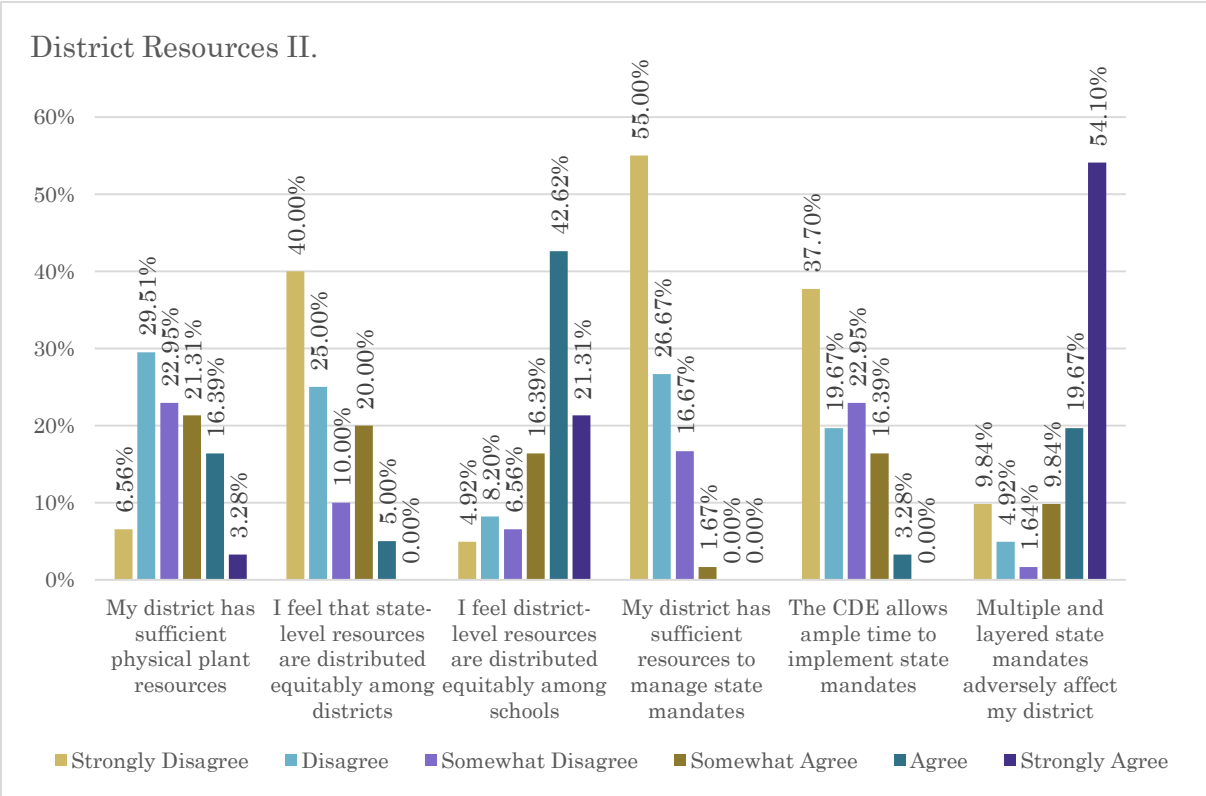


Figure 10: District Resources II

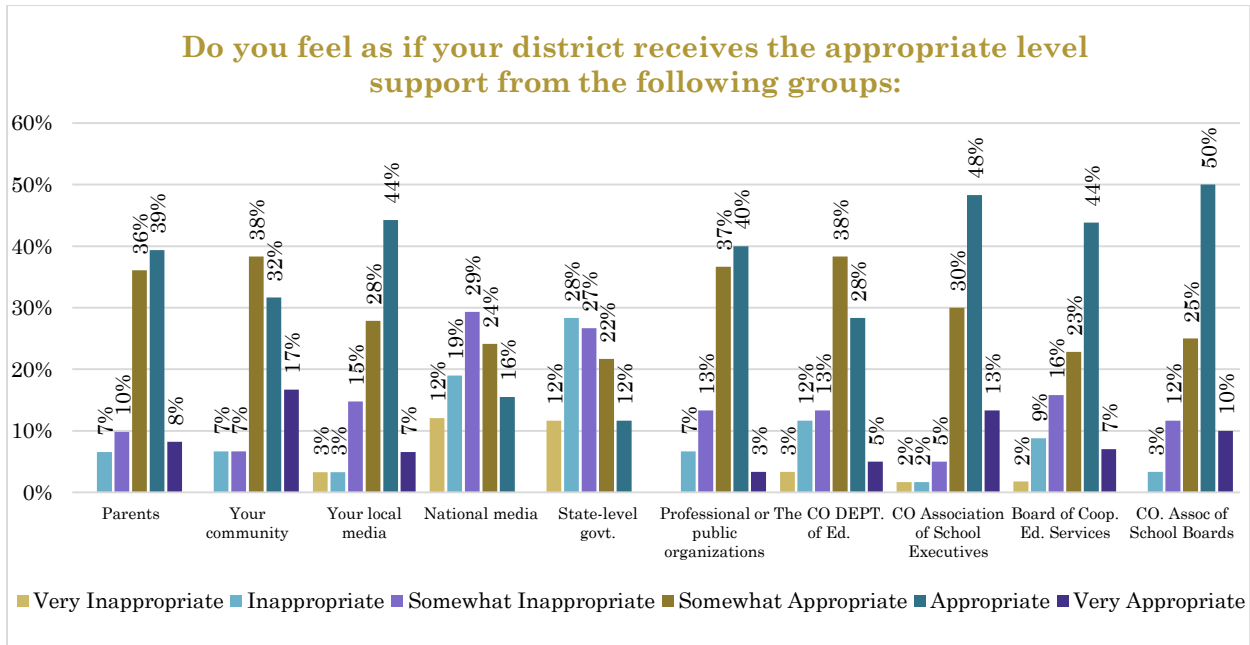


Figure 11: External Support

Attracting and Keeping Talent

Superintendents said they are having trouble, overall, attracting candidates for vacant positions in their school districts and particularly for mathematics, special education services professionals, and special education teachers. However, for the most part, they are satisfied with the quality of the new personnel they do hire. This level of satisfaction was even higher when asked about candidates for leadership roles in the district. High scores were assigned across the board when asked about the level of dedication and effectiveness of current school district employees.

