



New Jersey School Boards Association

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Board Self Evaluation 2022

District: Ridgewood Bd of Ed

Quantification of Relative Value <i>Quantification of Relative Value</i>	Vital 4	Very Important 3	Somewhat Important 2	Not Important 1	Not Observed	Average
1. PLANNING: The board is a planning body, focusing on the district mission and goals	2	3	0	0	0	3.4
2. POLICY: The board is a policy-making body, focusing on the development, review and revision of policy.	3	1	0	1	0	3.2
3. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: The board requires written curriculum and systematic evaluation that is focused on student achievement.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
4. FINANCE: The board provides financial oversight for budget development and evaluation, program support and equity.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6
5. BOARD OPERATION: The board operates through bylaws and effective meeting procedures, using collaborative decision-making skills.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
6. BOARD PERFORMANCE: The board exhibits good boardsmanship in areas of confidentiality, listening skills, preparedness, conflict management	2	1	1	1	0	2.8
7. BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIPS: The board respects the differences in roles and responsibilities, maintaining good communication and interaction between the board and the superintendent.	2	2	0	1	0	3.0
8. BOARD / STAFF RELATIONSHIPS: The board has effective personnel policies and supports staff development related to student achievement and recognition of staff accomplishments.	2	2	0	1	0	3.0
9. BOARD AND COMMUNITY: The board effectively represents and communicates with the public, involving the community in district planning.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2

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1 Planning						
About the Board <i>Our Board</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
1. with broad community input, established a district wide mission and multi-year plan for education.	1	4	0	0	0	3.2
2. plans, and collaboratively sets district and board goals and establishes priorities annually.	0	3	2	0	0	2.6
3. reviews Action Plans developed to support the goals.	0	2	2	1	0	2.2
4. regularly monitors progress towards achieving the district's vision, mission and goals making adjustments as needed.	0	2	0	2	1	2.0

Average: 2.5

About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. participate fully in the district planning process.	2	3	0	0	0	3.4
B. recognize the importance of meaningful public participation in the planning process.	2	3	0	0	0	3.4
C. support the district vision, mission and goals.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6

Average: 3.5

COMMENTS

- * We have the vision and all agree to support the staff and students while respecting the community, but could be better on getting updates on progress.
- * The Board truly values community input, evidenced by the unchecked duration of public comments and the amount of time allotted per speaker (we are at 4 minutes when the standard is closer to 3 minutes with some districts at 2 minutes). We need to capture input of the broader community that may not or want to speak up at meetings, but I believe we try to balance the needs of all and anticipate the concerns of the entire district. Improvement goal for the Board is to more closely monitor the progress and tweak as needed instead of waiting until the end of the year.
- * Three or four years ago a Strategic Plan was developed with broad community input. Goals and Action plans were established by district administrators at this time. It now seems to be sitting on the shelf and the Board does not appear interested in monitoring progress made and work that should be done to realize these goals. I marked this good for the work done in the past. The current Board was not involved.

District and Board goals are developed annually. Board goals were written, but no action plans developed. Action plans

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were developed by the superintendent for the district goals. Reporting of progress made on district and Board goals is not routinely scheduled into the agenda of our public Board meetings.

The School Board self evaluation was not completed last year by all members of the Board. The data from the evaluations that were completed was not reported out to help inform this year's goals. The information from the completed evaluation was requested several times, the request was ignored.

- * Good district goals and work towards those.
- * It works but can be improved.

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2 Policy						
About the Board <i>Our Board</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
1. operates as a "policy-making body."	0	3	1	1	0	2.4
2. develops broad policies that give the administration sufficient authority and latitude to manage the day-to-day operations.	0	2	2	0	1	2.5
3. uses written policies as the framework for our decision-making process.	0	3	2	0	0	2.6
4. reviews and updates the policy manual regularly as required by NJQSAC insuring that our bylaws, policies and procedures reflect current regulatory, and statutory requirements.	1	3	1	0	0	3.0
5. ensures that the administration develops appropriate procedures and regulations to implement the board's policy intent.	0	2	2	0	1	2.5

Average: 2.6

About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. am familiar with the board's policies.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6
B. use board policy as a basis for decision-making.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6
C. leave policy implementation to the administrative staff.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6
D. avoid involvement in day-to-day operations of the district.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6

Average: 3.6

COMMENTS

- * It works but can be improved.
- * We have not created new policy in a while. Most of our policies are the mandated ones from Strauss Esmay. Leaving the running of the district is up to the administration and not our function.
- * Board needs to do a better job not micromanaging the administration and ensuring they are appreciated and respected.

