Annual Board Development Tool

Waunakee Community School District

February 2026 Report

Contents

Annual Board Development Tool Overview

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards and School Perceptions jointly developed the Annual Board Development Tool (ABDT). This tool identifies the core skills school boards need to be effective and ensure that all students achieve at high levels.

ABDT Objectives:

✓ Expose board members to a comprehensive array of school board responsibilities based on the research reviewed by WASB.
✓ Identify areas where the board is aligned and where further dialogue and discussion are needed.
✓ Identify areas where board members expressed an interest in receiving additional information and/or training.

Format:

Items in the ABDT are organized into nine indexes, each of which corresponds to a survey page.

Data-Driven Decision-Making	Board Operations	Culture
Planning	Budgeting	District Operations
Community Engagement	Policy	Vision

Response Scale:

- **Fully Achieved**: This is an area of strength that could serve as a model for others.
- **Mostly Achieved**: Performance is acceptable, but future improvements should be considered.
- **Partially Achieved**: Performance needs improvement this year.
- **Not Achieved or Started**: Our performance needs improvement.
- **Not Sure**: This is an area where I have neither observed nor have knowledge.

Scores for each item are calculated based on the following weighting:

Fully achieved (4), Mostly achieved (3), Partially achieved (2), Not achieved or started (1)

Target Scores & Previous Scores:

Each item and index in this report includes *your current score* and a *target score*. The target score is the average of the top quartile. The top 25 percent represents high performers but filters out the median and low performers. Using the average of this group provides a stable benchmark while smoothing extreme cases. It also balances aspiration with feasibility. This approach is supported by the National Institute of Standards and Technology for areas such as education, healthcare, and organizational management. For information about target scores, please contact research@schoolperceptions.com. When available, this report will also present your board's most recent previous score and the difference between your current score and previous score.

Target & Previous Score: Index Analysis

Each page of the survey corresponds to an index. The data below shows your score, a target (or target) score for effective governance, and the difference. The data is sorted by the difference between your current score and the target score.
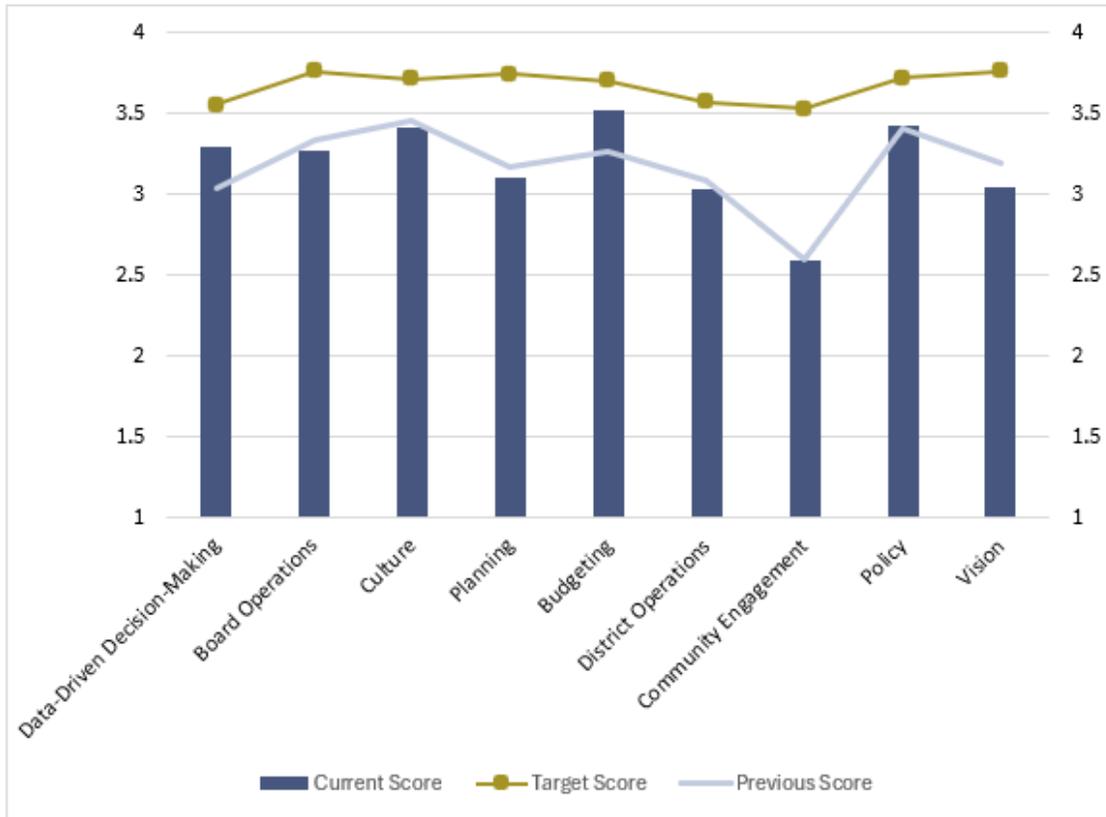
Index	Current Score	Target Score	Difference (Current to Target)	Previous Score	Difference (Current to Previous)
Data-Driven Decision-Making	3.29	3.55	-0.26	3.04	0.25
Board Operations	3.27	3.76	-0.49	3.33	-0.06
Culture	3.41	3.71	-0.30	3.45	-0.04
Planning	3.10	3.74	-0.64	3.17	-0.07
Budgeting	3.52	3.70	-0.18	3.26	0.26
District Operations	3.03	3.57	-0.54	3.08	-0.05
Community Engagement	2.59	3.53	-0.94	2.60	-0.01
Policy	3.42	3.72	-0.30	3.40	0.02
Vision	3.04	3.76	-0.72	3.19	-0.15