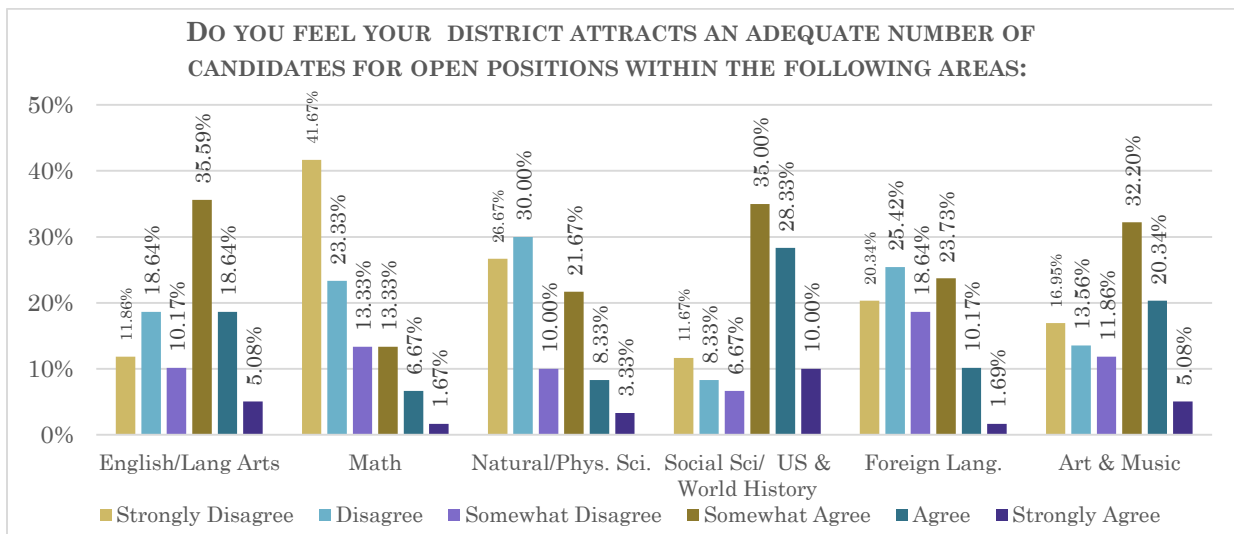


Figure 12: Adequate Candidates I

Table 43: Adequate Candidates I

DO YOU FEEL YOUR DISTRICT ATTRACTS AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES FOR OPEN POSITIONS WITHIN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:						
Statistic	English/Lang. Arts	Mathematics	Natural/Physical Sciences	Social Sci. (including US & World History)	Foreign Lang.	Art & Music
Range	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6
Mean	3.46	2.25	2.65	3.9	2.83	3.41
Median	4	2	2	4	3	4
Var	2.05	1.92	2.13	2.16	1.87	2.28
S.D.	1.43	1.39	1.46	1.47	1.37	1.51
N	59	60	60	60	59	59

