

2023 Annual Board Survey

Summary Report for



Empowering people, transforming lives

HunterKemper Consulting

October 3, 2023

Elizabeth Hunter, CFRE

HunterKemper Consulting

50 Panola Street, Asheville, NC 28801 elizabeth@hunter-kemper.com 828-250-0660 www.hunter-kemper.com

Angela Kemper, CFRE

20 Maplewood Road, Asheville, NC 28804 angela@hunter-kemper.com 828-252-1475

Section 1: Introduction and Survey Overview

The second annual Board Self-Evaluation Survey was conducted from September 6 - 26, 2023, and most questions were consistent with the first survey that was conducted in August of 2022. The survey focused on board members' understanding of their roles and the work of the agency as well as board governance best practices.

The Executive Committee reviewed a draft survey and confirmed the questions to include. All but two of the questions were repeated from last year's survey to compare this year's results with the baseline results from 2022.

The survey was distributed by email to 15 current board members, and the option for a verbal phone administration of the survey was also offered. A total of 12 of 15 board members responded (80%), and they spent an average of just under 13 minutes completing the survey.

The survey explored various topics in the following sections:

- 1. <u>Board of Directors Participation and Engagement (6 questions)</u>: Duration of board service, perceptions of board meetings and participation, suggestions of strengths and improvements related to board meetings, and overall board effectiveness.
- 2. <u>Individual Participation (3 questions)</u>: Self-assessment of board participation, areas of value and impact as a board member, and individual success as a board member.
- 3. <u>Board Understanding and Training (4 questions)</u>: Understanding of the organization's vision and respondent's role as a board member, clarity regarding board roles in various areas, and effectiveness of recent board trainings.
- <u>Communications and Tools (4 questions)</u>: Comfort level with communicating about WNCSource and utilization of board portal tools, ideas for developing an elevator speech, employee directory as a tool for communication, and input regarding new combination of virtual and in-person board meeting formats.
- 5. <u>Strategic Initiatives (2 questions)</u>: Understanding of current initiatives related to Head Start and Crossnore's 3-year trauma-informed community initiative. These questions were new and were not included in the 2022 version of the survey.
- 6. <u>Board-CEO Partnership (2 question)</u>: Agreement with aspects of communication and role differentiation between the CEO and the Board. A final question provided an opportunity for any other suggestions or questions related to board work and engagement.

This report summarizes the survey results. Section 2 summarizes the key findings for each of the six topics of the survey. Section 3 provides the survey results, including average ratings and text responses. The appendix includes a summary of all survey rating questions in descending order of average rating, with a comparison to the average ratings from the 2022 survey. A copy of the online survey has been provided as a separate document.



Section 2: Key Findings

This section summarizes the key findings, organized by the 6 topics of the survey. Survey rating response options extended from 1 to 5, (1 = low, 3 = medium, and 5 = high). Average response scores ranged from 2.92 to 4.92.

Many of these findings relate to the strategic plan Goal #1: Equip the Board of Directors with tools, training, and structure to lead the Agency strategically into its future. Survey results are relevant to some of the outcomes, strategies, and metrics identified in this goal. A few fundraising-related results are also relevant to the strategies and metrics for Goal #7: Implement a Strategic Development program to connect people's philanthropic passions with community needs.

Comparison of Ratings

Of the 38 average scores for the rating questions, 30 are 4.0 or higher on the 5-point scale, indicating favorable perceptions. In comparing 32 baseline average ratings from last year, the average scores for 13 items increased by more than 0.25, which is more than 12% of the range of scores. For the 5 average scores that decreased in 2023, these differences were not statistically notable and ranged from -0.09 to -0.16

1. Board of Directors Participation and Engagement

Strengths:

- The Board's overall effectiveness was highly rated. The level of priority that attending Board meetings has for respondents received the highest average rating of 4.92.
- There was a high level of agreement about board meetings, including that board meetings are well planned, different points of view are encouraged and acknowledged, board members are supportive of decisions made, that board members come to meetings prepared, and that board meetings are interesting.
- Comments indicated that board meeting strengths include the organization and thoroughness of meetings; information provided about programs, financial status, and emerging organization needs; learning more about strategic direction, community impact, and successes; the discussions; and feeling heard and valued.