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- * The Board ends up drawn into overseeing administration more closely than desired in order to accomplish our goals. I would like to see more ownership by certain sections of the administration, and am hopeful that this will be achieved given the hopefully better understanding of the Board's accountability mindset.
- * We use Strauss Esmay for the development and review of district policies. Since much of the policies recommended by Strauss Esmay are mandated, these policies are approved with no controversy. I have marked this standard good.

The policy developed by Board members this year re special education services and tuition rates for staff members who do not live in-district was poorly written and the rationale for the policy not articulated well. It was pushed through with little regard for the impact it would have on new staff member hiring/retention. Board members in favor of this policy did not listen to concerns voiced by administrators. The reality is that the pricing policy is prohibitive and it is highly unlikely that non-resident staff will request admission of their children to our district's general or special education programs.

3 Student Achievement						
About the Board <i>Our Board</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
1. determines the district educational goals with input and data from administration.	1	3	1	0	0	3.0
2. requires written curriculum with specific evaluation components in accordance with all statutes.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
3. requires systematic evaluation of and feedback on the instructional program.	1	2	0	1	1	2.8
4. uses the expertise of the professional staff, in development of curriculum, ensuring it is focused on student achievement.	1	4	0	0	0	3.2
5. monitors the effectiveness of our instructional programs by measuring student achievement against state and local standards and other pertinent data.	1	1	1	2	0	2.2
6. sets high standards for all students based on multiple, assessment measures.	1	2	1	0	1	3.0

Average: 2.9

About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. am involved in determining district educational goals.	3	1	1	0	0	3.4
B. am aware of the community's educational aspirations.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6
C. focus on improving student achievement as a basis in my educational decision-making.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6

Average: 3.5

COMMENTS

- * Board is focused on achievement
- * I believe we need to do a better job of using metrics and data in evaluating our curriculum. We have too many parents having to use outside tutors to achieve the positive outcomes we all want for the district students, so we need to constantly evaluate our curriculum and instructional methods.

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- * We do not get enough benchmarks from what we have set forth. Linkit was supposed to show us how our students have progressed and show our parents how their children were doing, yet no one has seen the data. We want to support our students and help give our staff the best possible resources to push our students to new heights. It is hard to create new programs when the State is mandating new curriculum that we need to conform to.
- * It works but can be improved.
- * Board does not focus on student achievement. Reports of student outcomes often devolve into debates about the quality of the instructional program and the education students receive.

No real direction provided by the Board on the use of ESSER money. No follow up or planned/scheduled reports on student outcomes where ESSER money was used.

Few reports on curricula revisions at Board meetings this year.

The Curriculum Committee meets quarterly to review new courses, textbooks, assessments, and required state standards that will be addressed. Notes are shared with the Board. Our staff is committed to the educational wellbeing of all students.

4 Finance						
About the Board <i>Our Board</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
1. exercises financial oversight of all aspects of district operations in accordance with statutes.	3	1	1	0	0	3.4
2. provides policy guidelines and parameters, related to our goals, for budget development/evaluation.	2	2	0	1	0	3.0
3. requires that all requests for unbudgeted expenditures be accompanied by specific indication of need and funding sources.	2	1	2	0	0	3.0
4. balances the educational needs of students with the impact of budgetary increases.	3	1	1	0	0	3.4
5. reviews, understands and evaluates all financial reports to ensure that all educational dollars are used in an efficient and effective manner.	3	1	1	0	0	3.4

Average: 3.2

About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. understand the relationship between our budget and our district's goals.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
B. understand and participate in our district's budgeting process.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
C. understand and review the monthly reports.	4	0	1	0	0	3.6
D. understand and review the results of the annual audit.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8

Average: 3.8

COMMENTS

- * It works but can be improved.
- * We have a Board strongly grounded in budget fundamentals. It is unfortunate that financial discipline is misinterpreted as "cost cutting" when in fact, our district has managed to support programming even with rising costs. Sometimes the Board is forced to make decisions under time pressure, so I would like to see less of those walk-in or last-minute spending approvals in the future.

