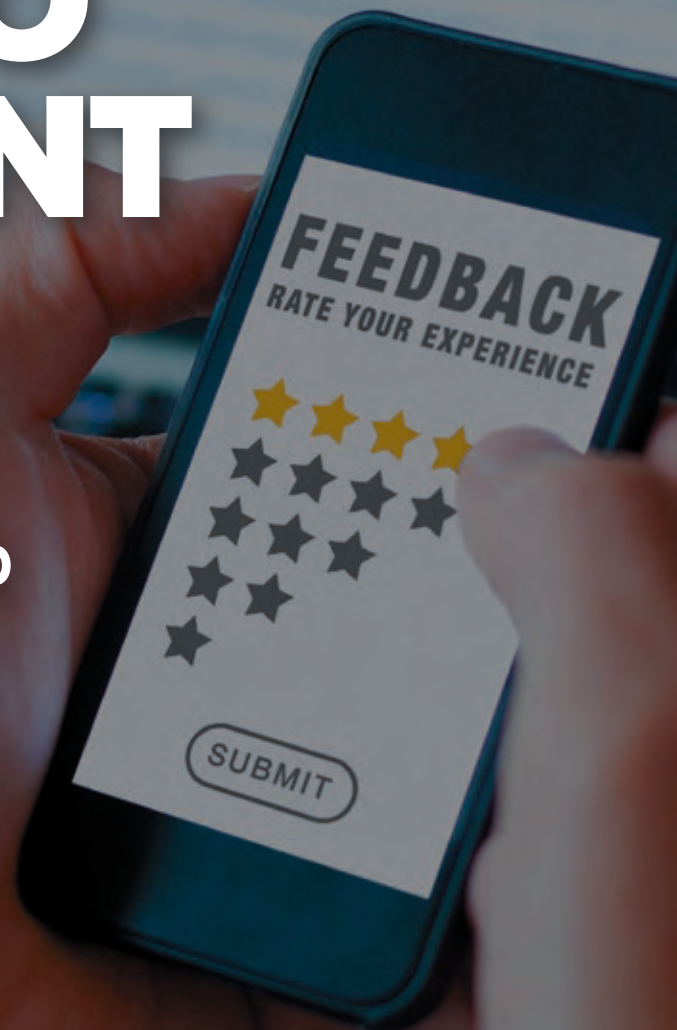


# ISBA IS **PROUD** TO REPRESENT **YOU!**

Members Share  
Thoughts on Membership  
Experience

*By Terry Spradlin, Executive Director*



**T**oday, the Indiana School Boards Association (ISBA) is proud to maintain 100 percent school board participation in membership, including the addition of 298 new school board members from across the state resulting from the November general election. It is impressive that more than 240 of these new members voluntarily participated in the 2021 New Board Member Academy clinic sessions in February and March to develop a foundational understanding of the precepts of effective board governance. ISBA will continue to offer a sequence of webinars into June to further support our new board members in fulfilling their duties.

We have also been planning meaningful and timely content for the 2021 ISBA events calendar for all of our members. Unfortunately, due to persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with a continued abundance of caution, the ISBA Spring Regional Meetings will be cancelled. Instead, ISBA is hosting a live Spring Meeting Webinar on May 12, 6 p.m. EDT. During the webinar, ISBA will present the annual Exemplary Governance Awards, a 2021 legislative session summary report, and a legal update. As the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel shines brighter and we can see an end to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be planning both webinar and hybrid seminars this summer. We then plan to move back to live, in-person events this fall. Please save the dates of October 11-12, 2021, for the Annual Fall Conference at the Indiana Convention Center.