Challenges:

- There was less agreement that all board members participate in important board discussions, with a score that was among the four lowest average ratings (3.58).
- Suggestions for enhancing the meetings include: increased clarity on what items require a vote; discussion of board decision-making; preference for in-person meetings; and request for board members to review the advance materials.

2. Individual Participation

Strengths:

• Board members rated their own participation among the highest average scores for supporting the decisions that are made and listening to different points of view and coming to meetings prepared.



- Notably, board members' average rating of their active participation in the assigned committee increased by more than one-half point, from 3.8 to 4.33.
- Board members indicated that they participate in important board discussions (4.0), which contrasts with the lower rating about all board members participating in important board discussions (3.58 in section one).
- Confidence in board members' sense of value notably increased in two areas: talent/skills (from 3.6 to 4.17) and knowledge of the issue and/or their advocacy (from 3.53 to 4.08).

Challenges:

- In contrast with the high rating of overall board effectiveness, the average rating of members' own overall effectiveness as a board member was among the lowest average scores (3.92), although this average rating is higher than in 2022 (3.47).
- The lowest rated item in the survey was board members' sense of the value of their financial contributions. Other items in the medium-level average ratings included value of their time, talent/skills as well as access to others, which did increase from 2022 (from 3.53 to 3.83).

Other Input:

- One survey comment requested increased board input and questions during meetings.
- Some board members indicated a willingness to volunteer, either for specific needs or to advocate on behalf of WNCSource. Others indicated regretting that they lack the time to provide additional help.

3. Board Understanding and Training

Strengths:

- Board members indicated a high level of understanding of board roles, as well as the role and vision of WNCSource in the community and of board roles.
- Clarity on several specific board roles received medium-high average ratings (4.0 to 4.36) including Strategic Planning, Financial, Oversight of Operations, and Board Management.

Challenges:

- Board members' comfort in helping with fundraising received the second lowest average rating. Clarity on the board fundraising role received the third-lowest average rating, although it did notably increase from 2023 (from 3.00 to 3.45). Perceptions of the level of importance of 100% of board members making financial contributions was also among the lower average scores, although it, too, notably increased from 2023 (from 3.64 to 3.91).
- The average rating of clarity on the board role in Legal Compliance was in the medium range.
- The effectiveness of recent board trainings (e.g., Bylaws, agency program operations, culture, and board portal) was also in the medium to medium-high range.
- There were a couple of requests for additional board trainings or information on specific topics such as transportation and landlord/tenancy roles.



4. Communications and Tools

Strengths:

• There was a strong indication of comfort with speaking to friends, colleagues, and/or community groups about WNCSource and with using the online board portal tools, which had a notable increase in average ratings from 4.00 in 2022 to 4.55.

Challenges:

• The rating for the effectiveness of the employee directory with role synopsis for easy communication was on the lower range, although it increased from 3.38 in 2022 to 3.7.

Other Input:

- Suggestions for helping board members develop an elevator speech included:
 - Learn the mission statement.
 - Bullet points about the top goals for WNCSource.
 - Short description of each WNCSource program.
 - Share program successes and stories.
- For the question about in-person or virtual board meeting formats, many people expressed a willingness to participate in either. Some people indicated that having the option for virtual participation increases flexibility, and a few others indicated a preference for in-person meetings for increased interaction.

5. Strategic Initiatives

Strengths:

• For the strategic initiative related to Head Start, board members rated their understanding of all three items in the medium-high to high range: the staffing issues in finding Head Start teachers, what WNCSource is doing to address the shortage of teachers, and the board's role in the decision to reduce the number of students served to raise teacher salaries.

Challenges:

• Board understanding of the agency's participation with Crossnore's 3-year trauma-informed community initiative received an average rating.

6. Board-CEO Partnership

Strengths:

- The assessment of good two-way communication between the board and the CEO was among the highest average ratings.
- Several other aspects of the Board-CEO partnership received medium-high to high average scores with notable increases from 2022, including indication that the board or a board committee has formally evaluated the CEO recently (from 4.17 to 4.45), understanding where the board's role ends and the CEO's begins (from 3.64 to 4.27), and agreement that the board provides feedback and shows its appreciation to the CEO (from 3.62 to 4.0).
- Board members also provided a medium-high to high rating on board clarity on the organization-related information expected from the CEO.

Challenges:

• No specific challenges were identified in this section.