Target Score: Item Analysis

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
We benchmark test results against districts with similar demographics and prior performance over previous years.	3.67	3.62	0.05
We examine data to help district leaders identify groups of students in need of additional support.	3.33	3.48	-0.15
Our curriculum development process ensures culturally relevant learning experiences for our students.	3.25	3.45	-0.20
We manage by facts and our decisions are data-driven.	3.17	3.48	-0.31
We have a schedule and protocol to review data and program performance.	3.33	3.65	-0.32
We have a process to ensure all students can participate in advanced coursework, the arts, and extracurricular programs.	3.00	3.64	-0.64

Comments:

We are doing a good job of making data driven decisions. We need to continue to work on how best to monitor achievement of all of our students to ensure they have the opportunity to achieve at their highest.

I want to commend our curriculum team for their exceptional work in leveraging data-driven decision-making. The way they present current past years trends and insights really equips us to make informed choices that truly support student outcomes. Their thoughtful analysis helps us understand where weve been and where we need to go, making our strategic conversations more impactful and ensuring were always focused on whats best for our students.

Board Operations

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
We encourage constructive and professional discussions at board meetings.	3.67	3.86	-0.19
We have an effective orientation process for new board members.	3.20	3.50	-0.30
Our board committees are used effectively.	3.33	3.64	-0.31
The members of the board come to meetings prepared to address the noticed agenda.	3.33	3.71	-0.38
Board members speak on behalf of the board/district only when authorized and clearly identify when they are commenting strictly as an individual.	3.33	3.73	-0.40
We have a good understanding of the Open Meetings Law and know how to navigate open sessions, closed sessions and special situations such as hearings.	3.33	3.77	-0.44
We honor our decisions outside of the board meetings (e.g., not undermining majority decisions with which some disagreed).	3.33	3.79	-0.46
I prepare for board meetings by reading the board packet and asking the administration to clarify issues prior to meetings.	3.33	3.86	-0.53
We conduct an annual school board self-evaluation.	3.33	3.95	-0.62
Our board meetings are effective and efficient.	3.00	3.64	-0.64
We evaluate the superintendent at least annually, against clear goals and with performance criteria that include measures of student achievement.	2.83	3.94	-1.11

Comments:

Our board has developed into a cohesive, respectful, and collaborative group. Our newest board members add an important voice and perspective to our meetings. While our meetins are effective and usually efficient, we are still developing in putting more emphasis on student outcomes.

