



Governance Committee
Monday, March 2, 2026

EC-340D & Virtual Meeting

AGENDA: 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Review of Committee Workplan
5. [Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation - Results](#)
6. Adjournment

BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.



GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, March 2, 2026

Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation – Survey Results

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Heather Miller, Officer of Trustee Services

Sally Landon, Manager, Research & Analytics

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation Survey Results report be received.

Background:

Trustees have been participating in annual Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation surveys since 2023, which ask them to reflect on what they know (i.e. the traditional roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees), but also inspire them to think about how they could evolve practices to reflect the pillars of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Status:

The Board's self-evaluation highlights relationship health, cohesion, role clarity, and meeting culture as the most pressing areas requiring improvement. Trustees also emphasized the need for skills-based professional learning focusing on conflict resolution and communication, and reiterated the importance of governance clarity and community engagement. These findings directly support several focused learning topics for the incoming Board of Trustees orientation, ensuring they start their term with the foundational knowledge and skills needed to strengthen Board capacity and effectiveness.

The survey results can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications known at this time.

Strategic Directions:

Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

Providing Equitable Quality Education

We will offer equitable quality educational opportunities to improve student engagement, learning and achievement for future-readiness.

Collaborating with Students, Families & Communities

We will build reciprocal relationships and partnerships to enhance access and engagement for students, families, and communities.

Building a Sustainable Education System

We will adapt to a rapidly changing world through responsible fiscal management, investing equitably in accessible and sustainable facilities, and supporting a robust workforce.

Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation

We will honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by cultivating intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system.

Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation, 2025-2026

Between January 19 and February 6, 2026, Trustees were provided an opportunity to engage in the third self-evaluation of Board of Trustee progress. Participation was voluntary and Trustees could skip questions they preferred not to answer.

The purpose of this yearly self-evaluation is to assess strengths and areas for improvement. A maturity model is used for this activity to show change over time along a continuum. It is designed to foster growth by asking where the Board of Trustees is at on this journey and where they need to go. Some questions were aspirational when asked during 2023-2024, meaning there was no expectation this work had begun, but that this is now part of the ongoing work of the Board of Trustees.

Scale:

1. PRE-IMPLEMENTATION:	we have nothing in place to address this, we may need to know more, we may be gathering information, we may be planning
2. EARLY IMPLEMENTATION:	this happens ad hoc, we're still learning
3. BUILDING CAPACITY:	this happens but not always consistently, we are learning more, practicing, supporting, shifting practice
4. SUSTAINING CAPACITY:	we are where we need to be. Practice/knowledge is consistent and ongoing

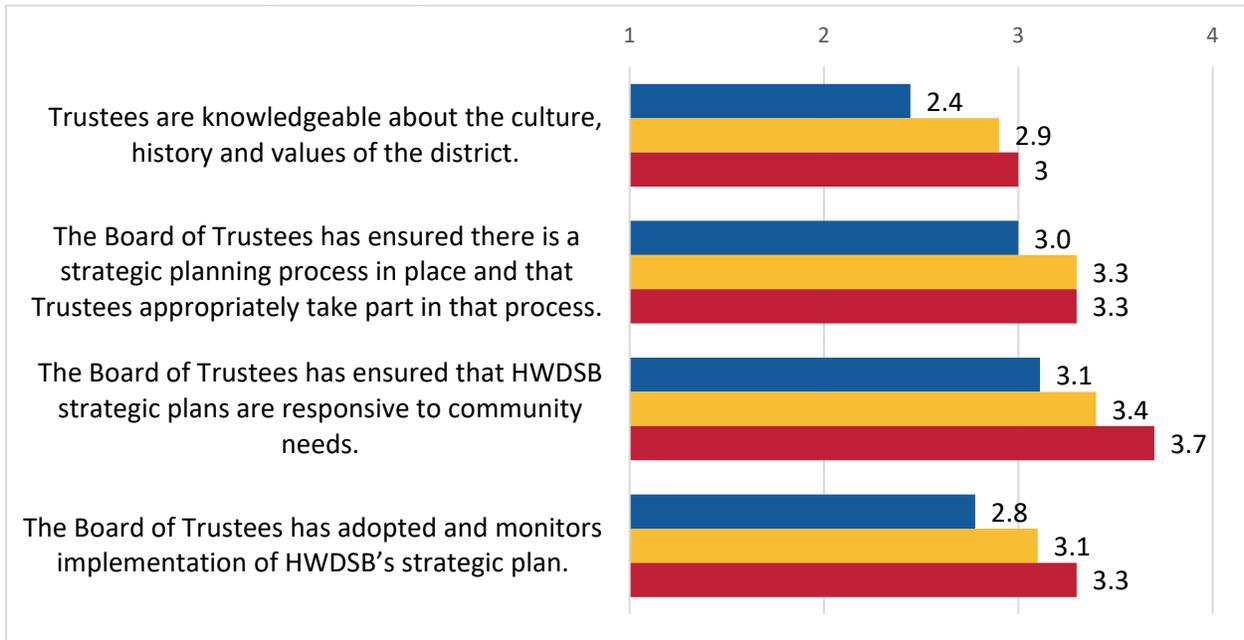
Of HWDSB's 11 Trustees, 3 participated this year. Their responses, using the scale above, are summarized below alongside the findings from 2024-2025 and 2023-2024 during which 7 and 10 Trustees participated, respectively. The average response is indicated at the end of each bar. It is that number we look at to assess progress toward a maximum of 4.