Section 3: Summary of Board Survey Responses

This section compiles the average ratings and all survey comments. Comments have been lightly edited for spelling and punctuation and to remove personally identifying information. The top three and bottom three average scores are noted.

Survey Page 1: Board of Directors Participation and Engagement

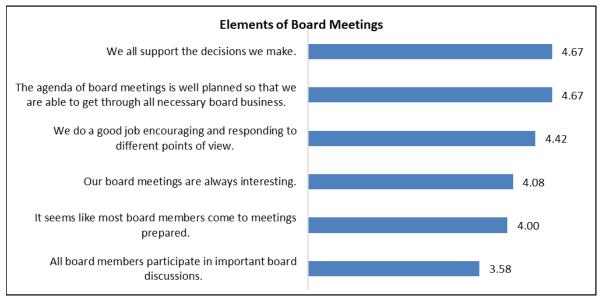
Survey Responses

Survey Dates	Total # Responses	Avg. Total Time Spent
September 6 - 26, 2023	12 out of 15 board members (80%)	12 min., 55 sec.

1. How long have you been a Board member with WNCSource (including when it was another name)?

Duration	# Responses	% Responses
Less than 1 year	2	17%
1 – 3 years	8	67%
4 – 5 years	1	8%
6 – 12 years	1	8%
Total	12	

2. How would you rate your level of agreement about the following key aspects of the board meetings?



Number of responses: 12.



3. Please rate the level of priority that board meeting attendance represents for you.



Number of responses: 12.

4. What is particularly helpful about board meetings?

Comments:

- Hearing what is happening and the reasons behind decisions being made.
- Information about all the different programs updates and changes. Current financial status of the organization.
- It is also important to me to know my opinion matters and is valued.
- Learning about all the areas WNCSource serves the community.
- Learning about different aspects that will help my child.
- Staff provide information to the Board and the Board guides decision making.
- The conversation and debate
- The information distributed to all members about the organization and the future plans for the organization to do well in the community and grow.
- The updates from the various department heads, very helpful in staying up to date on what is going on within the organization.
- They are very thorough and want everyone to understand and be on the same page.
- To know what is going on monthly with the agency as a whole and to learn about changes and needs as well as successes.
- Updates and strategic direction for attendees to keep up with the changing organization needs.
- Well organized and transparent

5. What could be improved about board meetings?

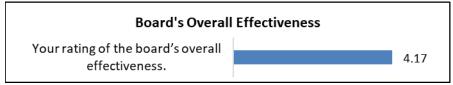
Comments:

- A lot of the information given in the portal and pre-board meetings are the same things read and covered in the board meetings. It would be nice if we didn't have to read everything then hear it all over again. I get it, but still...
- Ask that all Board members read the meeting reports prior to the meeting to increase informed consent.
- At the moment, I can't think of anything. We are starting back with in-person meetings as well as zoom meetings in October, so it's nice to have a choice.
- Everything is running okay.



- I think the meetings would be more productive and fruitful if held in person. Zoom should be a backup for inclement weather or situations like Covid. I am much more likely to speak freely in person than on Zoom meetings. The meetings seem sterile and formulaic...more for rubber stamping than leadership.
- I would like more discussion on making decisions rather than feeling like, at times, all decisions are already made and we just have to vote on them.
- More guidance on what requires a vote and closing the meeting and reopening for the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- n/a
- No suggestions
- Nothing.

6. How would you rate the board's overall effectiveness?



Number of responses: 12.

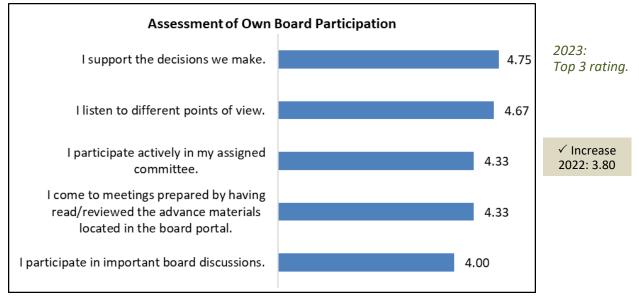
Comments:

- Again, can't think of anything.
- Getting board members more engaged with promoting the organization in the public sphere.
- I believe more training/education on the workings of the different departments within the organization.
- I feel most of our monthly meetings could be every other month or once a quarter. Half the time the board meetings feel like parent teacher conferences and we are just there while they tell us "what they've been working on in class". It's almost like they need board approval to do everything and I don't think our board members are necessarily at the expertise the staff is who do their jobs...
- Maybe sometime allow others to give opinions and ideas about how the money may be spent extra money.
- More facetime between board members and employees.
- More in-person meetings would benefit the group. Quarterly or Bi-annual meetings in person.
- More participation from clients
- n/a
- Nothing
- Quarterly face-to-face meetings.
- See above.