We are committed to serving you to the best of our ability and being attentive to your perspectives, comments, and any concerns about your membership organization. In this regard, we conducted the 2020 ISBA Membership Survey from November 9-December 4, 2020. This was the fourth consecutive year for administration of the Membership Survey. During a similar window in 2017 a baseline survey was conducted, and the results were used to inform a strategic planning process of the ISBA Board of Directors and Staff, with a new three-year plan adopted on June 15, 2018. The Board of Directors and Staff review the annual survey results each March. With good progress to report on the strategic plan, the Board approved an update to the ISBA Strategic Plan to extend it to March, 2022. In addition, the survey results have led to creation of the e-newsletter, e-Dition, the development

of new resource guides, more frequent webinar offerings, and most recently the move to a weekly event email update (to reduce the volume of email messages from the Association during each week). Your feedback is important to us and we are here to serve you!

## RESULTS OF THE 2020 ISBA MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

The 2020 ISBA Membership Engagement Survey was an online survey covering 22 questions, including four open-ended questions. A total of 244 members participated in the survey. The email invitation was sent to 1,509 members, including service and associate members, resulting in a 16.2% response rate. Of the total respondents who were school board members, about 66% were first or second term board members and 33% of respondents were board members in their third term or more. The I.U. Center for Survey Research once again performed the coding, tabulating, and formatting of results of the open-ended questions, and assisted with formatting of overall survey results. We thank Lilian Yahng, Director of Research & Development and the Research Laboratory, and Joel Bolinger and Chris Van Allen, Graduate Assistants, at the Center for Survey Research for lending their expertise to ensure a sound survey instrument and accurate reporting of the results.

A core question of the survey asked members about their perceptions of the Indiana School Boards Association across a number of dimensions. The results of this question are illustrated in Figure 1.

