



New Jersey School Boards Association

# Operating Within an Effective Committee System

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# What's A Committee?

“A group that keeps minutes  
and loses hours.”

*Milton Berle*

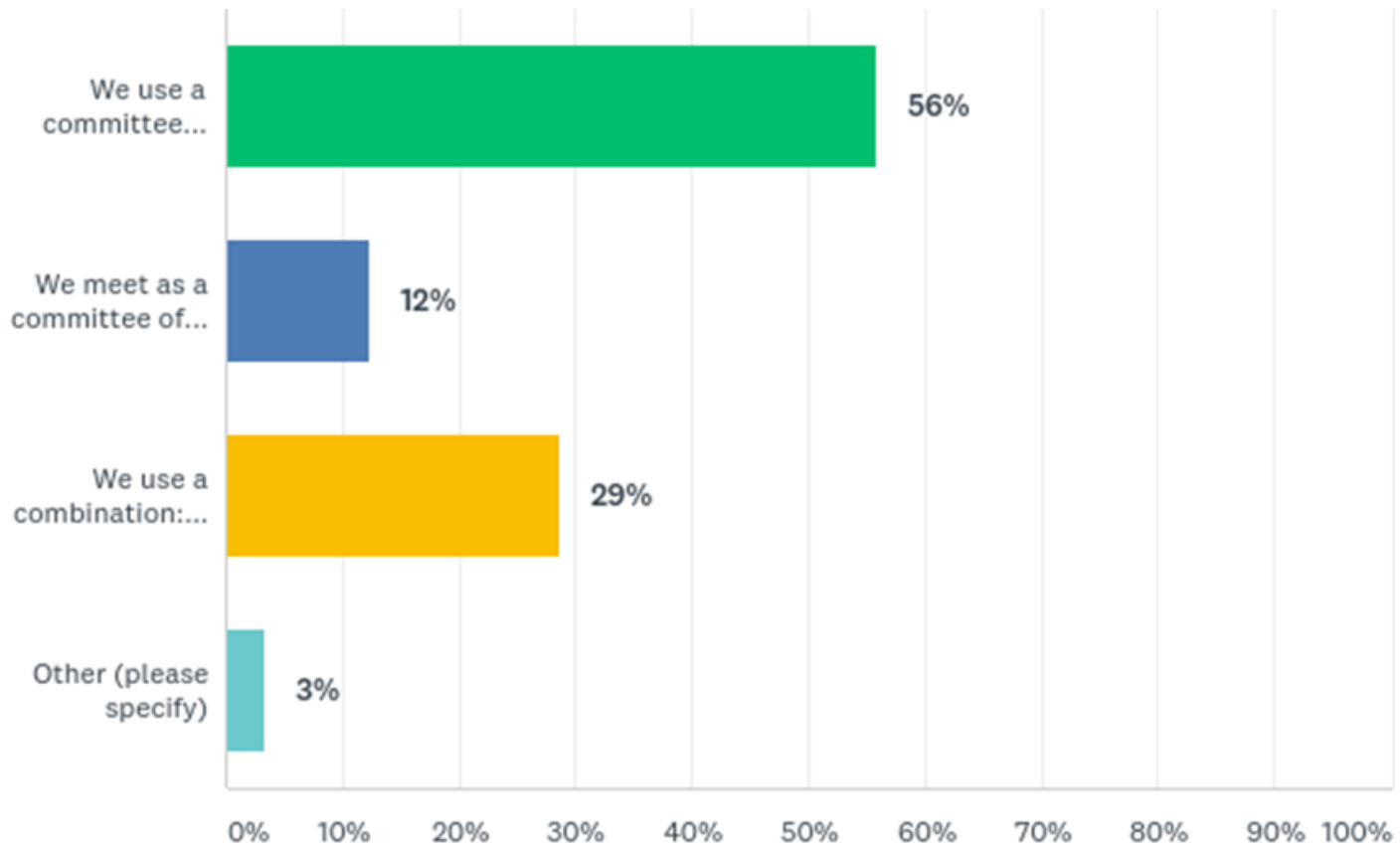


# **2015 Survey On Committees NJSBA School Board Notes**

**March 2015 – 149 Responses**



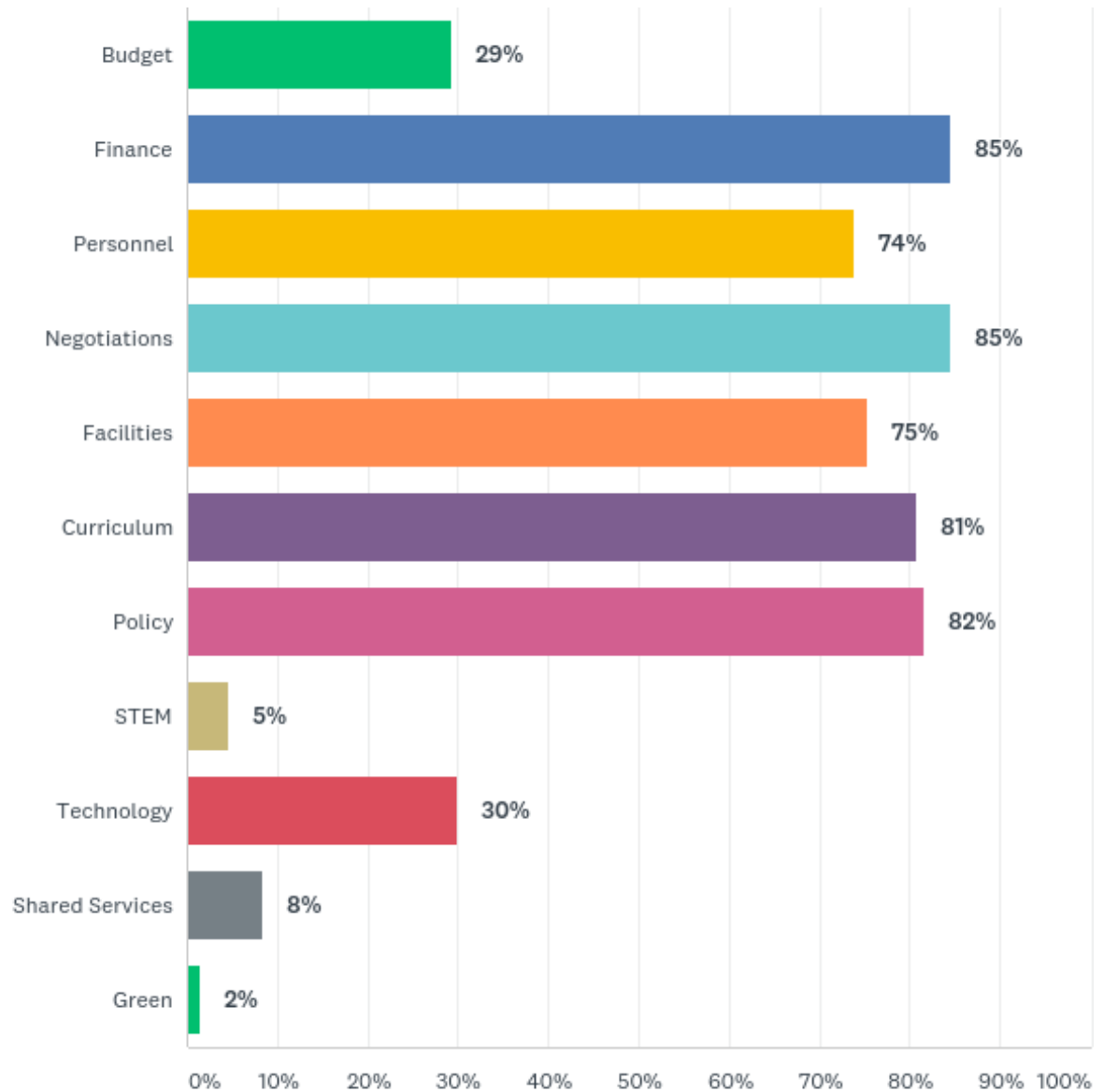
# Which governance structure does your school board use?