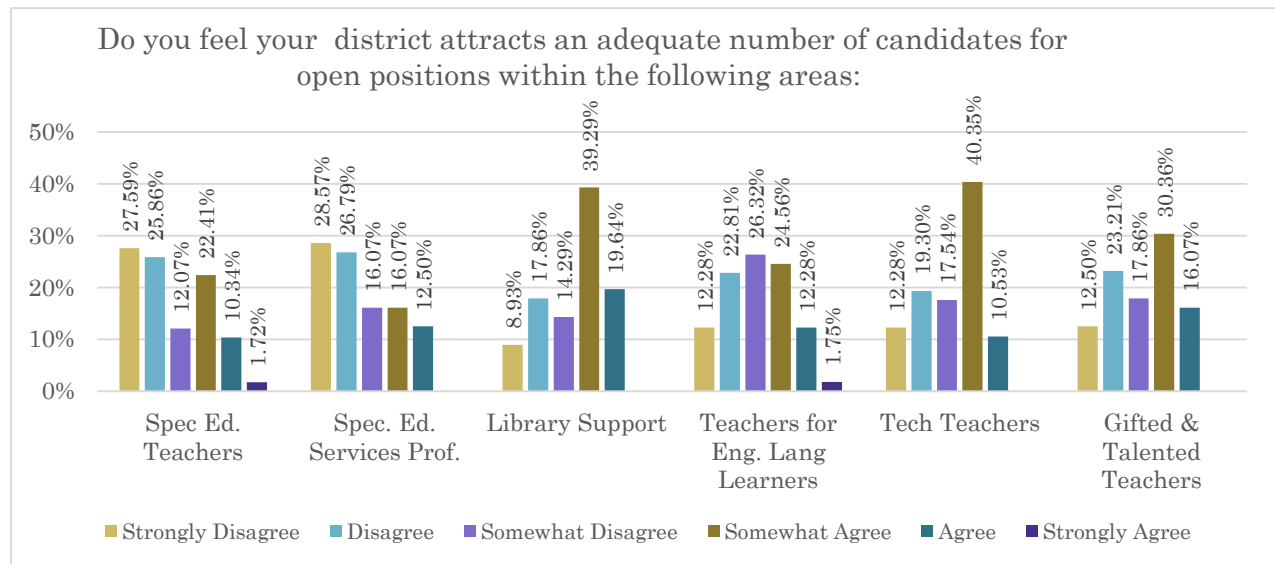


Figure 13: Adequate Candidates II

Table 44: Adequate Candidates II

DO YOU FEEL YOUR DISTRICT ATTRACTS AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES FOR OPEN POSITIONS WITHIN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:						
Statistic	Special Ed. Teachers	Special Ed. Services Professionals	Library Support	Teachers for English Language Learners	Technology Teachers	Gifted & Talented Teachers
Range	1-6	1-5	1-5	1-6	1-5	1-5
Mean	2.67	2.57	3.43	3.07	3.18	3.14
Median	2	2	2	3	4	3
Var	2.08	1.92	1.56	1.64	1.5	1.69
S.D.	1.44	1.39	1.25	1.28	1.23	1.3
N	58	56	57	57	56	57

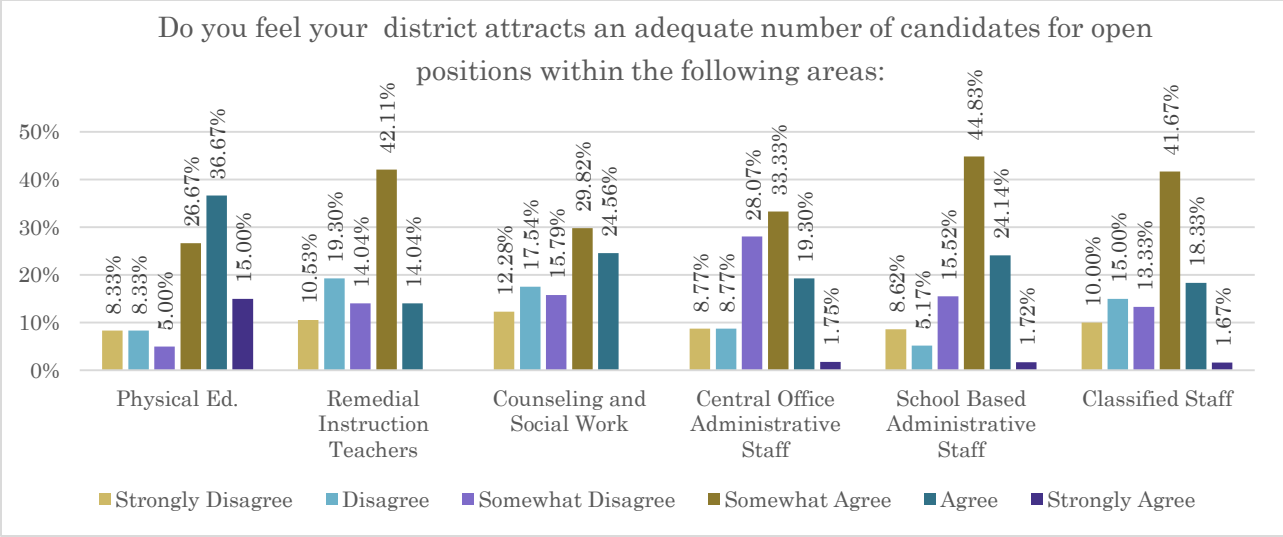


Figure 14: Adequate Candidates III

Table 45: Adequate Candidates III

DO YOU FEEL YOUR DISTRICT ATTRACTS AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES FOR OPEN POSITIONS WITHIN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:						
Statistic	Physical Education	Remedial Instruction Teachers	Counseling & Social Work	Central Office Admin. Staff	School Based Admin Staff	Classified Staff
Range	1-6	1-5	1-5	1-6	1-6	1-6
Mean	4.2	3.3	3.37	3.51	3.76	3.48
Median	5	4	4	4	4	4
Var	2.09	1.53	1.84	1.47	1.41	1.64
S.D.	1.45	1.24	1.36	1.21	1.19	1.28
N	60	57	57	58	60	60