As a board, we should develop key performance indicators to assess our own operations and effectiveness, not just the districts. This will help us measure how we contribute to the districts progress. Additionally, we need clearer guidelines on when and how board members

speak publicly. While we have a strong team, we must ensure communication is both intentional and aligned. In fact, we should increase our public communication through platforms like social media. By expanding our outreach, we can better engage with the community, clarify our role, and provide meaningful information that supports the district.

Culture

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
Our board models mutual respect and professional behavior.	3.67	3.86	-0.19
We value differences of opinion and do not let them degenerate into personality conflicts.	3.67	3.86	-0.19
We work with the superintendent in a spirit of mutual respect, open communication, trust and confidence.	3.67	3.87	-0.20
Our culture promotes high expectations.	3.33	3.70	-0.37
We recognize students, teachers and schools for outstanding performance.	3.33	3.70	-0.37
Our community believes the district is effectively governed and makes decisions with the best interest of students in mind.	3.00	3.39	-0.39
We focus on strategic decisions and policy issues rather than on the administrative implementation of policy and other day-to-day management/operational issues.	3.17	3.58	-0.41

Comments:

We as a BOE, work well together, respect the diverse opiniions of each other, and work well with Dr. Brown. We do a great job of celebrating or students and staff, but can still do a better of job of celebrating our staff at our monthly meetings.

First, we have a strong culture of decorum and professionalism, even when we disagree, and thats commendable. Second, we should raise the bar for ourselves, ensuring we make meaningful progress in our own decision-making. Lastly, while we do well recognizing students and schools, we need to ensure teachers are equally celebrated. Additionally, we must find ways to more actively engage the community in our work moving forward.

Planning

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
We have a process to annually review the district's facility/maintenance needs.	3.83	3.89	-0.06
We have sound risk-management practices in place that include a regular review of insurance options.	3.17	3.80	-0.63
We have a process to annually review the district's non-instructional support services and operations (e.g., transportation, food service, maintenance, business services, etc.).	3.00	3.76	-0.76
We have explored sharing services with other districts and/or our local municipalities.	2.40	3.52	-1.12

Comments:

We need to broaden our approach to risk management. Beyond reviewing insurance options, we should evaluate when to engage outside auditors or legal firms, beyond our retained counsel, particularly during investigations or complaints. In addition, we need a clearer process for board visibility on non-instructional support services, such as transportation and food services. In doing so, we should push for more frequent requests for proposals to outside vendors, ensuring we continuously secure the best services for our community. This should not be viewed as a threat to current partners, but rather as motivation for everyone to continually add value to the district.

Budgeting

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
Our budget process includes determining if and when referenda are needed.	4.00	3.95	0.05
We make staffing and budget decisions based on student achievement priorities.	3.50	3.57	-0.07
I understand the basic principles of school finance, including state, federal and local sources of income and the school district budgeting cycle.	3.33	3.59	-0.26
Our community believes the district is a responsible steward of its financial resources.	3.17	3.46	-0.29
We evaluate the district's financial statements on a monthly basis.	3.60	3.92	-0.32

Comments:

The administration has done an excellent job informing board members about the budgetary process and is truly a leader in the state from what Ive observed. That said, I believe we have a significant opportunity to assist our community in understanding how we steward financial resources responsibly. By enhancing communication and transparency on this front, we can help build even greater trust and confidence in our fiscal responsibility.

District Operations

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
We have a process to gather feedback from teachers and other staff to update our employee handbook and personnel policies.	3.33	3.60	-0.27
Staff authority and responsibility is well defined and granted at the appropriate level.	3.20	3.64	-0.44
We regularly communicate our academic priorities and achievement results to the parents and the public.	3.17	3.65	-0.48
We have initiatives in place to facilitate leadership succession in key administrative positions.	2.40	3.39	-0.99

Comments:

No comments.