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- * We are fiscally responsible as a board, but sometimes that is not always positive. We need to weigh the wants and needs of the district with the impending financial crisis. We need to upgrade aging infrastructure while making sure we have funds available. It is a very difficult balancing act. We need to build and expand, but remember that we do not have a money tree.
- * Budget development this year seemed chaotic and at times rushed due to the state's miscalculation of Chapter 44 tax refund and the district's appeal that resulted in the Chapter 44 tax decrease going from \$4.7 million to \$27,000.

Relationship between the BA and some Board members is fractured and this contributes to miscommunication, delays, and what appears to be a lack of trust. Some financial and facility items are discussed and discussed until inertia sets in or delays ensue. Meeting minutes from Facility and Finance Committees are slow to be distributed and shared with the full Board. Sometimes we don't receive minutes. There has been an occasion where the Facilities Committee has recommended a project, but Finance has disagreed with the recommendation and this is not shared with the Board or brought forth for discussion.. Again this leads to delays and confusion.

There seems to be a lack of any urgency in addressing facility needs or using maintenance reserves to do identified projects.

The Board failed to publically discuss the Audit Corrective Action Plan that should have been developed by the BA and Superintendent and put on the Board meeting agenda as drafted. Instead the Board leadership decided to pose responses to the findings verbally at the end of a meeting under other business and vote on a non-existent plan. Since the Board seemed to agree with the Audit findings, the correct procedure would have been to have the administration write the corrective action plan, place it on the Public Meeting agenda for Board discussion and vote. This did not happen and there was no transparency in response to the audit findings. The procedure followed was incorrect and not recognized by some on the Board as such.

- * Good budget oversight as it relates to district performance.

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Average: 2.5

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About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. introduce new issues through the agenda process, allowing sufficient time for appropriate study.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
B. recognize the importance of teamwork, problem solving and effective decision-making.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6
C. attend workshops to increase my effectiveness as a board member.	4	0	1	0	0	3.6

Average: 3.5

COMMENTS

- * I like that we rotated our committee assignments, so we each had exposure to different facet of the district operations. I think it should be clearly respected by the administration though that Committees do not make decisions for the entire Board. The committees review and share a recommendation, but we all can and do participate in evaluating the issues.
- * It works but can be improved.
- * The board needs reminding that we all have the same mission, educate our students and make sure the schools are run efficiently. Sometimes the board uses personal feelings to get in the way of progress. We need to remember that mission and work closer together; egos aside. Some board members are taking a brunt of the workload while others are working hard to discredit the others. We need to come together and be unified.
- * Board needs to do a better job trusting each other and having a positive approach to dealing with each other. This will enable us to achieve more.
- * There is a rigidity and non-collaborative work approach by some on the Board. Communication is not open and honest. There is no teamwork, no consensus buildings, and no real effort to problem solve.

There seems to be little respect for the opinions or guidance from the administration creating an atmosphere of the Board knows better than our educational leadership team. It is not surprising that we have had two highly qualified superintendents resign in the span of two years.

At times some Board members are demanding and intolerant of others opinions.

Even at the Board table there are disrespectful comments made to fellow Board members. At times it is a hostile environment in which to work.

6 Board Performance						
About the Board <i>Our Board</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
1. recognize that authority rests with the board as a whole, sitting in a legally authorized board meeting.	1	1	3	0	0	2.6
2. make every effort to attend all board meetings, coming prepared and having done their homework.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
3. recognizes the need for, and the importance of, confidentiality.	1	2	2	0	0	2.8
4. works together in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.	1	2	0	2	0	2.4
5. ensures that all members have input into decisions.	1	2	1	1	0	2.6
6. avoids even the appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest.	1	2	1	1	0	2.6
7. operates in accordance with the board member's Code of Ethics and the Ethics Act.	1	2	2	0	0	2.8

Average: 2.7

About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. make no personal promises nor take any private action.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
B. make every effort to attend all meetings, having done my homework and prepared to contribute.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
C. maintain the confidentiality of board proceedings.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
D. am respectful of everyone at our meetings and I listen with an open mind.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
E. adhere to ethical standards.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8

Average: 3.8

COMMENTS

* Going back to earlier comments. The board needs to work together and trust one another. Just because someone did not
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get a committee assignment or position does not mean that they are not a valued member of the board. A house divided cannot stand, so if someone is struggling, everyone needs to help otherwise we all fail.