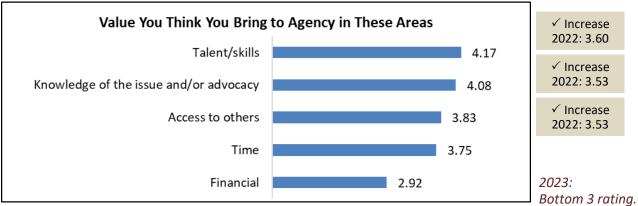
Survey Page 2: Individual Participation

7. To what degree do you agree with the following in reference to your board participation?



Number of responses: 12.

8. Please rate the value you think you bring to the agency through your contributions in the following areas.



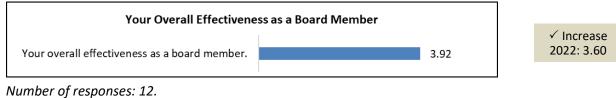
Number of responses: 12.

Comments:

- Being a Section 8 subsidy recipient I have personal experience navigating low income housing in Henderson County and the issues applicants and recipients face.
- I am a consumer of transportation services and have intimate knowledge of the operations.
- I think critically and ask good questions.
- n/a



9. How would you rate your overall effectiveness as a board member?



Number of responses.

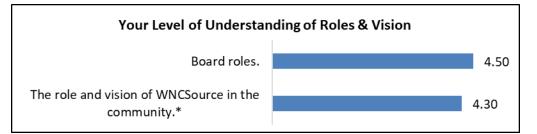
Comments:

- As stated above, having meetings in person would be a benefit to me. I have not been able to give WNCSource the attention I had hoped for due to family responsibilities. It's been a challenge to manage work, family and the good intentions I have with volunteer work with WNCSource. I'm hoping the dust will settle a bit and I can refocus on the important work of WNCSource.
- Given specific projects to accomplish.
- If I didn't have a very demanding job that keeps me from attendance at activities from time to time. Wish I could commit to more involvement.
- I'm effective, I'm here if ever need it for any volunteer worker any area that I can find myself available to fulfill.
- I'm not sure I'm the right fit for the board as some initiatives changed over the years, which is totally okay, WNCSource needs to do what's best for them and their programming.
- I'm very interested in WNCSource and all of its programs and enjoy hearing from other board members in the meetings, as well as the staff. That keeps me engaged.
- Increase questions and comments from all Board members.
- Living in the community would be beneficial.
- n/a
- Perhaps this poll will give us further direction.
- The chance to advocate/promote/lobby for the organization more.



Survey Page 3: Board Understanding and Training

10. Please rate your level of understanding of the following:

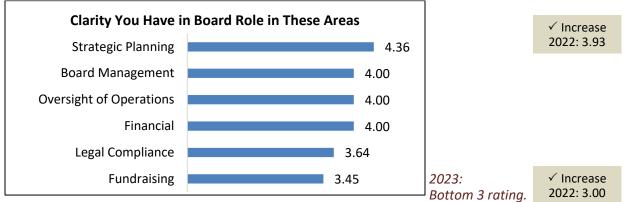


* Full wording: The role and vision of WNCSource in the community, as described on the website and in the strategic plan, which is available in the board portal under "Resource Documents." Number of responses: 11.

Comments:

- Appreciate having the Board Portal on the WNCSource Website.
- I am very knowledgeable about the board meetings. I listen carefully.
- n/a

11. Please rate the clarity you have regarding your role as a board member in the following areas.



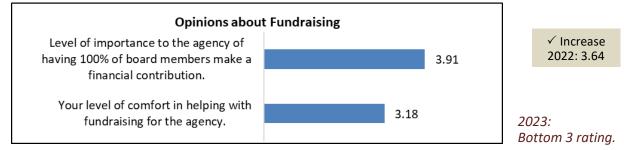
Number of responses: 11.