Note: Participation Rate

Year	#	Rate
2023-2025	10	91%
2024-2025	7	70%
2025-2026	3	27%

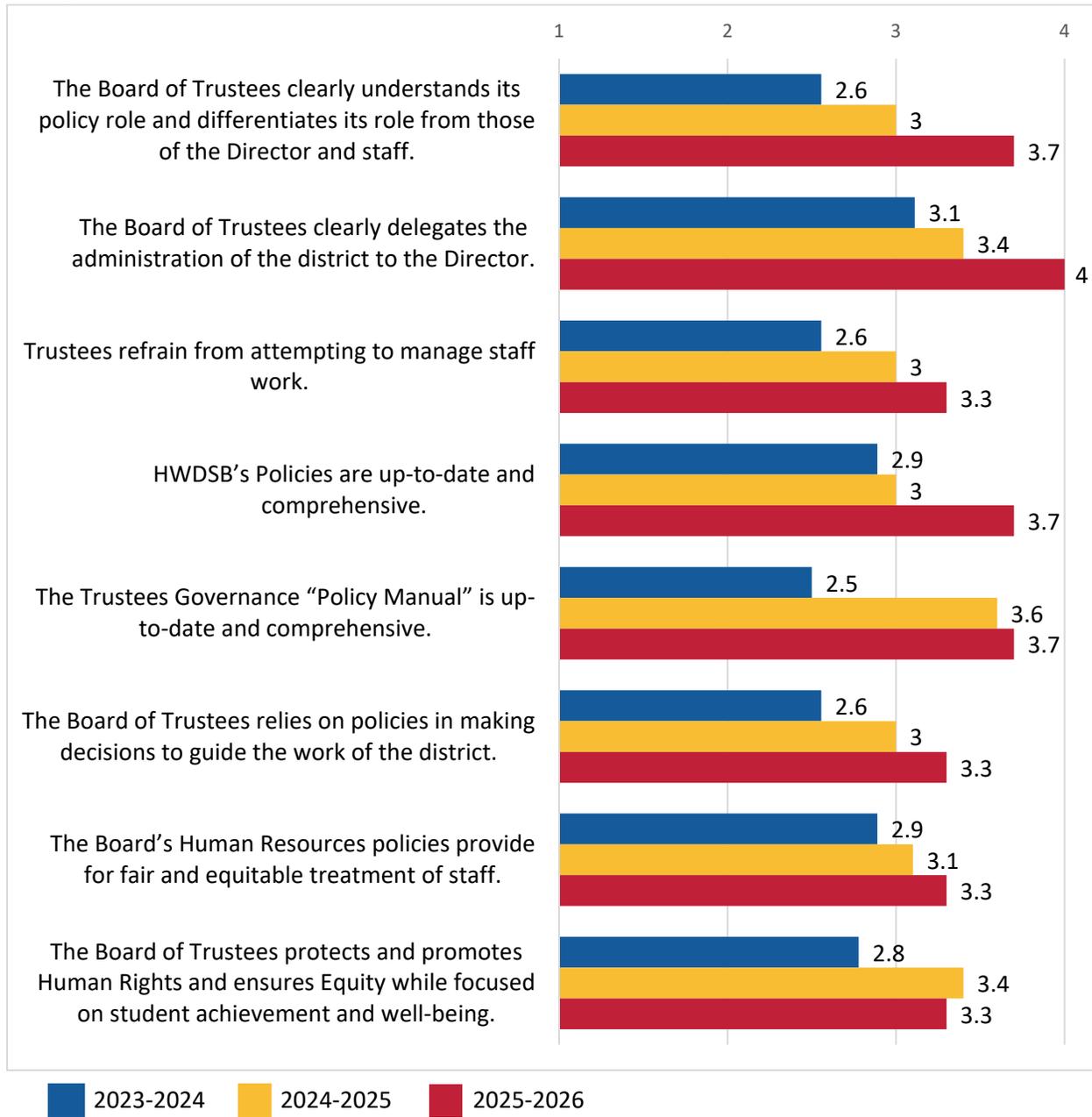
A word of caution is warranted when interpreting these results due to the low participation rate. Red was used to demarcate the 2025-2026 bars in the charts below as a visual cue. These results cannot be generalized to the entire Board of Trustees.