- * The Board has some work to do in terms of not catering to special interest groups or going by precedent only when it's convenient.
- * Board is committed to our task.
- * It works but can be improved.
- * The Board does not work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

There have been times when the approval of meeting minutes have been a source of controversy with revisions demanded that appear to be contrary to what was decided/said. The debate on the accuracy of the minutes and how detailed they should be or not be needs to be decided and then we should move forward.

There have been attempts to silence efforts to promote advocacy on legislation. There seems to be little appetite to speak as a Board on state issues that impact public education.

7 Board Superintendent Relationships						
About the Board <i>Our Board</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
1. respects the management responsibilities and administrative prerogatives of the superintendent.	1	2	0	2	0	2.4
2. works with the superintendent in a spirit of mutual trust and confidence.	1	2	0	2	0	2.4
3. maintains ongoing open lines of communication, and observes the chain of command.	1	2	0	2	0	2.4
4. keeps the superintendent informed about community/school issues and aspirations.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
5. conducts a comprehensive and fair annual evaluation of the superintendent in accordance with statute and code as per NJQSAC.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
6. works with the superintendent to develop performance objectives for evaluation that are consistent with district goals and in compliance with district policy.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
7. requires regular dialogue on progress towards district goals and objectives, student achievement and feedback on performance.	2	2	0	1	0	3.0

Average: 2.8

About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. respect the management responsibility of the superintendent.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
B. observe the chain of command.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
C. participate fully in the superintendent evaluation process approaching the task of evaluation fairly and diligently.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8

Average: 3.8**COMMENTS**

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- * I understand the role of the superintendent and appreciate how difficult the position is. It is important to hold the superintendent accountable for the administration's performance, and I believe we work collaboratively with the superintendent.
- * Need to do a better job respecting administration role
- * It works but can be improved.
- * The Board has a great relationship with the Superintendent.
- * Board- administration relationships are fractured. Our superintendent of eighteen months will be leaving the district in June. The pool of interim superintendents applying to work here was small and might be a reflection on the strained Board-superintendant relationship.

At times, the questioning of our administrative team appears to insinuate distrust or suggests a lack of professional knowledge or integrity.

8 Board/Staff Relationships						
About the Board <i>Our Board</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
1. provides effective personnel policy direction and oversight.	1	2	2	0	0	2.8
2. recognizes the importance of staff development and provides the necessary time and funds.	1	3	1	0	0	3.0
3. provides for public recognition of staff achievements.	2	3	0	0	0	3.4
4. treats district staff with courtesy and respect, recognizing that the appropriate channel for board/staff communications is through the superintendent.	1	2	1	1	0	2.6
5. ensures that our actions and decisions are quickly and effectively communicated to the staff.	0	4	0	1	0	2.6

Average: 2.9

About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. communicate all concerns about staff members to the superintendent.	3	2	0	0	0	3.6
B. use and enforce the chain of command.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
C. attend school and community activities.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8

Average: 3.7**COMMENTS**

- * The Board is good at attending community events and spreading out their reach. The board likes to recognize and appreciate our staff, evident in the new tradition of retiree recognition at our meetings. When budget time comes programing and staff are sacred and not to be cut only as a last resort as per the boards' wishes.
- * I respect the chain of command, although some of the district staff appear not to understand or simply do not care to abide by it.
- * Lack of curtesy to our administrative staff and disregard of their views or advice is a problem contributing to fractured relationships. Occasionally, the need to be right or to win an argument permeates discussions and has no real place at the public meetings. This said I have not witnessed any discourtesy to a member of our teaching staff.

Money is allocated for staff development and professional development days are well planned by our administrative staff.

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The superintendent's recommendation to honor staff retirees at the Board meetings has been welcomed by the Board and staff.

- * It works but can be improved.
- * need to trust our staff and treat them respectfully.