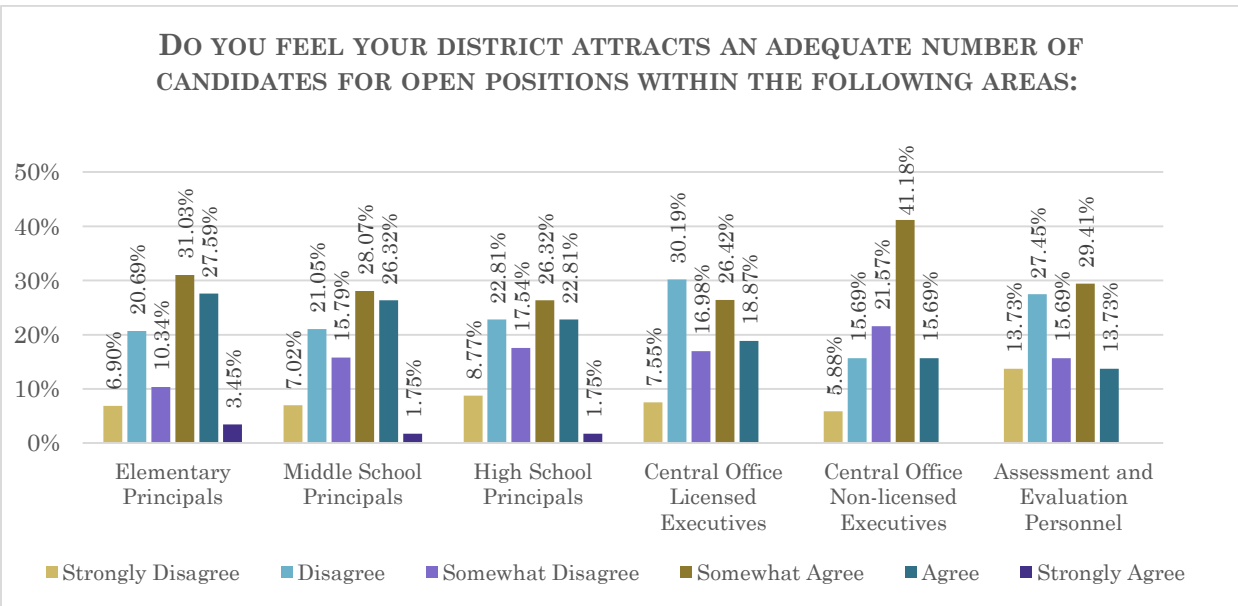


Figure 15: Adequate Number of Candidates IV

Table 46: Adequate Number of Candidates IV

DO YOU FEEL YOUR DISTRICT ATTRACTS AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES FOR OPEN POSITIONS WITHIN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:						
Statistic	Elementary Principals	Middle School Principals	High School Principals	Central Office Licensed Executives	Central Office Non-licensed Executives	Assessment and Evaluation Personnel
Range	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-5	1-5	1-5
Mean	3.62	3.51	3.37	3.19	3.45	3.02
Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00
Variance	1.85	1.75	1.81	1.62	1.25	1.70
S.D.	1.36	1.32	1.34	1.27	1.12	1.30
N	58	57	57	53	51	51

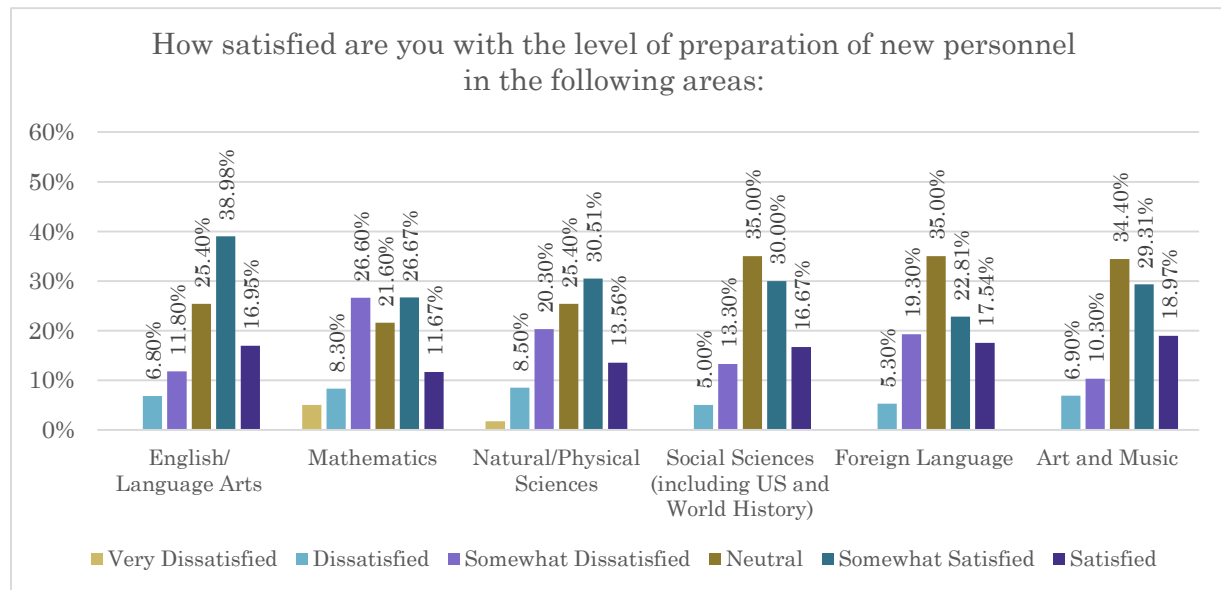


Figure 16: New Personnel Preparation I

Table 47: New Personnel Preparation I

LEVEL OF PREPARATION I						
Statistic	English/ Lang Arts	Mathematics	Natural/Phys. Sciences	Social Sci. (including History)	Foreign Language	Art & Music
Range	2-6	1-6	1-6	2-6	2-6	2-6
Mean	4.47	3.92	4.15	4.4	4.28	4.43
Median	5	4	4	4	4	4
Var.	1.25	1.81	1.55	1.16	1.28	1.27
S.D.	1.12	1.34	1.24	1.08	1.13	1.13
N	59	60	59	60	57	58

