Executive Summary

Objectives and Methodology: A survey of IASB members was conducted in February 2022 to assist the IASB Board of Directors and staff in strategic planning. The survey assessed member views on the quality and value of current services as well as needs for the future. The online survey was open to all board members, superintendents, board secretaries and business managers. The overall response from 450 people is a response rate of 22%, providing a strong sample across role groups and enrollment size.

A unique survey was also provided for board members newly elected or appointed in 2021. This survey sought demographic information on new board members and insights on some of the same questions in the general member survey. Responses came from 134 board members.

Key Findings

NEW BOARD MEMBER INSIGHTS: THE CLASS OF 2021

- **Occupation:** The top three occupational areas reported by new board members elected or appointed in 2021 are education and training; agriculture, food and natural resources; and healthcare.

- **Motivation for Running:** 50% of respondents indicated their motivation for running for election is "to ensure our children's schools are the best they can be." "To give back to my community" and "I have areas of expertise relevant to serving" were each selected by 15% of respondents. "To fix selected issues in the schools/district" was selected by 7% of respondents.

- **Prior Board Experience:** 65% said they had prior experience serving on a corporate, church or nonprofit board; 35% said this would be their first experience serving on a board.

- **Children in School:** 66% said they currently have children enrolled in PK-12 public school; 32% reported no children currently in PK-12 school; 2% said they currently have children enrolled in PK-12 private school.

- **Learning Needs:** Respondents selected in-person events (36%) and webinars (22%) as top preferences for ways of receiving professional development. School finance and budgeting, advocacy/legislative issues; and strengthening board-superintendent team relationships were key themes in topics or issues they would like to learn about.

RATINGS OF IASB QUALITY AND VALUE

- 92% of members rated the overall quality of IASB services as "excellent" or "good."

- Ratings of overall quality varied by position. Combined excellent+good ratings were 97% for board presidents; 94% for board vice presidents; 83% for other board members; 95% for superintendents/chief administrators; and 94% for board secretary/business managers.

- Ratings of overall quality stayed strong across enrollment categories, ranging from 89-97% excellent+good regardless of district size.

- Board policy and formal learning experiences received the highest combined excellent+good ratings for individual services, at 92% and 88.5% respectively.

- Collective bargaining/personnel resources received the lowest combined excellent+good rating at 70%, as well as the highest indication that members were unsure/did not have enough information to rate this services (17.5%).

- Members who reported interacting with an IASB staff member by phone, email or in person gave rated aspects of customer services as 95-98% excellent+good. These ratings included 95% for timeliness in response; 97% for knowledge/expertise; 97% for communication skills; and 98% for courtesy and respect.

- Members identified policy services and education/conferences/workshops as the most important benefits they receive from being a member of IASB.

- Members reported finding issue-related background information and talking points and legislative bill summaries as the most useful in helping them advocate with Iowa legislators.

- 93% of members strongly agree or agree that IASB is a strong advocate for public education.

- 92% of members strongly agree or agree that IASB education for board members is relevant and useful.

- 90% strongly agree or agree that IASB is operated with integrity and accountability.

- Lower levels of strongly agree/agree exist for other statements, including 64% agreement that IASB is run by its members and 59% agreement that respondents would welcome more contact from their regional representative on the IASB Board of Directors.

- The survey calculated Net Promoter Score (NPS), a standardized measure of customer satisfaction, by asking, "How likely are you to recommend us to a friend or colleague?" The IASB Net Promoter Score was 45, which is considered admirable for companies using this measure.

- Net Promoter Score was highest for superintendents/chief administrators and board secretary/business managers at 62 and 63 respectively, and lower for board members at 27.

Among board members, officers had higher promoter scores at 36 for board presidents and 41 for vice presidents.

- Net Promoter Score by enrollment category varied from a low of 31 for enrollment of less than 500; to a high of 65 from AEA respondents.

ENSURING SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS: PRIORITIES IN NEXT FIVE YEARS

All respondents were asked, "When you think about the mission of ensuring success for all students, which three areas do you see as priorities for your board to focus on in the next five years?"

- Recruiting or retaining quality teachers or administrators is a top priority according to 79% of all members and 89% of new board members.

- Preparing students for college and careers is another top priority, according to 42% of all members and 48% of new board members.

- Increasing community engagement/parent involvement and closing achievement gaps affecting under-served students are high priorities as well. Forty percent of all members and 27% of new board members selected closing achievement gaps; 34% of all members and 46% of new board members selected community engagement.

GREATEST CHALLENGES IN BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

Members were asked an open-end question about the greatest challenges their board faces in being effective in its governance role. Major themes from responses by role group are shown below.

Board Members (6 major themes)	New Board Members (2 major themes)
Communicating effectively with the community, families and staff. Unifying the board-superintendent team, to ensure clear communication and collaboration at the board table. Understanding governance, and the differences between the roles of the board and the superintendent. Recruiting candidates who are willing to learn and serve in the best interest of students and the district.	Effective communication with the community, staff and parents. Transparency, building trust and unity with the community during times of polarization, strongly held perspectives and hot-button issues. Building board unity: The need to onboard new board members to learn roles and responsibilities; communicating with staff and community on addressing concerns. In addition, the current climate of politically charged, divisive issues are seen as impacting board unity and trust.

Educating and onboarding new board members, helping them prepare for their governance roles. School funding resources, managing finances, and offering competitive salaries and benefits to recruit and retain quality staff.	
Superintendents/Chief Administrators (3 major themes)	Board Secretary/Business Managers (5 major themes)
Understanding governance, and the difference between the roles of the board and the roles of the superintendent. Creating a united board-superintendent team based on trust, while navigating a current climate of divisiveness and polarization. Educating and onboarding new board members, helping them prepare for their governance roles.	Effective communication among the governance team and with the community. Educating and reminding board members about their governance roles and responsibilities. Educating and onboarding new board members, helping them prepare for their governance roles. Recruiting candidates who are willing to learn and serve in the best interest of students and the district. Unifying the board-superintendent team, to ensure clear communication and collaboration at the board table and with the community.

IASB FUTURE SERVICES

Members were asked, "What service or resource should IASB consider providing to members within three years that it is not offering today?" Answers were provided by 166 respondents.

- Twenty-five responses included feedback on IASB learning opportunities, with 10 suggestions for more regional offerings.

- Twenty-two responses mentioned student learning as a high need area, with emphasis on preparing students for the future and mental health.

- Nineteen responses focused on advocacy and legislative resources, with more than half of the responses specifically tied to lobbying efforts.

Additional details and data are provided in the complete report.