Community Engagement

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
Our board is represented at district and community events when possible.	3.00	3.55	-0.55
We regularly communicate our financial needs to the public in an easy to understand format.	2.83	3.43	-0.60
We regularly communicate with our legislators on a particular subject or bill.	2.60	3.23	-0.63
Our board is addressing the needs of all students to ensure high levels of learning.	2.67	3.59	-0.92
Our board is addressing students' interests through extracurricular programming and other activities.	2.83	3.77	-0.94
We have partnerships with businesses, service and community organizations, and local government officials.	2.67	3.64	-0.97
We invite legislators to our schools for tours and discussions of important education issues.	2.50	3.55	-1.05
We have a legislative advocacy process to monitor issues and communicate our position to our legislators and the WASB.	2.50	3.62	-1.12
We ensure our standards are consistent with parent and community expectations.	2.25	3.40	-1.15
We regularly discuss legislative issues during board meetings.	2.00	3.54	-1.54

Comments:

We need to revisit community engagement to refocus and alignm our vision, mission, and goals with our communities. It has been a long time since we last utilized community engagement in forming our v, m, and g. We need to be more formally and regularly connected with our legislators, not just in the budget years. I'd like to encourage a legislative update at our BOE meetings and begin planning for an annual day with our our legislators and community leaders, in January or February or September/October. Stoughton does a phenomenal job of this.

We have a broader opportunity to foster a truly robust engagement model. We should develop a multidisciplinary approach that actively seeks input from a wide array of stakeholders: parents, community members, business owners, teachers, and staff. By creating multiple avenues, whether town halls, advisory panels, or forums, we can ensure diverse perspectives are heard rather than having a sense that the district is simply informing. Importantly, this engagement is critical for major matters like high school facility planning,

upcoming referenda, and the future of 4K within our district. By grounding our decisions in broad-based, community-supported input, well ensure they reflect genuine public intent and deepen trust in our process.

Policy

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
We are successful at attracting and retaining high-quality employees.	3.67	3.50	0.17
We have appropriate interventions and consequences for all staff and schools that do not meet expectations.	3.50	3.52	-0.02
We regularly receive updates on the district's targeted programming (e.g., curriculum, at-risk and alternative education, special education, gifted and talented education, etc.)	3.67	3.76	-0.09
We have an ongoing process to review and update board policies.	3.83	3.96	-0.13
We have clear policies that promote safe schools and positive learning environments.	3.50	3.85	-0.35
We regularly review our policies to ensure there are no barriers to equitable education for all students.	3.17	3.71	-0.54
We have a well-defined and well-communicated school safety and crisis response plan.	3.17	3.88	-0.71
We have effective public input and complaint resolution processes.	2.83	3.60	-0.77

Comments:

I don't feel we have a strong public input or complaint resolution process currently, and if one exists, it hasnt been clearly communicated to the board. We have an opportunity to establish or refine that process and ensure we, as a board, are informed. Additionally, while we do have a school safety and crisis response plan, we should treat it as an ongoing area of improvement. The board should have greater oversight, ensuring its regularly updated, well-communicated, practiced, and adapted to evolving needs and expectations.

Vision

Item	Current Score	Target Score	Difference
Our vision and top priority is student achievement.	3.50	3.88	-0.38
We have established clear strategies to accomplish our vision.	3.17	3.70	-0.53
We clearly communicate our vision to our staff, parents and community.	3.17	3.82	-0.65
We have a process that allows key stakeholders (administrators, staff, parents and the community) to help create/refine our vision and strategic priorities.	2.33	3.63	-1.30

Comments:

I don't feel we currently have an effective process to engage key stakeholders in creating or refining the districts vision and strategic priorities. This represents an important area of opportunity and is part of a larger need to improve transparency and engagement. Establishing a clear, structured approach for gathering and incorporating input from administrators, staff, parents, and the broader community would help ensure alignment and strengthen confidence in our strategic direction.