9 Board and Community						
About the Board <i>Our Board</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
1. acts as representatives for every child in our school district.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
2. anticipates community issues and trends affecting our district.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
3. encourages community involvement in the district.	3	1	1	0	0	3.4
4. promotes community use of school facilities.	2	2	1	0	0	3.2
5. builds partnerships with the community, business and governmental leaders.	2	1	2	0	0	3.0
6. provides opportunity for meaningful parental involvement.	2	1	1	1	0	2.8
7. has an effective community relations program.	1	1	3	0	0	2.6

Average: 3.1

About You, the Board Member <i>As a board member, I:</i>	Commendable 4	Good 3	Adequate 2	Unsatisfactory 1	Not Observed	Average
A. make my decisions based on what is best for every child in the entire district.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
B. listen to, and consider, community input while guarding my statutory decision-making authority.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8
C. promote the positive image of the district within the community.	4	1	0	0	0	3.8

Average: 3.8

COMMENTS

* If the public agrees with the majority of the Board they are welcomed, if they disagree they are ignored or chided for their opinions/views.

I have not noticed the building of partnerships with the broader community. Although the Board leadership may meet with the municipal leadership, no meeting notes are generated so it is difficult to know if there is any real communication between the Board and the municipality.

This spring the Stigma Free Committee and the Village Health Department forged a partnership with the Wellness Staff to

bring programs to RHS during May, Mental Health Awareness Month.

Letters to the Board are not routinely responded to by the Board President and letters that challenge or are critical of the Board often go unanswered.

It is most helpful that the Superintendent is responsive to emails and comments and that our Public Information Officer produces quality electronic newsletters highlighting our students and the work done by the district's staff.

The Alternative School Schedule Committee lacked momentum and focus during the first part of the year. But in reality the focus had to be on bringing all students back to school after 18 months of hybrid and home instruction. Educating and assessing children, addressing mental health needs and behavioral issues, developing plans for the effective use of ESSER money, and supporting staff through professional development had to be the priorities. With speakers on student sleep and wellness this spring and the survey soon to be released, the Board and administration may have the data to gauge community support and plan accordingly.

- * It works but can be improved.
- * Board tried to move the district forward.
- * We are representatives of our community, however we speak for the children. We could always be better at communicating with the public, however we get the word out as best as we can. From social media to surveys to mailer to email, the public is updated as much as possible. We allow the public to speak often in our meetings and we are receptive to email communications.
- * It is frustrating when a board trustee undermines statutory decision-making, which then impacts the entire Board. Some decisions are strictly the purview of the Board, and the administration should not be involved in some decisions because they are not elected trustees.

Identifying the Challenges facing your District

Recognizing that our board's highest priority is to improve student achievement, what are 3 major challenges currently facing our district?

- * 1) measuring student achievement accurately and ensuring equity across our buildings
- 2) addressing whether late start makes sense of elementary, middle and high school, and if so, how to implement without reducing instructional minutes
- 3) assessing our math curriculum, which appears to be yielding uneven results
- * * Need to replace CSA - need to work on board image to make sure we have best possible leader for our future
- * Aging Infrastructure of our buildings - 11 buildings that need big improvements and two fields that constantly flood. This is a costly big issue.
- * Covid Fatigue - parents are upset about any new mandates, kids feel tired and worn out, mental health needs to be addressed.
- * Selecting a superintendent search firm and appointing a new superintendent while recognizing and addressing the behaviors that contributed to the loss of two superintendents in less than two years.

Honestly addressing learning loss/lag and mental health issues with appropriate support of our staff and students. Survey parents re level of satisfaction with the district, educational programs, supports etc..

Make a decision re school start times (Alternative School Schedule). Plan accordingly, understanding the science behind adjusting school start times and analyzing and reflecting on the survey data

- * Post covid learning loss, adopting late start, meeting special needs requirements.
- * The notion that "we are Ridgewood and thus rules don't apply to us".

In maintaining our appropriate role as a policy making body through effective oversight, what specific areas of board governance require additional focus and training?