Mission and Strategic Planning

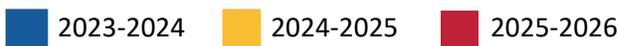
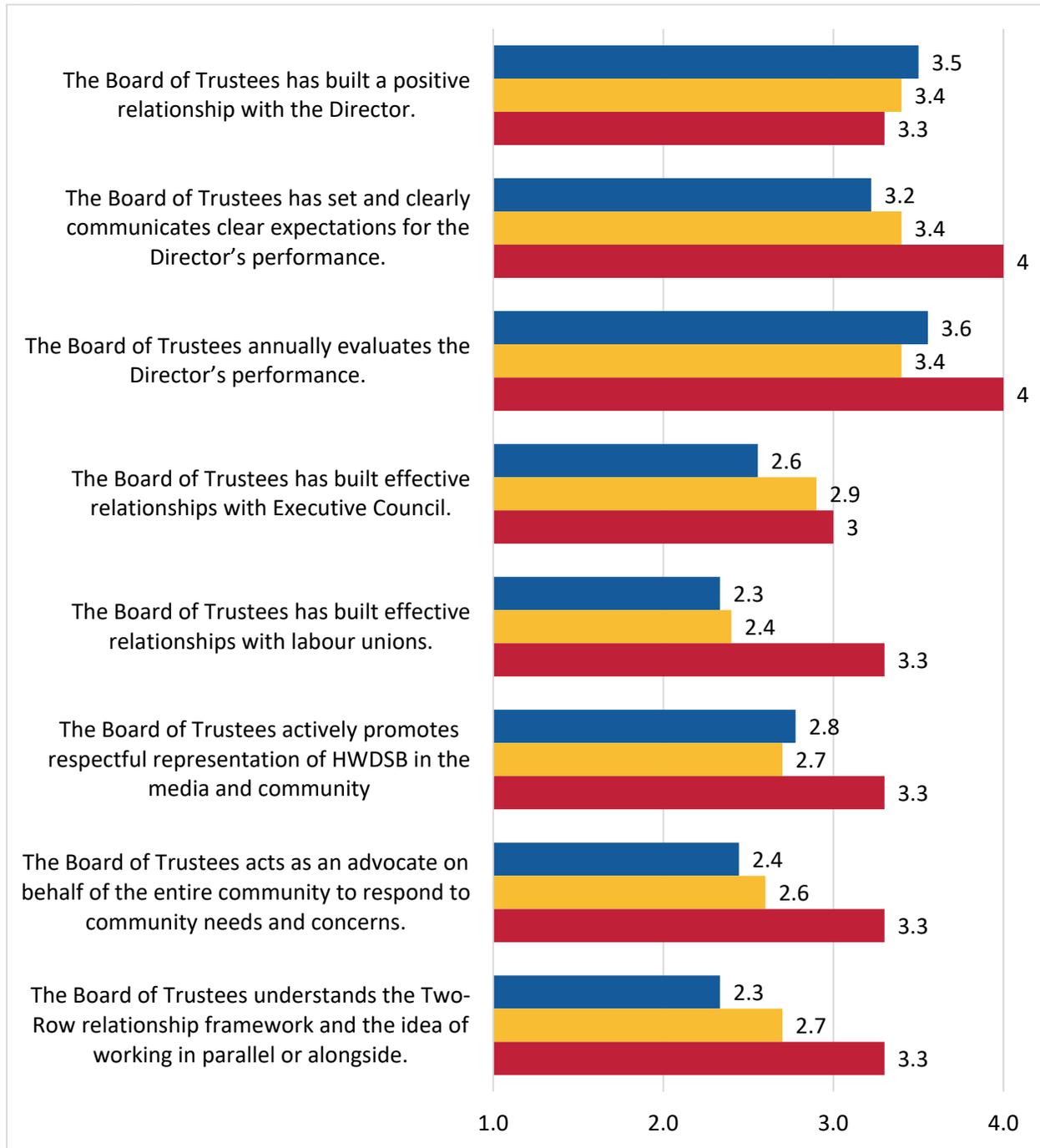