Previous Score: Item Analysis

This section shows your current score, your previous score, and the difference sorted by survey index. Each section is sorted by the difference.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
We have a schedule and protocol to review data and program performance.	3.33	2.43	0.90
Our curriculum development process ensures culturally relevant learning experiences for our students.	3.25	2.71	0.54
We manage by facts and our decisions are data-driven.	3.17	2.75	0.42
We benchmark test results against districts with similar demographics and prior performance over previous years.	3.67	3.50	0.17
We examine data to help district leaders identify groups of students in need of additional support.	3.33	3.50	-0.17
We have a process to ensure all students can participate in advanced coursework, the arts, and extracurricular programs.	3.00	3.38	-0.38

Board Operations

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
We encourage constructive and professional discussions at board meetings.	3.67	3.13	0.54
We have an effective orientation process for new board members.	3.20	2.71	0.49
The members of the board come to meetings prepared to address the noticed agenda.	3.33	3.13	0.20
Board members speak on behalf of the board/district only when authorized and clearly identify when they are commenting strictly as an individual.	3.33	3.17	0.16
I prepare for board meetings by reading the board packet and asking the administration to clarify issues prior to meetings.	3.33	3.25	0.08
We honor our decisions outside of the board meetings (e.g., not undermining majority decisions with which some disagreed).	3.33	3.38	-0.05
Our board committees are used effectively.	3.33	3.38	-0.05
Our board meetings are effective and efficient.	3.00	3.38	-0.38
We evaluate the superintendent at least annually, against clear goals and with performance criteria that include measures of student achievement.	2.83	3.25	-0.42
We have a good understanding of the Open Meetings Law and know how to navigate open sessions, closed sessions and special situations such as hearings.	3.33	3.86	-0.53
We conduct an annual school board self-evaluation.	3.33	4.00	-0.67

Culture

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
Our culture promotes high expectations.	3.33	3.13	0.20
We focus on strategic decisions and policy issues rather than on the administrative implementation of policy and other day-to-day management/operational issues.	3.17	3.13	0.04
We recognize students, teachers and schools for outstanding performance.	3.33	3.38	-0.05
Our board models mutual respect and professional behavior.	3.67	3.75	-0.08
We value differences of opinion and do not let them degenerate into personality conflicts.	3.67	3.75	-0.08
We work with the superintendent in a spirit of mutual respect, open communication, trust and confidence.	3.67	3.75	-0.08
Our community believes the district is effectively governed and makes decisions with the best interest of students in mind.	3.00	3.29	-0.29

Planning

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
We have a process to annually review the district's facility/maintenance needs.	3.83	3.63	0.20
We have a process to annually review the district's non-instructional support services and operations (e.g., transportation, food service, maintenance, business services, etc.).	3.00	3.00	0.00
We have explored sharing services with other districts and/or our local municipalities.	2.40	2.57	-0.17
We have sound risk-management practices in place that include a regular review of insurance options.	3.17	3.50	-0.33

Budgeting

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
We make staffing and budget decisions based on student achievement priorities.	3.50	3.00	0.50
I understand the basic principles of school finance, including state, federal and local sources of income and the school district budgeting cycle.	3.33	2.88	0.45
We evaluate the district's financial statements on a monthly basis.	3.60	3.17	0.43
Our budget process includes determining if and when referenda are needed.	4.00	3.88	0.12
Our community believes the district is a responsible steward of its financial resources.	3.17	3.38	-0.21

District Operations

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
We have initiatives in place to facilitate leadership succession in key administrative positions.	2.40	2.29	0.11
We regularly communicate our academic priorities and achievement results to the parents and the public.	3.17	3.13	0.04
Staff authority and responsibility is well defined and granted at the appropriate level.	3.20	3.29	-0.09
We have a process to gather feedback from teachers and other staff to update our employee handbook and personnel policies.	3.33	3.63	-0.30

Community Engagement

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
We regularly communicate with our legislators on a particular subject or bill.	2.60	2.14	0.46
We invite legislators to our schools for tours and discussions of important education issues.	2.50	2.17	0.33
Our board is represented at district and community events when possible.	3.00	2.71	0.29
We have a legislative advocacy process to monitor issues and communicate our position to our legislators and the WASB.	2.50	2.25	0.25
We regularly discuss legislative issues during board meetings.	2.00	1.88	0.12
We regularly communicate our financial needs to the public in an easy to understand format.	2.83	2.75	0.08
We have partnerships with businesses, service and community organizations, and local government officials.	2.67	2.88	-0.21
Our board is addressing the needs of all students to ensure high levels of learning.	2.67	3.00	-0.33
Our board is addressing students' interests through extracurricular programming and other activities.	2.83	3.38	-0.55
We ensure our standards are consistent with parent and community expectations.	2.25	2.88	-0.63