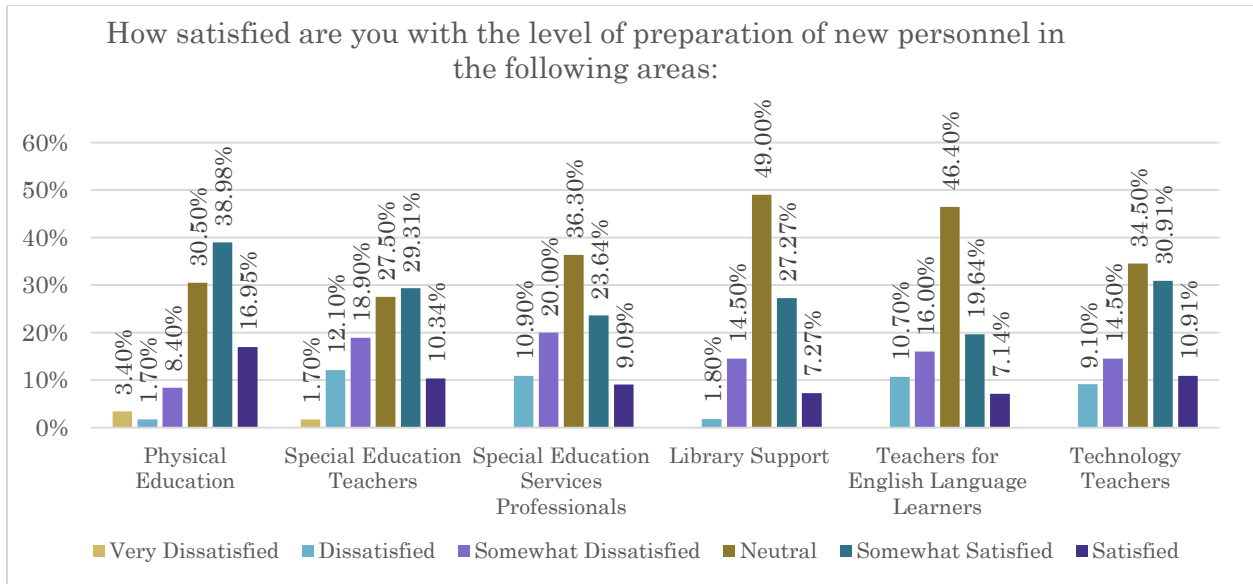


Figure 17: Level of Preparation II

Table 48: Level of Preparation II

LEVEL OF PREPARATION II						
Statistic	Physical Educ.	Spec. Educ. Teachers	Special Educ. Services Prof	Library Support	Teachers for Eng. Lang. Learners	Technology Teachers
Range	1-6	1-6	2-6	2-6	2-6	2-6
Mean	4.51	4.02	4	4.24	3.96	4.2
Median	4	4	5	4	4	4
Var.	1.29	1.56	1.26	0.74	1.09	1.24
S.D.	1.14	1.25	1.12	0.86	1.04	1.11
N	59	58	55	55	56	55

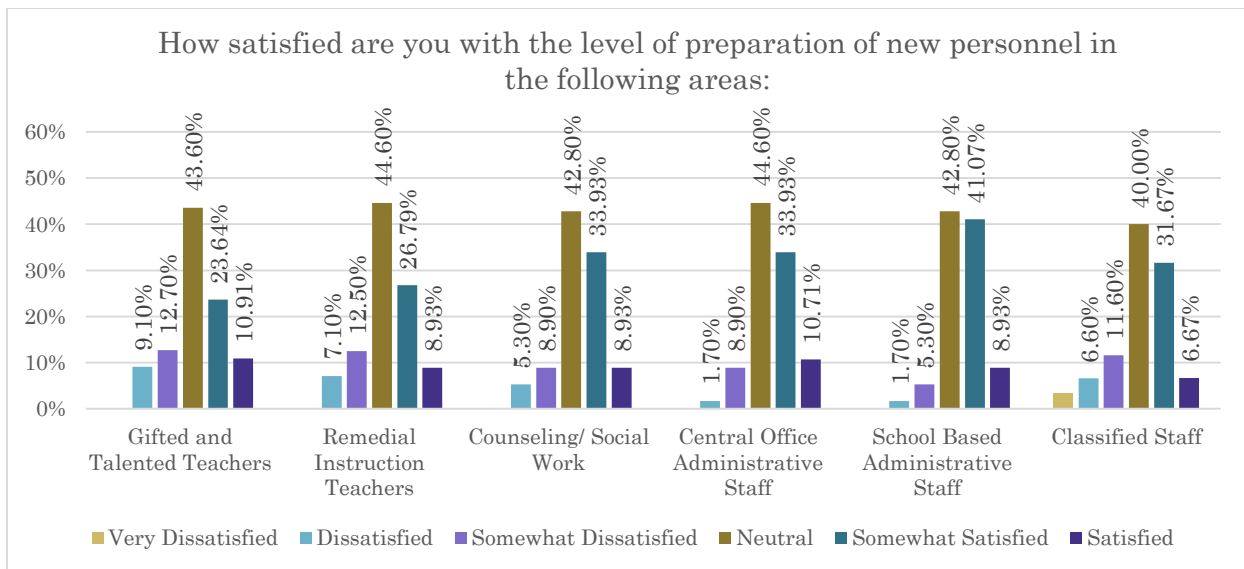


Figure 18: Level of Preparation III

Table 49: Level of Preparation III

LEVEL OF PREPARATION III						
Statistic	Gifted & Talented Teachers	Remedial Instruction Teachers	Counseling/Social Work	Central Office Administrative Staff	School Based Administrative Staff	Classified Staff
Range	2-6	2-6	2-6	2-6	2-6	1-6
Mean	4.15	4.18	4.32	4.43	4.5	4.1
Median	4	4	4	4	4.5	4
Var.	1.16	1.02	0.91	0.76	0.65	1.28
S.D.	1.08	1.01	0.96	0.87	0.81	1.13
N	55	56	56	56	56	60