■ 2023-2024
 ■ 2024-2025
 ■ 2025-2026

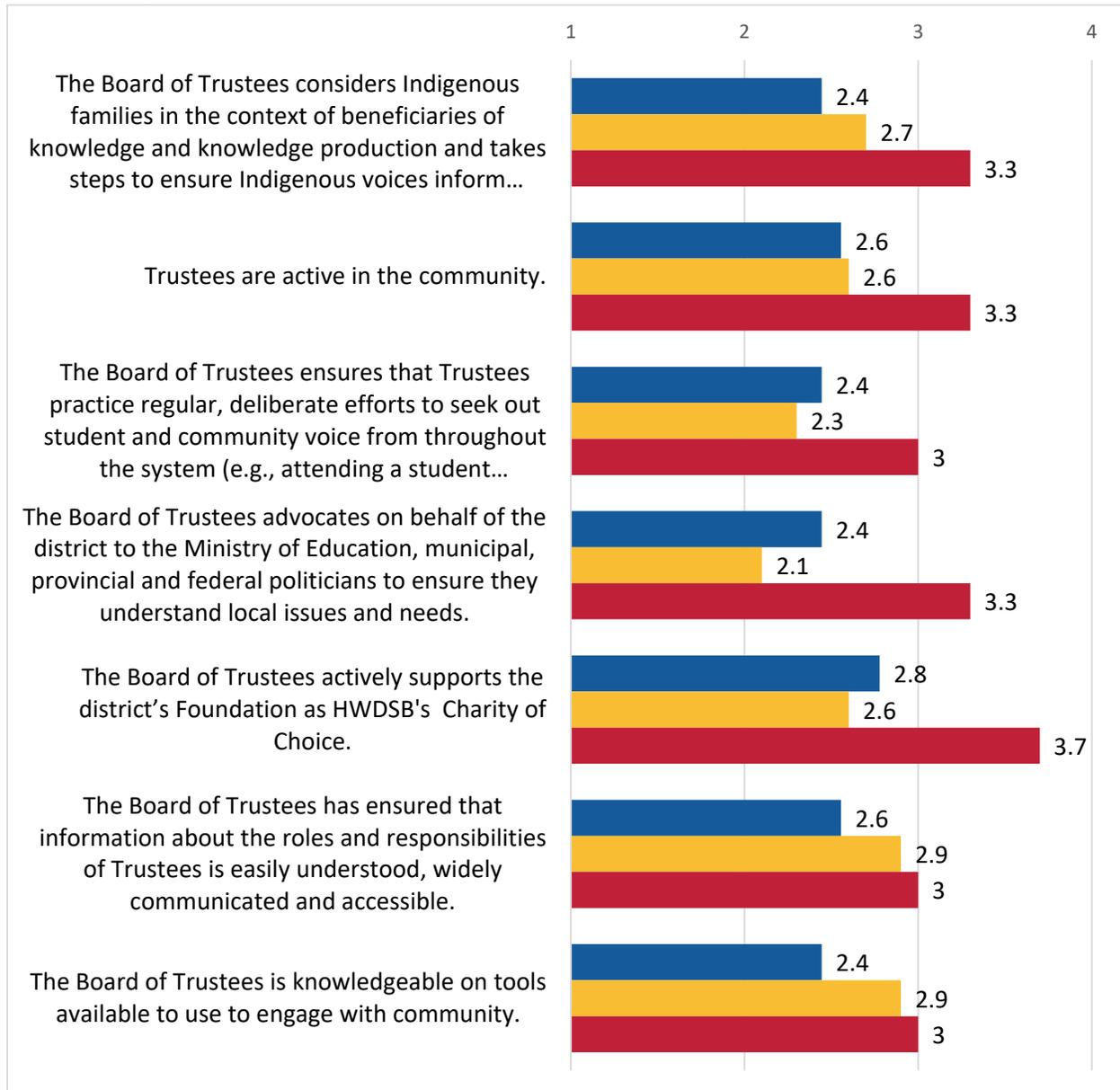
Policy and Governance Role