Policy

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
We have appropriate interventions and consequences for all staff and schools that do not meet expectations.	3.50	2.83	0.67
We are successful at attracting and retaining high-quality employees.	3.67	3.25	0.42
We regularly receive updates on the district's targeted programming (e.g., curriculum, at-risk and alternative education, special education, gifted and talented education, etc.)	3.67	3.38	0.29
We have a well-defined and well-communicated school safety and crisis response plan.	3.17	3.13	0.04
We regularly review our policies to ensure there are no barriers to equitable education for all students.	3.17	3.25	-0.08
We have an ongoing process to review and update board policies.	3.83	4.00	-0.17
We have clear policies that promote safe schools and positive learning environments.	3.50	3.75	-0.25
We have effective public input and complaint resolution processes.	2.83	3.63	-0.80

Vision

Item	Current Score	Previous Score	Difference
We have established clear strategies to accomplish our vision.	3.17	3.13	0.04
Our vision and top priority is student achievement.	3.50	3.50	0.00
We clearly communicate our vision to our staff, parents and community.	3.17	3.38	-0.21
We have a process that allows key stakeholders (administrators, staff, parents and the community) to help create/refine our vision and strategic priorities.	2.33	2.75	-0.42

What is this table showing?

These 10 items had the least consensus among board members for each item (meaning responses to these questions varied the most among board members). This was calculated by using the standard deviation. A high standard deviation reflects lower agreement: some rated the item highly, while others rated it much lower. These items may point to areas where perspectives are most divided or where expectations are unclear.

Why is this perspective important?

Analyzing which items have the highest standard deviation helps identify areas where perspectives are most divided. These are often the issues that warrant deeper discussion, clarification, or alignment. Some board members may think the item is fully achieved, while others believe you haven't started.

Item	Spread
We have a process to annually review the district's non-instructional support services and operations (e.g., transportation, food service, maintenance, business services, etc.). *(Planning)*	Fully Achieved (2) Mostly Achieved (0) Partially Achieved (2) Not Achieved/Started (0) Not Sure (2)
I prepare for board meetings by reading the board packet and asking the administration to clarify issues prior to meetings. *(Board Operations)*	Fully Achieved (4) Mostly Achieved (0) Partially Achieved (2) Not Achieved/Started (0) Not Sure (0)
Our board is addressing students' interests through extracurricular programming and other activities. *(Community Engagement)*	Fully Achieved (1) Mostly Achieved (4) Partially Achieved (0) Not Achieved/Started (1) Not Sure (0)
We have effective public input and complaint resolution processes. *(Policy)*	Fully Achieved (2) Mostly Achieved (1) Partially Achieved (3) Not Achieved/Started (0) Not Sure (0)
Our curriculum development process ensures culturally relevant learning experiences for our students. *(Data-Driven Decision Making)*	Fully Achieved (2) Mostly Achieved (1) Partially Achieved (1) Not Achieved/Started (0) Not Sure (2)
We ensure our standards are consistent with parent and community expectations. *(Community Engagement)*	Fully Achieved (0) Mostly Achieved (2) Partially Achieved (1) Not Achieved/Started (1) Not Sure (2)

We have a process to ensure all students can participate in advanced coursework, the arts, and extracurricular programs. *(Data-Driven Decision Making)*	Fully Achieved (2) Mostly Achieved (2) Partially Achieved (2) Not Achieved/Started (0) Not Sure (0)
We have explored sharing services with other districts and/or our local municipalities. *(Planning)*	Fully Achieved (0) Mostly Achieved (3) Partially Achieved (1) Not Achieved/Started (1) Not Sure (1)
We regularly communicate with our legislators on a particular subject or bill. *(Community Engagement)*	Fully Achieved (1) Mostly Achieved (1) Partially Achieved (3) Not Achieved/Started (0) Not Sure (1)
We invite legislators to our schools for tours and discussions of important education issues. *(Community Engagement)*	Fully Achieved (1) Mostly Achieved (1) Partially Achieved (4) Not Achieved/Started (0) Not Sure (0)