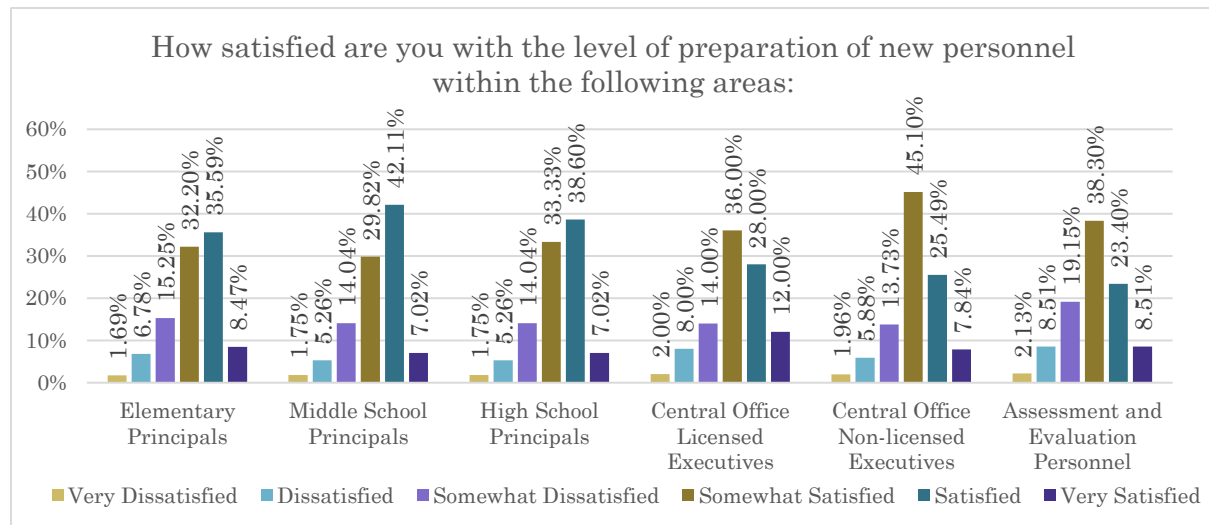


Figure 19: Staff Preparation

Table 50: Staff Preparation

LEVEL OF PREPARATION: STAFF						
Statistic	Elementary Principals	Middle School Principals	High School Principals	Central Office Licensed Executives	Central Office Non-licensed Executives	Assessment and Evaluation Personnel
Range	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6
Mean	4.19	4.26	4.23	4.16	4.10	3.98
Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Variance	1.26	1.16	1.14	1.40	1.13	1.33
S.D.	1.12	1.08	1.07	1.18	1.06	1.15
N	59	57	57	50	51	47

Table 51: Staff Dedication

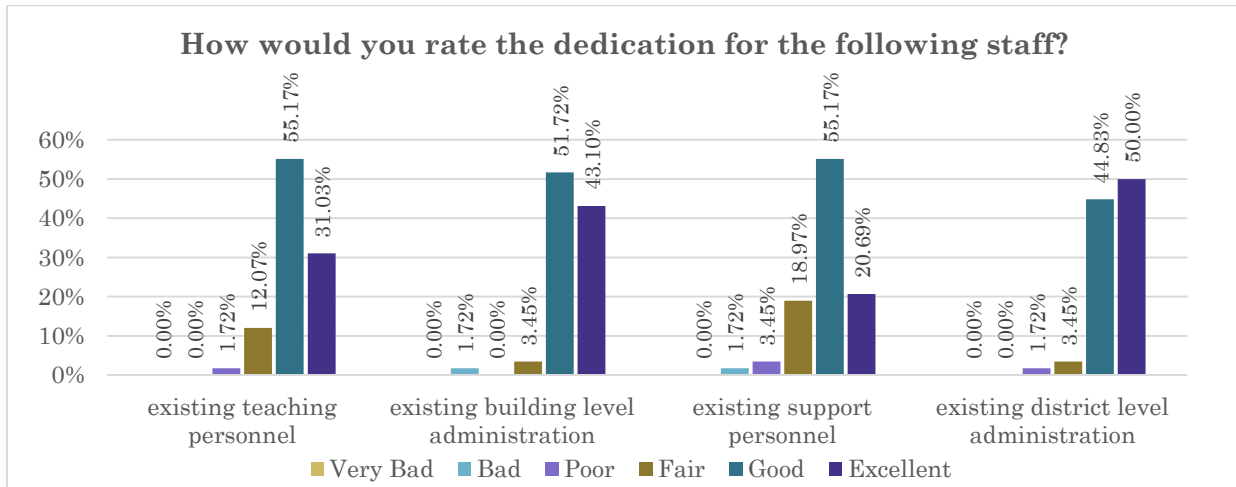


Figure 20: Staff Dedication

Table 52: Staff Dedication

LEVEL OF STAFF DEDICATION				
Statistic	the level of dedication of existing teaching personnel	the level of dedication of existing building level administration	the level of dedication of existing support personnel	the level of dedication of existing district level administration
Range	3-6	2-6	2-6	3-6
Mean	5.16	5.34	4.90	5.43
Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.50
Variance	0.48	0.51	0.69	0.42
S.D.	0.70	0.71	0.83	0.65
N	58	58	58	58