Relationships

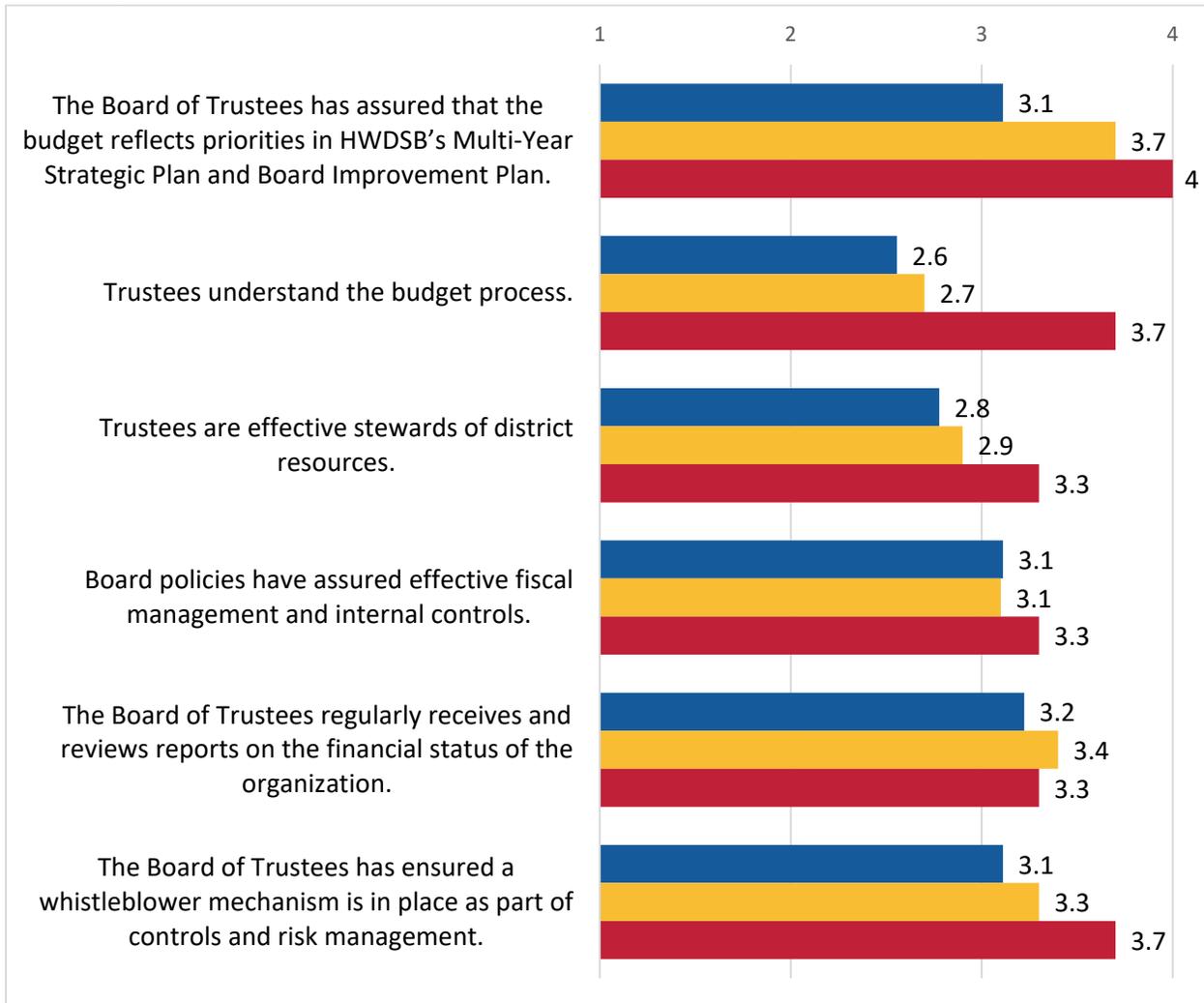


Relationships, cont'd.