Comments:

- Have had lots of training and input into all of these areas both in meetings and in serving on committees.
- n/a

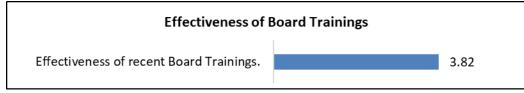


12. Please rate the following:



Number of responses: 11.

13. Please rate the effectiveness of recent Board Trainings (e.g., Bylaws, WNCSource program operations, culture, board portal).



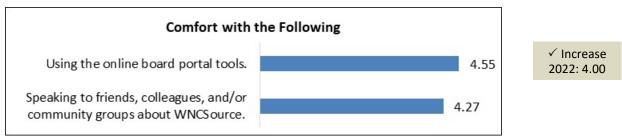
Number of responses: 11.

Comments:

- Have not received any board trainings.
- How we can help facilitate getting more landlords to accept housing vouchers and training the public who need a housing voucher how to be a good & responsible tenant. The latter would help with the former over time!
- Topic on transportation for parents who sometimes struggle to get kids to and from school.

Survey Page 4: Communications and Tools

14. Please share your comfort with the following:





Comments:

- As I said really appreciate the Board Portal! It is very easy to use and chock full of information! (Thanks to Kim Hall!!)
- I am visually impaired and it is difficult to navigate in my browser.



- I am willing to speak to select potential donors that WNCSource is seeking contributions from.
- n/a

15. One of the strategies in the strategic plan is to develop a 30-second elevator speech so that board members can uniformly articulate WNCSource's mission and activities. What information would be helpful to you in developing this elevator speech?

Comments:

- A one-liner for each of the different programs supported by WNCSource.
- Feedback from our clients
- Have more background in the housing and senior nutrition programs.
- Key points about the organization that reflect the mission and activities in the elevator speech.
- Know the Mission statement and be aware of the many programs that the agency directs.
- Program successes.
- Technology is always changing and it's always good to stay connected with the highest and latest technology.
- There are many different parts to WNCSource, I think it depends on whom you are talking to in order to articulate the mission & and activities. 30 seconds won't cut it and the elevator won't wait.
- Top 3 goals of the organization condensed into bullet points.

16. How would you rate the effectiveness of the employee directory with role synopsis for easy communication?



Number of responses: 10.

17. For upcoming board meetings, what is your comfort with having a choice of virtual and inperson options for participating? Please share any suggestions to increase the effectiveness of this combination.

Comments:

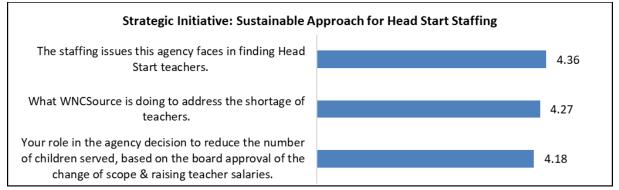
- Flexible to both
- I like having both options available. Communicate what time the actual meeting portion will take place so the online folks can log on after in-person folks have eaten or have been served.
- I think having a choice is very nice, but we probably have more attendance virtually.



- I think having a hybrid option allows each person the opportunity to choose in person or on-line depending on their preference.
- I think the meetings should be scheduled as in-person and the virtual option is only to give people a back-up plan if they cannot attend.
- I would prefer virtual options for meetings as transportation for me is difficult. It was suggested to have an in-person option once per quarter which would be possible for me.
- I'm comfortable with either.
- It is nice to offer both, especially with the changes in the world these days. I know that offering both modalities can be hard and those who choose to be online need to accept that sometimes they might not be able to hear and see everything. In an effort to help staff during the meetings, I think in-person should be given the priority for presentations and materials, etc.
- Quarterly face to face. Can be a hybrid for those unable to attend in person.
- Virtual meetings help participation.
- Virtual or in person it really does not matter as long as everyone is understanding and on the same page.

Survey Page 5: Strategic Initiatives

18. One current strategic initiative is to develop a sustainable approach to sufficient and quality staffing for Head Start. Please rate your level of understanding about the following.



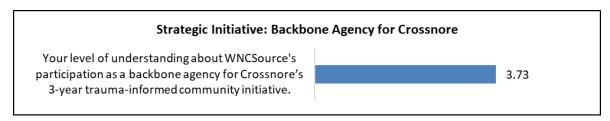
Number of responses: 11.

What could we do to help increase your understanding of this initiative?