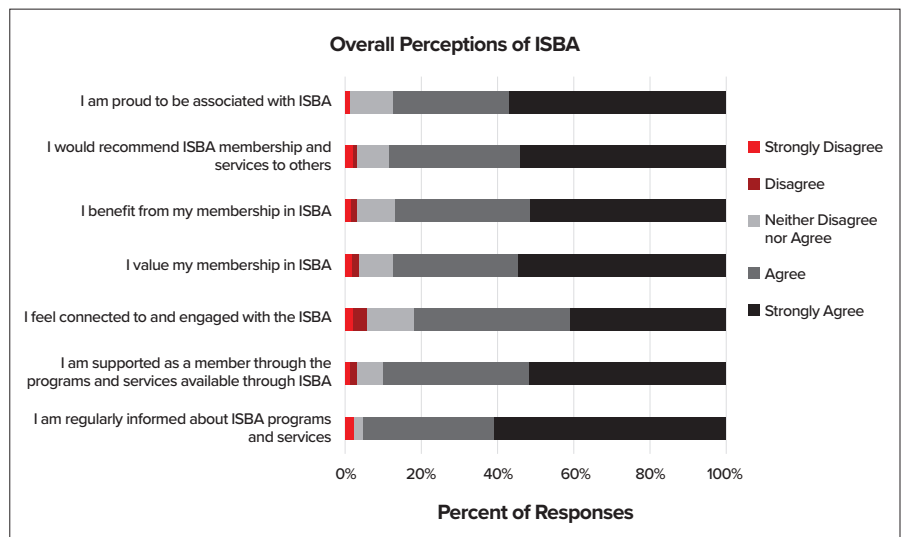


Figure 1. Overall Perceptions of ISBA

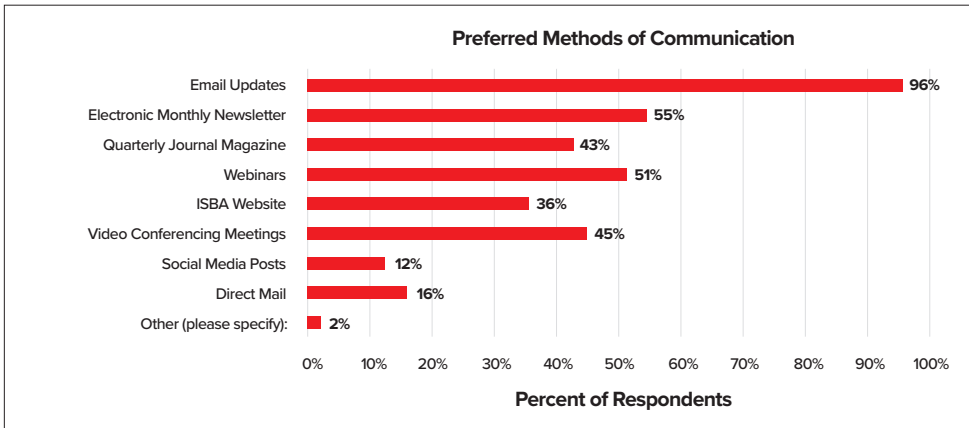


Figure 2. Preferred Methods of Communication

Agreement responses to all parts or dimensions of this question increased from the 2017 survey, most significantly with the percentage of respondents indicating strong agreement. A total of 95% of respondents expressed agreement that they are regularly informed about ISBA programs and services. A total of 89% of respondents agreed that they are supported as a member through the programs and services available from ISBA, up from 80% in 2017. A total of 87% of respondents indicated that they value their membership in ISBA. A growth of 12 percentage points (from 75% to 87%) occurred with the statement: “I benefit from my membership in ISBA.” Another area of membership satisfaction improvement was with membership connectedness and engagement with 82% of respondents sharing agreement, and a 20-percentage point jump in “strongly agree” responses from 2017.

Two subsequent open-ended questions asked about the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the ISBA and its programs and services it provides to its members. Regarding strengths, respondents emphasized regular communication and outreach, legislative services, legal updates, continuing education and professional development, information about issues confronting other school boards, and the availability of staff to answer questions as needed. Regarding weaknesses, the top response was “no recommendations,” but also the travel distance, costs, or timing of meetings, as well as overlapping or redundant event content, and too much email communication.

Another question that we have evaluated closely was the open-ended question asking for topics and issues that members would like addressed at ISBA events in 2021. Top topics were school funding and budgeting, roles and responsibilities of board members, tax increment financing, teacher compensation, and legislative updates. Certainly, hot topics emerge as each school year

progresses, so please do not hesitate to share your input if a key topic was not highlighted here that you would like ISBA to address at an upcoming webinar, seminar, workshop, or conference.

Results of other questions clearly illuminated that ISBA members would like more board training, professional development, and education policy chats or topical webinars (see Figure 2).

Finally, respondents indicated a higher level of satisfaction with the “overall value of membership in ISBA.” A total of 95% of respondents indicated that the value of membership is good (17%), very good (38%), or exceptional (40%), with an increase in those selecting “exceptional” from 25% in 2017 to 40% in 2020.

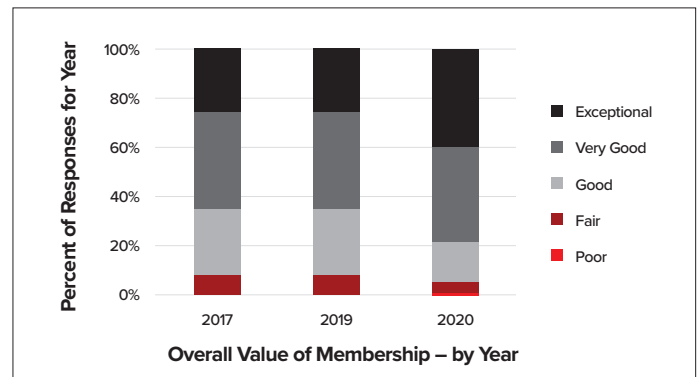


Figure 3. Overall Value of ISBA Membership

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Thank you to the 244 ISBA members who took time to complete the 2020 Membership Survey. We will continue this survey again in November, while using the most recent results to focus our efforts to enhance the programs and services that support you. I hope you are ready to take advantage of the programs and services offered today to you and your fellow board members, and are excited about your membership in the Indiana School Boards Association. Please do not forget to contact us whenever we can be of assistance to you. Working together we can undoubtedly achieve our vision of being the preeminent resource in school governance and a respected advocate of public education. 🏡