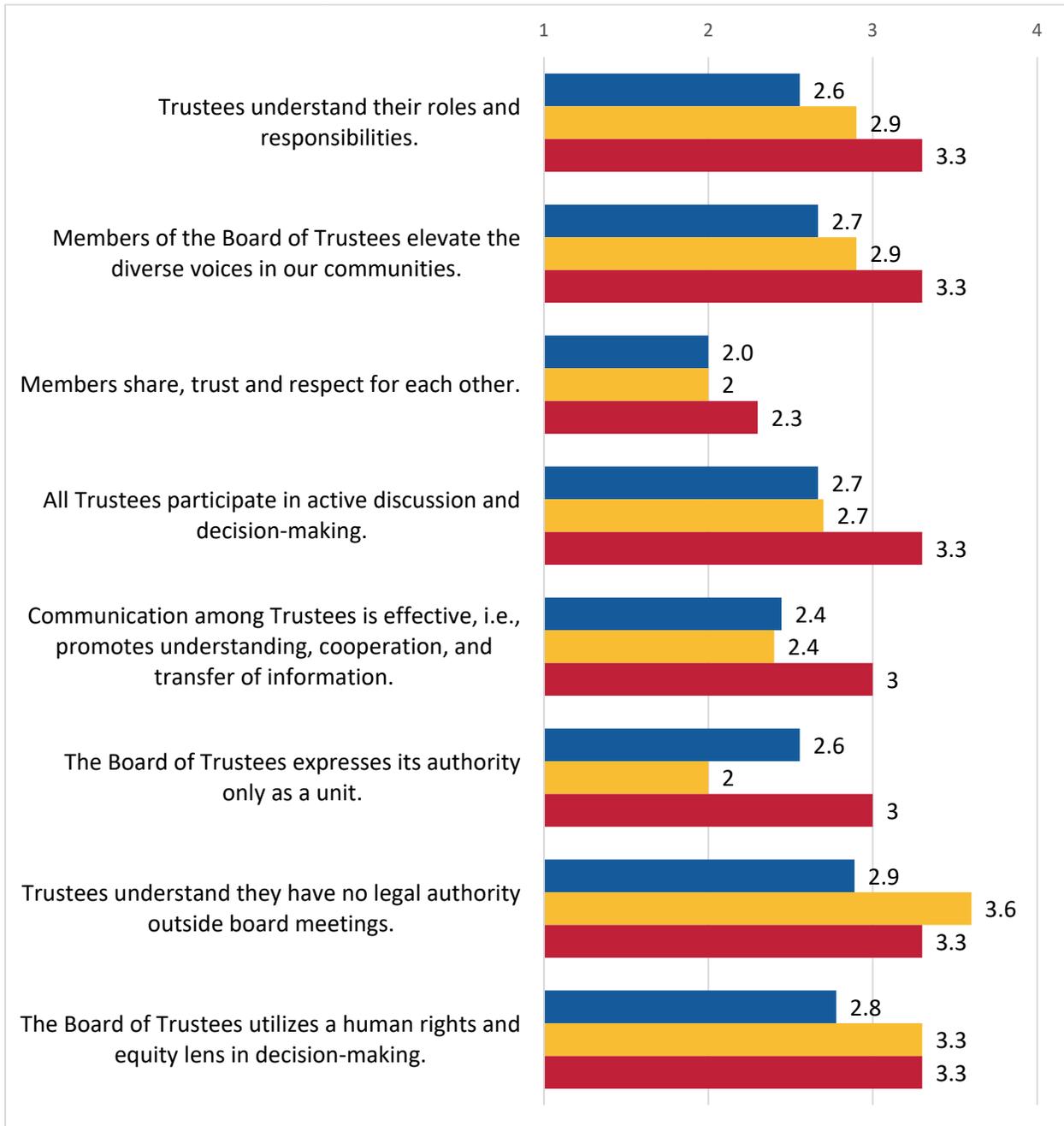
■ 2023-2024
 ■ 2024-2025
 ■ 2025-2026

Fiduciary Role



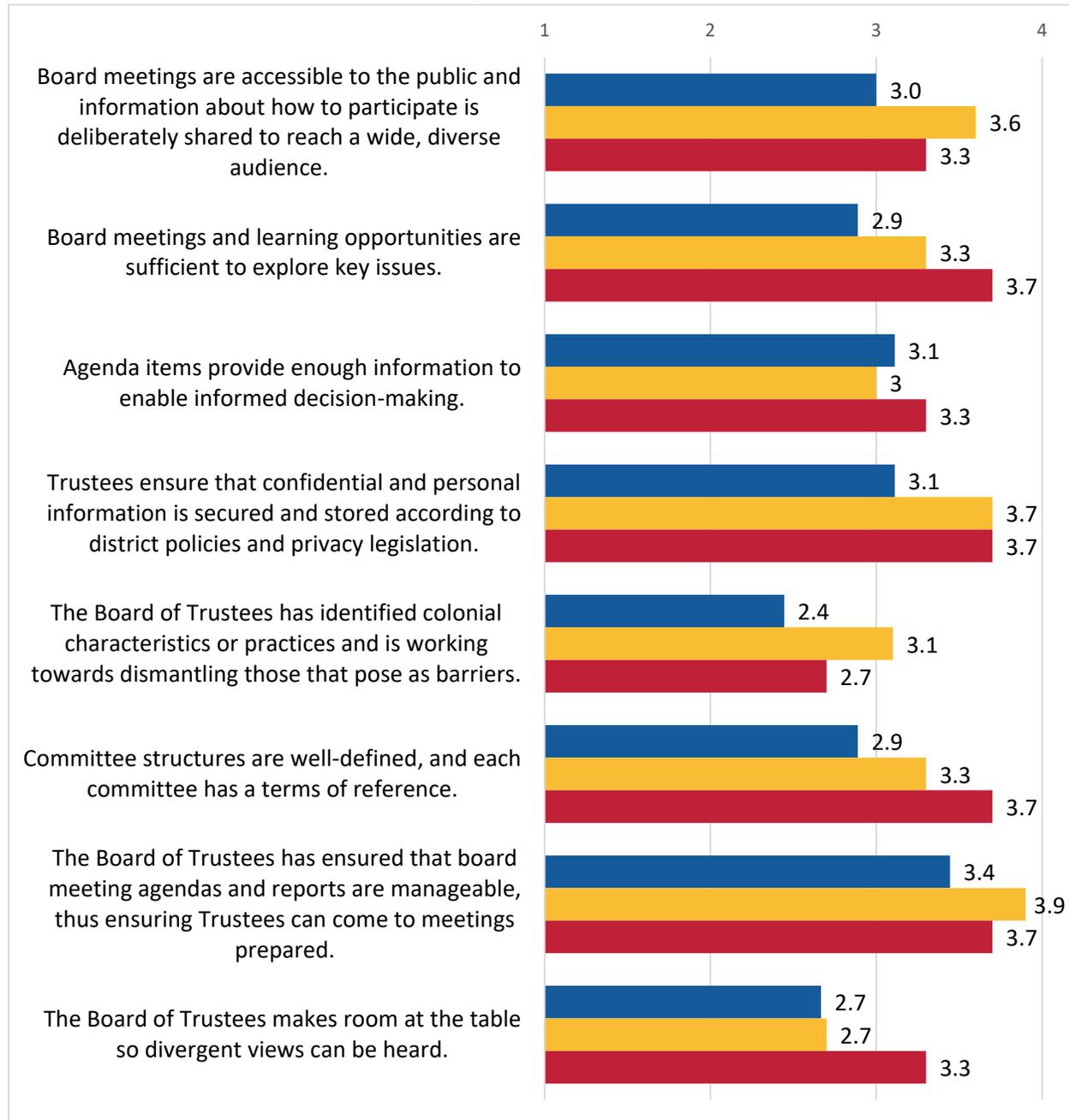
■ 2023-2024
 ■ 2024-2025
 ■ 2025-2026

Board of Trustee Leadership



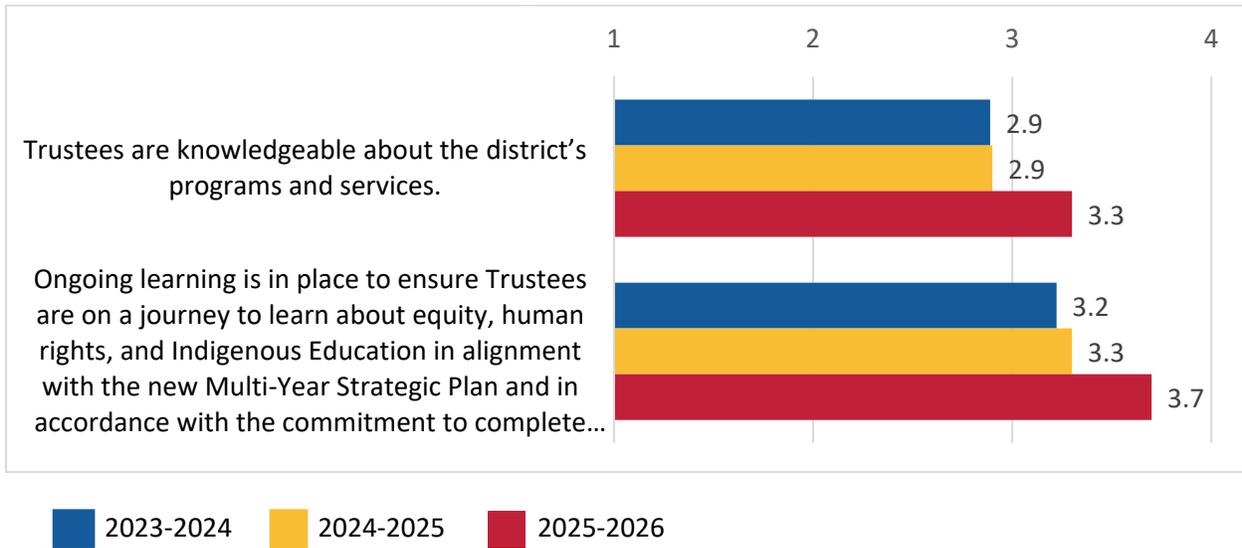
■ 2023-2024
 ■ 2024-2025
 ■ 2025-2026

Effective Committee and Board Meetings



■ 2023-2024
 ■ 2024-2025
 ■ 2025-2026

Board of Trustee Professional Learning



Following the matrices of maturation questions above, Trustees were asked optional open-ended questions. Below is a summary of the themes/sentiments expressed by those who chose to respond. These summaries are very high level because of the low participation rate and lack of robust data for thematic analysis.