- I'm sure information is available... I just need to read it.
- It has been explained in several previous Board meetings.
- Just more time hearing about the issues. Being new/back to the board after a year away, I have some catching up to do.
- n/a



19. A second current strategic initiative is to participate as a backbone agency for Crossnore's 3year trauma-informed community initiative. Please rate your level of understanding about this initiative.



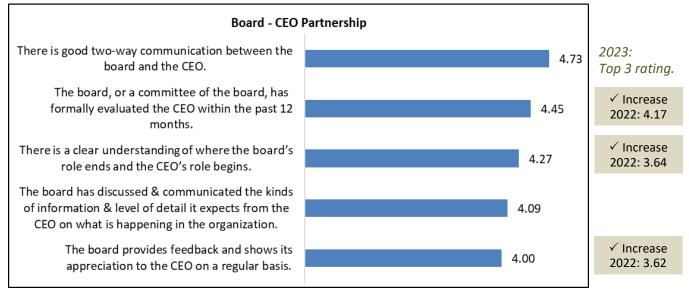
Number of responses: 11.

What could we do to help increase your understanding of this initiative?

- As above. I'm sure information is available... I just need to read it.
- n/a
- Same as above, more time to learn about the initiative and the backstory on the same having just come back on the board.
- Some details have been shared at the Board meeting, perhaps keeping us up to date in the same manner.

Survey Page 6: Board-CEO Partnership

20. How would you rate your level of agreement with the following?



Number of responses: 11.

Comments:

• Maybe a slide presentation showing examples of David White's dedication to WNCSource/WCCA over the years.



Survey Page 7: Other Feedback

21. Do you have any other suggestions or questions related to board work and engagement?

- It has been a pleasure to serve on this Board!
- n/a
- None for now.
- The only suggestion is that for the parents who have struggles getting children to and from school it would really be helpful if those who qualify could get help with transportation.



Appendix: 2023 Average Ratings in Descending Order with Comparison to 2022 Results

Survey Questions	Specific Items	2023	2022	Difference
High Ratings				Difference
Q3. Please rate the following.	Level of priority that board meeting attendance represents for you.	4.92	4.71	0.21
Q7. To what degree do you agree with the following in reference to your board participation?	I support the decisions we make.	4.75	4.67	0.08
Q20. How would you rate your level of agreement with the following?	There is good two-way communication between the board and the CEO.	4.73	4.71	0.02
Q2. How would you rate your level of agreement about the following key aspects of the board meetings?	The agenda of board meetings is well planned so that we are able to get through all necessary board business.	4.67	4.80	(0.13)
Q2. How would you rate your level of agreement about the following key aspects of the board meetings?	We all support the decisions we make.	4.67	4.47	0.20
Q7. To what degree do you agree with the following in reference to your board participation?	I listen to different points of view.	4.67	4.80	(0.13)
Q14. Please rate your comfort with the following.	Using the online board portal tools.	4.55	4.00	0.55
Q10. Please rate your level of understanding of the following.	Board roles.	4.50	4.40	0.10
Medium High to High Ratings				
Q20. How would you rate your level of agreement with the following?	The board, or a committee of the board, has formally evaluated the CEO within the past 12 months.	4.45	4.17	0.28
Q2. How would you rate your level of agreement about the following key aspects of the board meetings?	We do a good job encouraging and responding to different points of view.	4.42	4.33	0.09
Q11. Please rate the clarity you have regarding your role as a board member in the following areas.	Clarity I have about my board role in: Strategic Planning	4.36	3.93	0.43