\*School Board Notes, March 2015



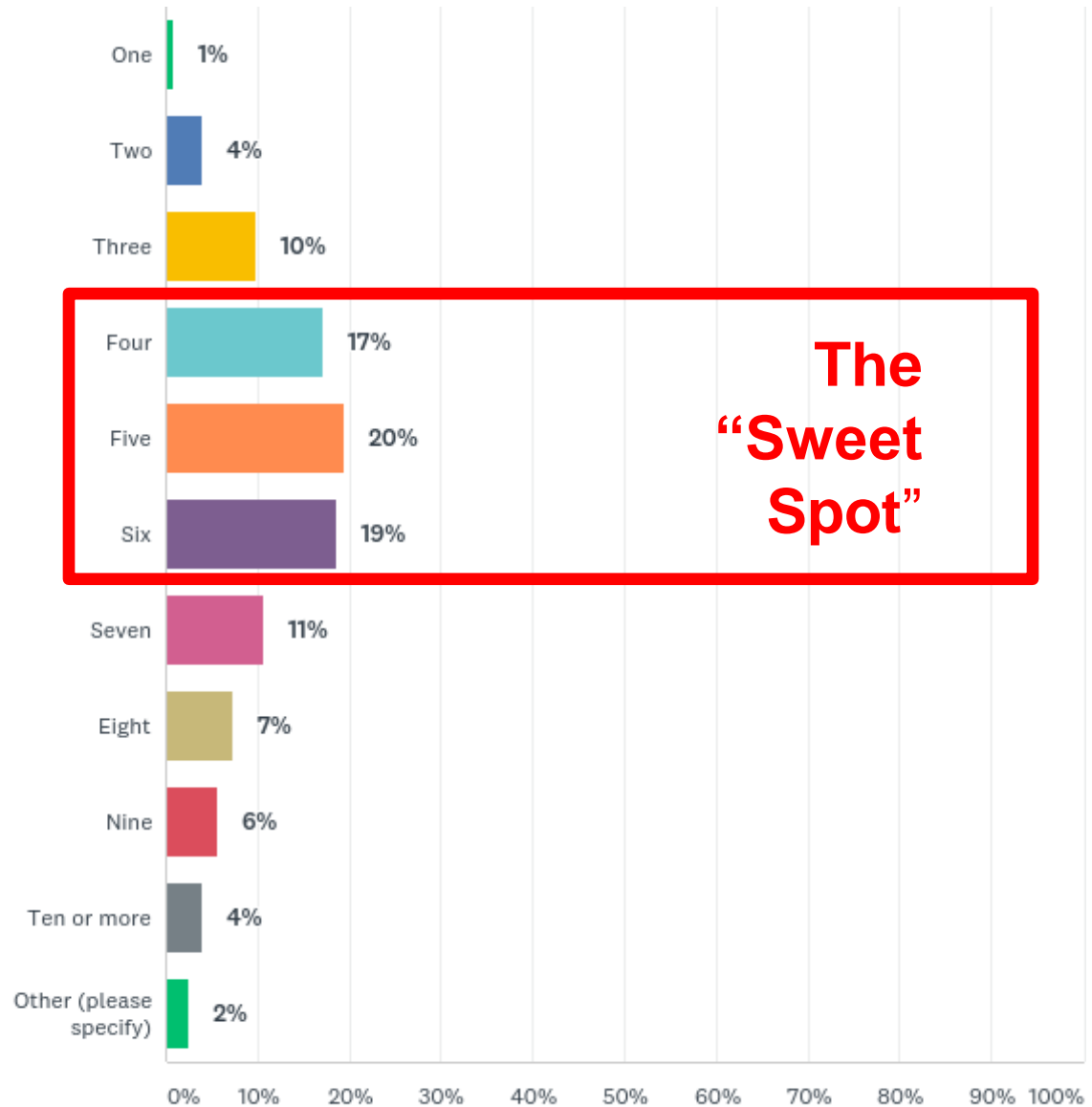
# Which committees does your board use?