1. In your opinion, what are the Board of Trustees' greatest strengths?

Trustees continue to see their primary strengths in supporting staff and the Director, though this year's responses were narrower and more operationally focused than last year's broader reflections on strategic thinking and collaboration.

2. What are the Board of Trustees' greatest opportunities for improvement?

Similar to last year, trustees still identified relationships and collaboration as major areas needing improvement, but this year's comments reflect a stronger sense of frustration with internal conflict and procedural time-wasting.

3. As a member of the Board, I have concerns about...

In contrast to last year, concerns were more personal and internal, pointing to trust breakdowns and apprehension about the Board's future. Yet similar to last year, trustees still felt that interpersonal dynamics and lack of constructive engagement remain core concerns.

4. I think the Board of Trustees would benefit from learning about these topics:

Similar to last year, trustees again identified role clarity as important. However, this year's responses shifted more toward navigating interpersonal conflict and modern communication (social media), suggesting a growing emphasis on relational and reputational skills.

5. What additional resources & supports does the Board of Trustees need to understand roles and responsibilities as members of Trustee special committees, advisory committees, legislative committees, etc.?

Similar to last year, trustees continue to want clearer guidance and professional learning about committees, though this year's responses were more behavioral and practical rather than structural or systemic

6. Please describe how the board functions as a cohesive unit. Is it functioning as a unit as well as it should? Why or why not?

Consistent with last year, trustees still felt the Board is not functioning as a cohesive unit. This year's comments, however, suggest the situation may feel more entrenched or emotionally charged than before with the added stress of the Board of Trustees' future still not known.

Summary

This third annual Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation was designed to cover areas pertinent to the governance of public boards of education and do so in a way that provides a road map for future development, growth and improvement. The maturity model acts as a point in time and can be compared to results in past and subsequent years to track progress. The open-ended questions were designed to elicit more granular information that Trustees can now use to plan next steps. Participating trustees demonstrated courage and care by naming areas that matter most to governance effectiveness, particularly relationships, cohesion, and clarity of roles. While only 27% of trustees participated this cycle, the responses still provide valuable direction for growth and learning in the year ahead.

Across the seven domains: Mission and Strategic Planning, Policy and Governance, Relationships, Fiduciary Responsibilities, Board Leadership, Committee and Board Meetings, and Professional Learning, participants generally placed current practice in the Building Capacity range. In the maturity model, this means the right pieces are present and increasingly practiced, with opportunities to strengthen consistency and sustainability over time. This is a natural and expected stage on a multi-year journey and aligns with the Board's stated goal of using the self-assessment as a road map for where trustees want to go next.

The asset story in this year's open-ended responses is clear:

- Trustees affirmed a continued commitment to supporting the Director and staff and to responding to community concerns, reflecting a service-oriented mindset and respect for operational roles.
- Participants recognized and named the conditions that most influence effectiveness: relationship health, collaboration, and meeting culture, thereby creating shared visibility of what to improve. This transparency is a strong foundation for change.
- Learning priorities such as conflict mediation, role clarity, and modern communication (including social media) point to a practical, skills-based path forward that can yield gains in how trustees work together and with the public.

Importantly, this year's reflections build on last year's insights. Trustees again highlighted the value of preparation, collaboration, and clear governance practices, while adding a more explicit call to

strengthen trust, good-faith engagement, and committee norms. Seeing these themes re-emerge is not a setback; it shows the Board is staying with the real work and refining its focus as conditions evolve.

Looking ahead, the Board can capitalize on this momentum by: (1) acknowledging the vulnerability demonstrated by participants and inviting broader participation next cycle; (2) translating the identified priorities into targeted professional learning and simple working agreements (e.g., meeting preparation expectations, committee role reminders); and (3) celebrating small wins that reinforce positive norms and trust. Taken together, these steps keep the emphasis where it has always been: on growth, development, and improvement, and position the Board to deepen its impact for students, staff, and community in the year to come.