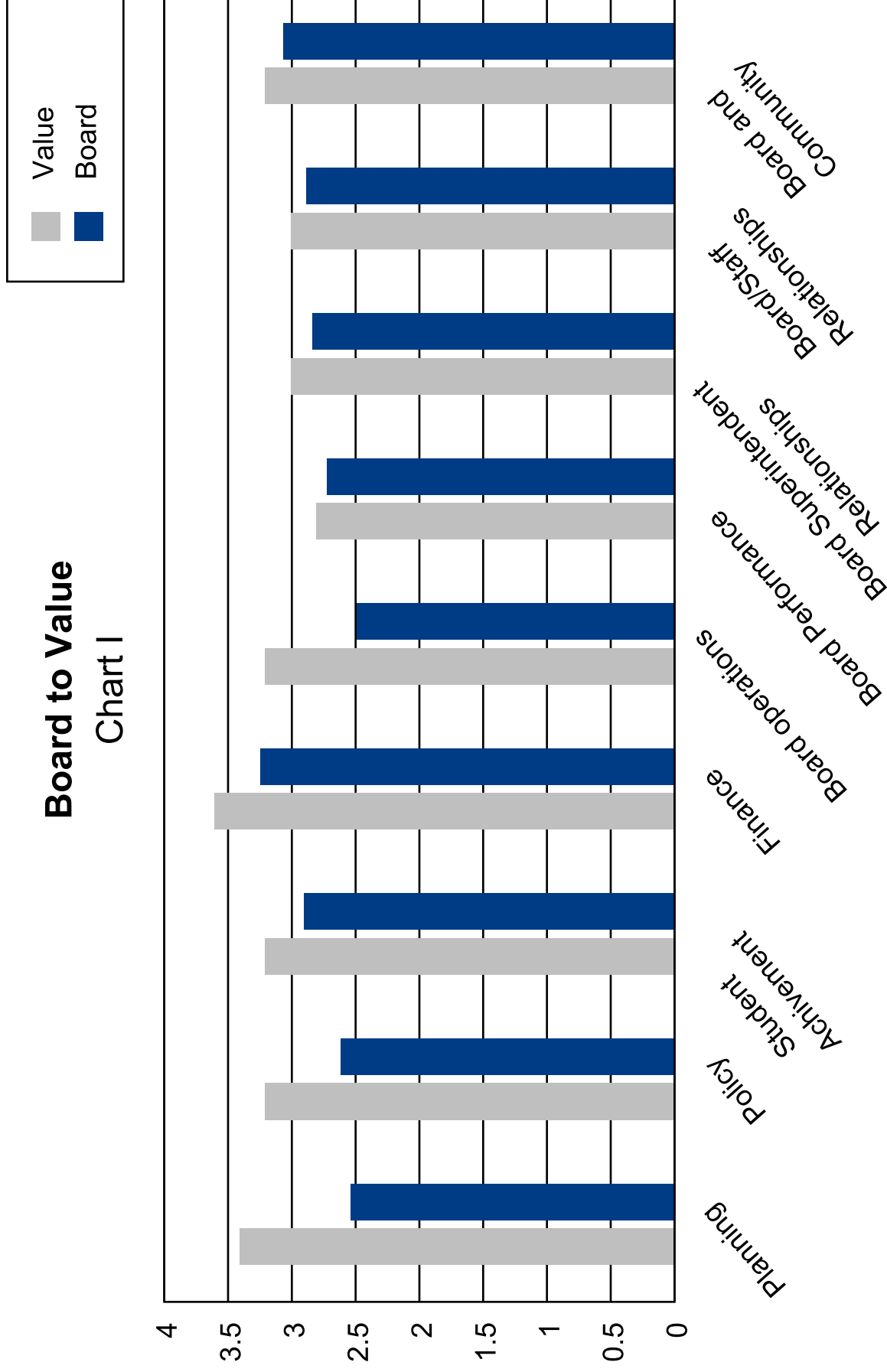
- * 1) individual committee responsibilities need to be better understood and respected by the entire Board
- 2) how to manage public/community involvement without ceding decision-making authority
- 3) ethical conduct
- * Team building would be excellent. The board could do the NJSBA certification program as a certified board as well to make sure everyone is on the same page. The more the board gets to know one another rather than "that person who sits up here with me" I believe the board would work better together. We are in a crucial time for the district and this board can and will be the best one representing Ridgewood for a multitude of reasons.
- * In truth, there is not just one area in need of improvement, but all areas need improvement and work.

Team work, building trust, and collaboration among Board members is essential. Effective oversight should be our goal, working cooperatively with both the interim and future superintendents and our Central Office Administrators.