Survey Questions	Specific Items	2023	2022	Difference
Q18. One current strategic initiative is to develop a sustainable approach to sufficient and quality staffing for Head Start. Please rate your level of understanding about the following.	The staffing issues this agency faces in finding Head Start teachers.	4.36	n/a	
Q7. To what degree do you agree with the following in reference to your board participation?	I come to meetings prepared by having read and reviewed the advance materials located in the board portal.	4.33	4.13	0.20
Q7. To what degree do you agree with the following in reference to your board participation?	I participate actively in my assigned committee.	4.33	3.80	0.53
Q10. Please rate your level of understanding of the following.	The role and vision of WNCSource in the community described on the website and in the strategic plan.	4.30	4.40	(0.10)
Q14. Please rate your comfort with the following.	Speaking to friends, colleagues, and/or community groups about WNCSource.	4.27	4.20	0.07
Q18. One current strategic initiative is to develop a sustainable approach to sufficient and quality staffing for Head Start. Please rate your level of understanding about the following.	Understanding of what WNCSource is doing to address the shortage of Head Start teachers	4.27	n/a	
Q20. How would you rate your level of agreement with the following?	Understanding of where the board's role ends and the CEO's role begins	4.27	3.64	0.63
Q18. One current strategic initiative is to develop a sustainable approach to sufficient and quality staffing for Head Start. Please rate your level of understanding about the following.	Understanding of board role in decision to reduce # of Head Start children served & raise teacher salaries	4.18	n/a	
Q6. How would you rate the board's overall effectiveness?	Board's overall effectiveness	4.17	4.33	(0.16)
Q8. Please rate the value you think you bring to the agency through your contributions in the following areas.	Value of my contributions in: Talent/skills	4.17	3.60	0.57
Q20. How would you rate your level of agreement with the following?	Board clarity on information & detail expected from CEO on what is happening in the organization	4.09	4.00	0.09
Q2. How would you rate your level of agreement about the following key aspects of the board meetings?	Board meetings are always interesting	4.08	3.87	0.21



Survey Questions	Specific Items	2023	2022	Difference
Q8. Please rate the value you think you bring to the agency through your contributions in the following areas.	Value of my contributions in: Knowledge of the issue and/or advocacy	4.08	3.53	0.55
Q11. Please rate the clarity you have regarding your role as a board member in the following areas.	Clarity I have about my board role in: Financial	4.00	3.80	0.20
Q11. Please rate the clarity you have regarding your role as a board member in the following areas.	Clarity I have about my board role in: Oversight of Operations	4.00	3.93	0.07
Q11. Please rate the clarity you have regarding your role as a board member in the following areas.	Clarity I have about my board role in: Board Management	4.00	3.87	0.13
Q2. How would you rate your level of agreement about the following key aspects of the board meetings?	It seems like most board members come to meetings prepared	4.00	4.00	-
Q20. How would you rate your level of agreement with the following?	The board provides feedback and shows its appreciation to the CEO on a regular basis	4.00	3.62	0.38
Q7. To what degree do you agree with the following in reference to your board participation?	I participate in important board discussions	4.00	3.87	0.13
Medium Ratings				
Q9. How would you rate your overall effectiveness as a board member?	Your overall effectiveness as a board member	3.92	3.47	0.45
Q12. Please rate the following.	Level of importance to the agency of having 100% of board members make a financial contribution	3.91	3.64	0.27
Q8. Please rate the value you think you bring to the agency through your contributions in the following areas.	Value of my contributions in: Access to others	3.83	3.53	0.30
Q13. Please rate the effectiveness of recent Board Trainings (e.g., Bylaws, WNCSource program operations, culture, board portal).	Effectiveness of recent Board Trainings on Bylaws, agency program operations, culture, board portal	3.82	3.64	0.18
Q8. Please rate the value you think you bring to the agency through your contributions in the following areas.	Value of my contributions in: Time	3.75	3.67	0.08



Survey Questions	Specific Items	2023	2022	Difference
 Q19. A second current strategic initiative is to participate as a backbone agency for Crossnore's 3-year trauma-informed community initiative. Please rate your level of understanding about this initiative. 	Understanding of WNCSource's participation with Crossnore's 3-year trauma-informed community initiative	3.73	n/a	
Q16. How would you rate the effectiveness of the employee directory with role synopsis for easy communication?	Effectiveness of the employee directory with role synopsis for easy communication	3.70	3.38	0.32
Q11. Please rate the clarity you have regarding your role as a board member in the following areas.	Clarity I have about my board role in: Legal Compliance	3.64	3.73	(0.09)
Q2. How would you rate your level of agreement about the following key aspects of the board meetings?	All board members participate in important board discussions	3.58	3.40	0.18
Q11. Please rate the clarity you have regarding your role as a board member in the following areas.	Clarity I have about my board role in: Fundraising	3.45	3.00	0.45
Q12. Please rate the following.	Your level of comfort in helping with fundraising for the agency	3.18	3.07	0.11
Q8. Please rate the value you think you bring to the agency through your contributions in the following areas.	Value of my contributions in: Financial	2.92	2.87	0.05