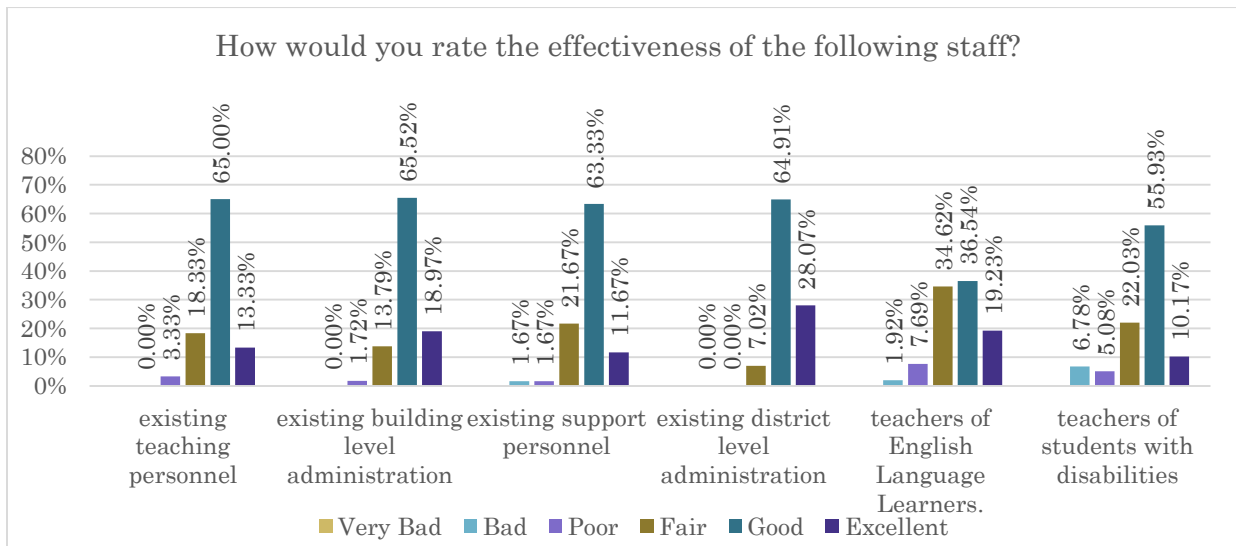


Figure 21: Staff Effectiveness

Table 53: Staff Effectiveness

STAFF EFFECTIVENESS						
Statistic	existing teaching personnel	existing building level administration	existing support personnel	existing district level administration	Teachers of Eng. Language Learners.	teachers of students with disabilities
Range	3-6	3-6	2-6	4-6	2-6	2-6
Mean	4.88	5.02	4.82	5.21	4.63	4.58
Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Variance	0.44	0.40	0.53	0.31	0.90	0.97
S.D.	0.67	0.63	0.72	0.56	0.95	0.99
N	60	58	60	57	52	59

Mandates and Policy

Questions about policy covered a range of areas and focused on the ability to implement new policy and the benefits derived by the school district. For example, the superintendents reported that they have too few resources to implement state mandates. They also report insufficient time to carry out new mandates and that multiple and layered mandates are having an adverse effect on their school districts. The superintendents are overwhelmingly dissatisfied with the amount of time devoted to mandatory testing and the number of student academic contact hours. Most report that they do not get test data back in time to use for district planning or school level planning. The charter school law is viewed unfavorably by most of the group (78%) and they indicate (48%) it is having a negative effect on their school district’s financial health. However, they have a positive view of the inter-district choice policy. With regard to SB191, 63% are not satisfied with the teacher and principal evaluation law and are split (52% to 48%) on whether the law is having a negative or positive impact on the school district.

Table 54: Testing Satisfaction

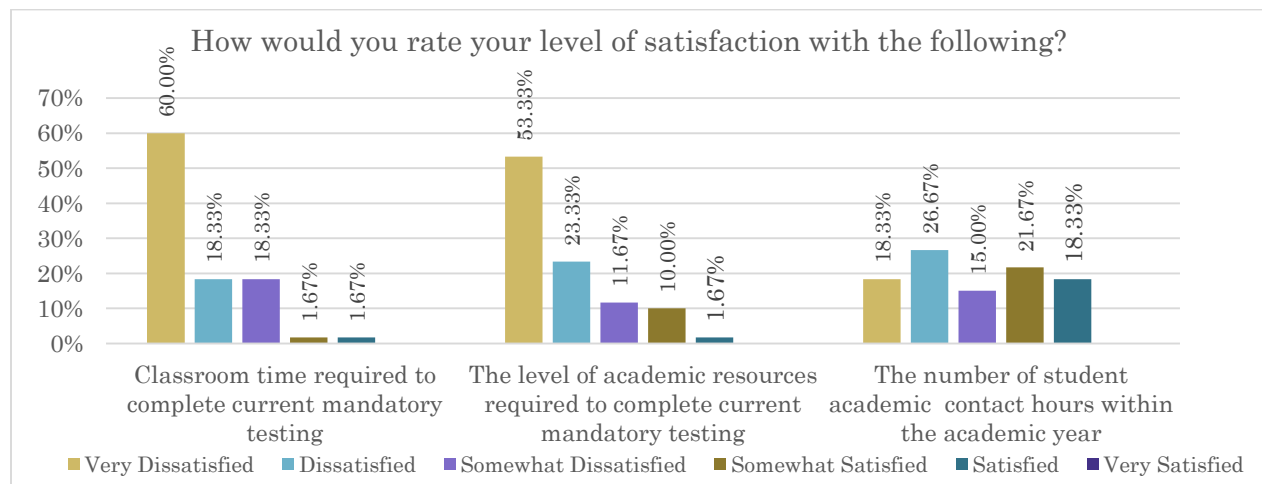


Figure 22: Testing Satisfaction

Table 55: Testing Satisfaction

TESTING SATISFACTION			
Statistic	Classroom time required to complete current mandatory testing	The level of academic resources required to complete current mandatory testing	The number of student academic contact hours within the academic year
Range	1-5	1-5	1-5
Mean	1.67	1.83	2.95
Median	1.00	1.00	3.00
Variance	0.90	1.19	1.98
S.D.	0.95	1.09	1.41
N	60	60	60