- * Board needs to do a better job with roles and responsibilities and working with our administration as one team. Currently our administration feels threatened, disrespected and not trusted. This is not a good place to be. Yes Board should ask questions and scrutinize but in a respectful approach.
- * Transparency and Accountability

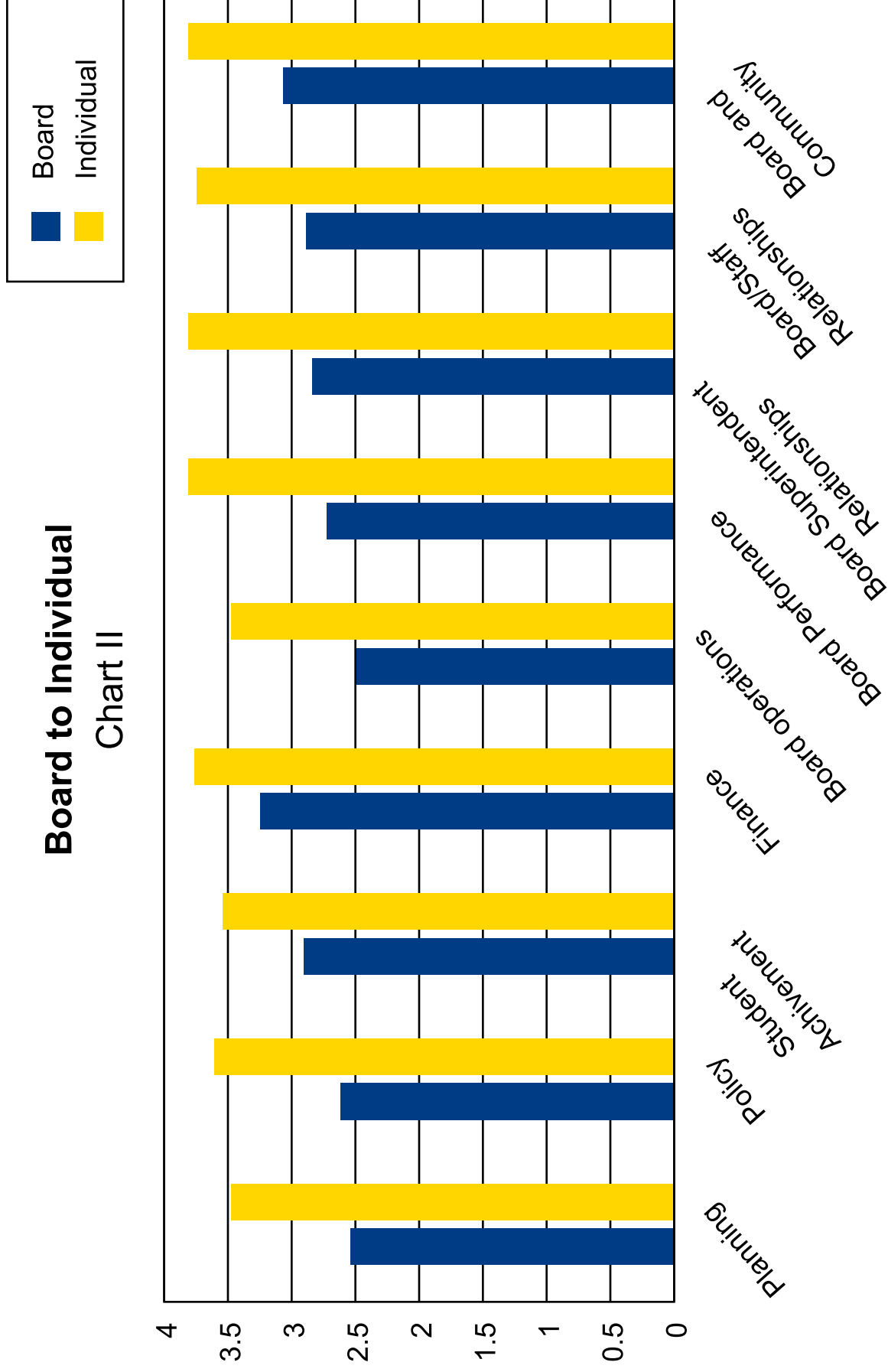
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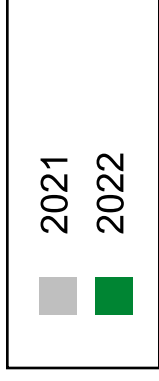
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Current Year vs Prior Year

Chart III