\*School Board Notes, March 2015



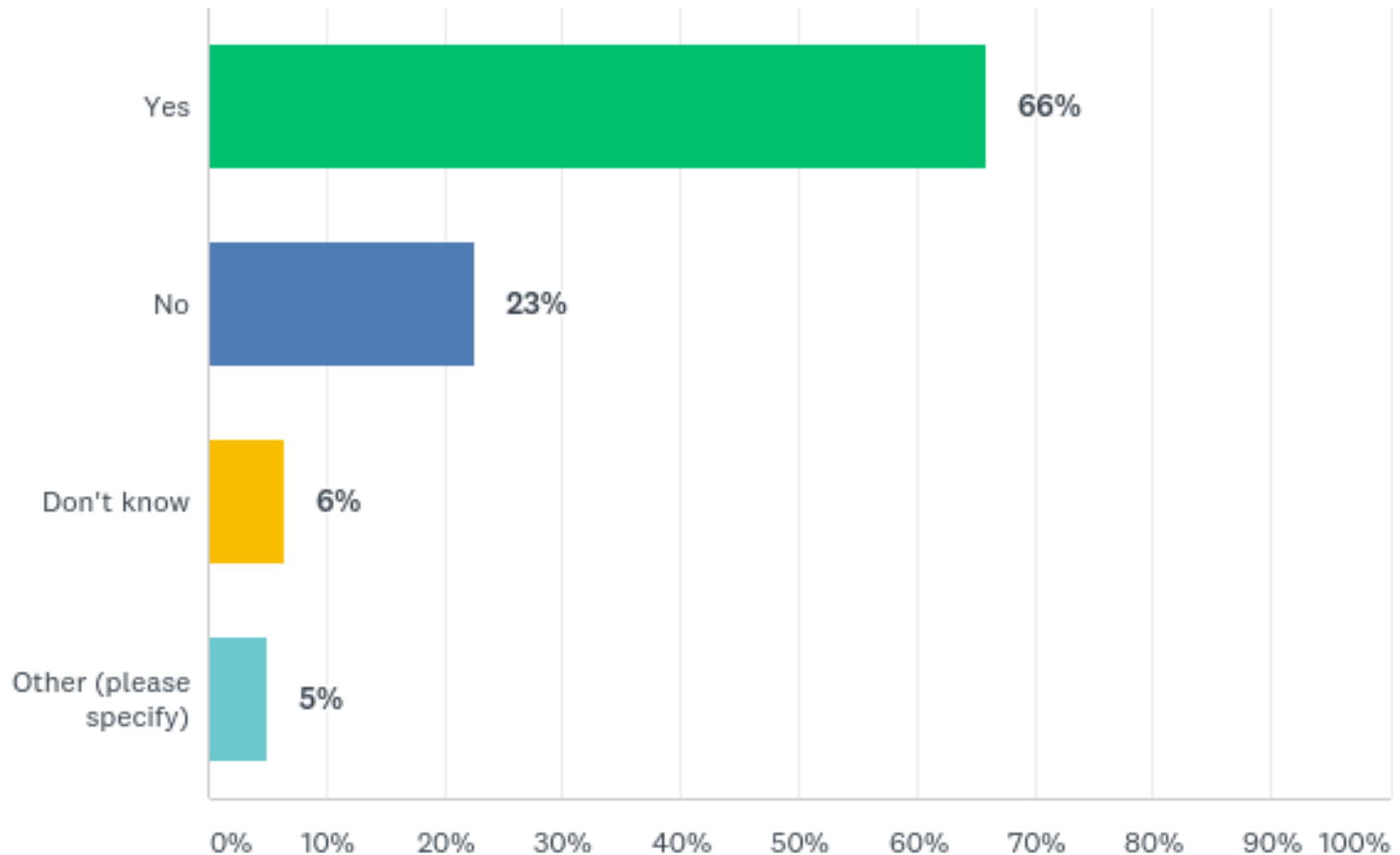
# How many committees does your board use?



\*School Board Notes, March 2015



# Does Your Board Use Ad Hoc Committees?



\*School Board Notes, March 2015



**For what reason(s)  
would/has your board used  
an ad hoc committee?**





# Board Committees Are Effective When They...

- Meet a clearly defined need
- Are established in an appropriate manner
- Operate under clearly defined bylaws
- Lessen the total work of the board members
- Explore issues related to board goals and objectives in depth
- Have a clearly defined reporting process

- Develop and investigate, as requested by the full board, either options or recommendations
- Meet in a timely fashion
- Have an effective chairperson
- Include appropriate administrators and staff
- Provide for minority opinions



# Role Of The Committee Leaders

# A

**Coordinate  
the work  
of the  
committee**

1. Work closely with the administrative liaison assigned to your committee in establishing the agenda and the calendar (if not set by policy or by the board calendar).
2. Lead the discussion on the aligning the focus of the committee to the established DISTRICT GOALS - and how the specific goals assigned to your committee are to be handled.
3. Work with the administrative liaison or the board secretary to arrange the meeting dates, times, locations; keep the committee and the full board informed of the actual meetings.
4. Organize the work of the group -- divide responsibilities, assign recorder, distribute the minutes, do necessary follow-up.
5. Facilitate group process/chair the meetings.



# Role Of The Committee Leaders (cont.)

# B

**Communicate  
between the  
committee /  
the board /  
CSA**

1. Arrange for the committee report form to be completed during or following every meeting, and ensure the distribution of meeting notices and the committee report.
2. Communicate I anticipate any problems or concerns to the board president and to the CSA.
3. Arrange (through the CSA) for other administrators to work with the committee (resources, presentations, ideas).
4. Set target dates for completing certain committee tasks and reports.



# Advantages of COW vs. Standing

## Committee of the Whole

- Common understanding of issues by all members
- Everyone gets same information at same time
- Increased transparency
- Opportunity for increased stakeholder input
- Work is focused on the needs of the full Board.

## Standing Committee

- Thorough research and consideration of information
- More time at regular meetings for other Board business
- Build ownerships and accountability among the members
- Builds a more cohesive board-administrative working relationship.



# Best Practices Summary

## **A Well-run Committee Meeting**

- Starts and ends on time
- Follows an agenda
- Maintains focused discussions
- Is led by an effective chairperson
- Members are thoughtfully appointed
- Provides administrative liaison and materials

## **Accountability to Board**

- Sends committee agenda to all board members
- Reporting mechanism so all members have a thorough understanding of recommendations prior to voting.
- Focuses on furthering the work of the Board
- Examines its effectiveness



# Questions?