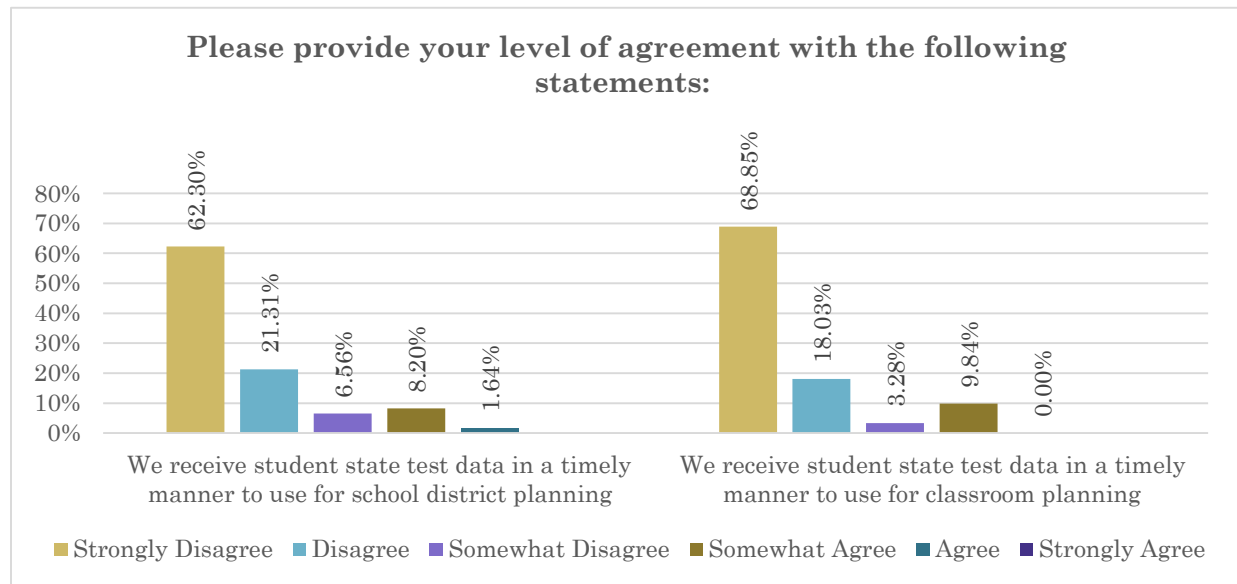


Figure 23: Use of Testing Data

Table 56: State Assessment Data

STATE ASSESSMENT DATA		
Statistic	We receive student state test data in a timely manner to use for school district planning	We receive student state test data in a timely manner to use for classroom planning
Range	12-16	12-15
Mean	12.66	12.54
Median	12.00	12.00
Variance	1.06	0.92
S.D.	1.03	0.96
N	61	61

Table 57: Charter School Law

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH CURRENT STATE CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS?		
	N	%
Very Dissatisfied	17	28%
Dissatisfied	12	20%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	18	30%
Somewhat Satisfied	11	18%
Satisfied	2	3%
Very Satisfied	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 58: Charter School Finance

HOW DO YOU SEE CURRENT CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS IMPACTING LOCAL DISTRICT FINANCE?		
	N	%
None	12	20%
Very Little	3	5%
Some	16	27%
A Lot	20	34%
To a Large Extent	4	7%
To a Very Large Extent	4	7%
Total	59	100%

Table 59: Inter-district Choice

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH CURRENT INTER-DISTRICT CHOICE POLICY?		
	N	%
Very Dissatisfied	2	3%
Dissatisfied	2	3%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	6	10%
Somewhat Satisfied	14	24%
Satisfied	32	55%
Very Satisfied	2	3%
Total	58	100%

Table 60: SB-191

PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH SB-191 REQUIREMENTS:		
	N	%
Very Dissatisfied	13	21%
Dissatisfied	13	21%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	13	21%
Somewhat Satisfied	17	28%
Satisfied	5	8%
Very Satisfied	0	0%
Total	61	100%

Table 61: SB-191 Implementation

OVERALL DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SB-191 IS HAVING A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON YOUR DISTRICT?		
	N	%
The impact is very negative	5	8%
The impact is negative	13	22%
The impact is moderately negative	11	18%
The impact is moderately positive	26	43%
The impact is positive	4	7%
The impact is very positive	1	2%
Total	60	100%

Table 62: Common Core

COLORADO SHOULD PULL BACK FROM COMMON CORE (PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT):		
	N	%
Strongly Disagree	16	26%
Disagree	12	19%
Somewhat Disagree	10	16%
Somewhat Agree	14	23%
Agree	7	11%
Strongly Agree	3	5%
Total	62	100%

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Superintendents in this study included over 300 comments to open ended questions about their concerns for the future of Colorado public education and reasons to celebrate Colorado public education. The condition of public school education in Colorado is a concern for superintendents and they see TABOR, measures of student learning for teacher assessment, and attracting and retaining high quality personnel as among the many challenges they face. With regard to the strength of Colorado public schools, perhaps one superintendent said it best, “It is equal access and a promise for the future. Our schools are safe, productive learning environments where children thrive.”