



## Summary: 2015 District Professional Survey

*The Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials conducted a member survey in October and November 2015. Two versions of the survey were made available: one for school district professionals and one for Service Affiliate members. A total 437 District Professionals and 89 Service Affiliates responded to the survey. WASBO's Member Resources Committee collaborated to create the survey, and the resulting data is being used by the WASBO Board of Directors as it develops the association's strategic plan. Below is a summary of the District Professional survey responses.*

### Membership Value

Of survey respondents:

- 36% have been members for less than 5 years
- 29% have been members 5-9 years
- 17% have been members 10-14 years
- 11% have been members 15-20 years
- 7% have been members for more than 20 years

Every respondent found value in WASBO membership. More than 86% found WASBO membership to be valuable or very valuable, with 11% finding its value is about average, and only 3% responding that membership is slightly valuable.

- *"Without WASBO's help I would have been lost as a new business manager"*
- *"Great to network with other peers, since most districts only have one business manager"*
- *"I believe school districts look for this professional membership when hiring"*

Similarly, 91% of respondents said they were likely or very likely to recommend WASBO membership. The remaining 9% said they were of average or slight likelihood to recommend WASBO.

- *"Over the years I have introduced many acquaintances to WASBO, and they have always thanked me for introducing them to our great resourceful organization."*
- *"In order for them to stay current in their profession, they need professional development. It is also very valuable for superintendents, business managers, and buildings and grounds personnel to learn what each other does. The more you learn about each position, the better you become and the better your school district will operate."*
- *"WASBO has helped me in so many ways, and I want to let other people in on the advantages."*

Most members cited the professional development opportunities, member rates for conference registration, and networking opportunities as the top benefits for WASBO membership. Also ranking high as benefits were legislative representation, the mentorship program, professional recognition awards, and the Facilities Manager Certification program.

Most of WASBO's communication-based member benefits ranked highly with members as well, with top marks going to the online member portal for paying invoices and renewing membership, Taking Care of Business newsletter, Wisconsin Education News email, Peer to Peer communication network, WASBO.com website content, and the online member directory.

While most had no suggestions for improving the value of WASBO membership, several responded with ideas such as:

- adding completed coursework to the online member profile
- a liaison person to field general questions
- sessions for district administrators who are also their district's business manager
- sessions on food service, software, and mandated law changes
- additional training formats such as webinars, online sessions, 1-day mini-summits
- more forums for exchanging ideas
- certification options for non-administrative staff
- buyers consortiums
- electronic database of salary information, mill rates, coaching stipends, etc.

Other services and benefits suggested included:

- additional certifications, including ALICE (safety), human resources, and payroll
- group health insurance and/or liability insurance through the association
- a legal hotline and database of documents
- legal and human resources advice
- management audits
- district reviews and/or training; administrative team development
- assistance with pre-audit work
- email alerts with deadlines for new administrators
- staffing and recruitment tools

## **Certifications**

Participation in current certification programs showed room for growth:

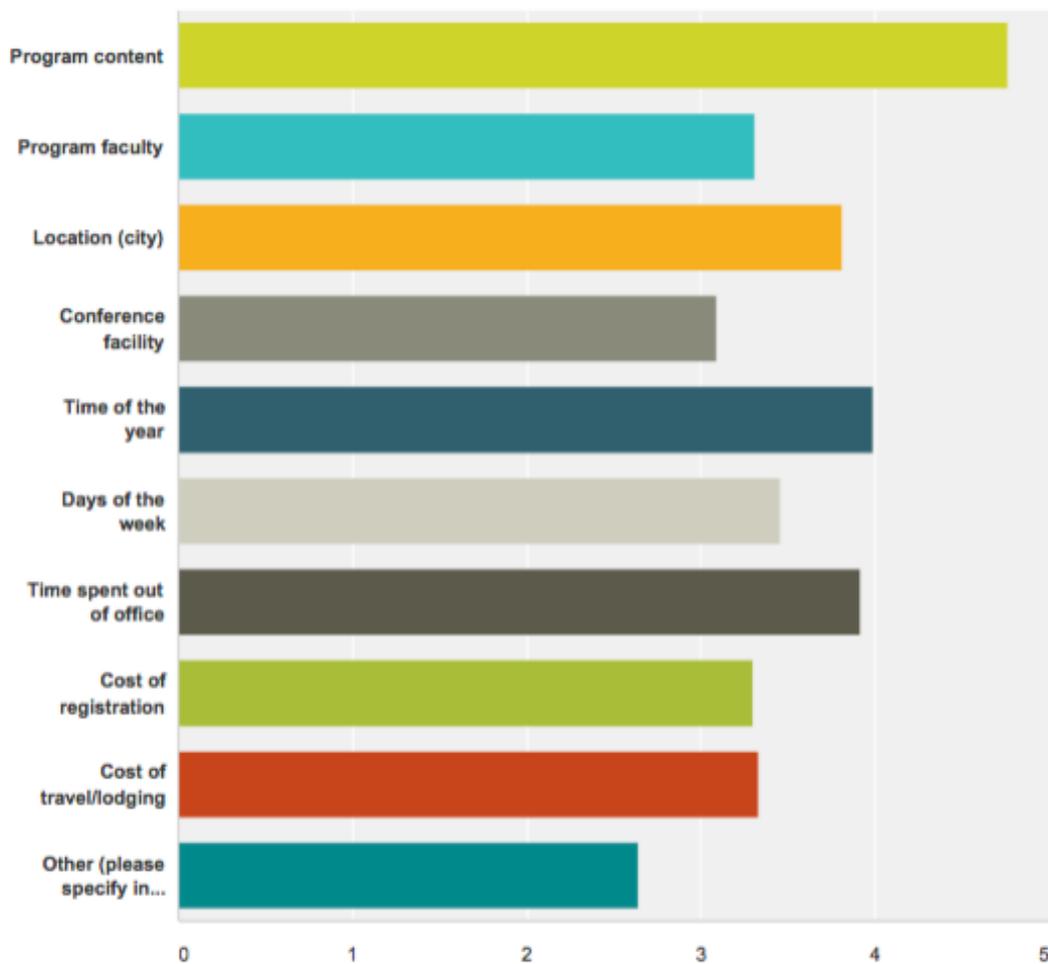
- Facilities Manager Certification: 15% have participated in the past, 21% are continuing participation, and 6% plan to begin participating.
- Certified School Risk Managers designation: 9% have participated in the past, 10% are continuing participation, and 26% plan to begin participating.
- ASBO SFO program: 4% have participated in the past, 4% are continuing participation, and 20% plan to begin participating.

Looking at possible additional programs, 88% indicated they might pursue a human resources certification, and 67% expressed interest in a payroll certification.

## Conferences

The highest percentage of respondents attended the Accounting Conference, followed closely by the Spring and Fall Conferences. Reported attendance rates correlated strongly with actual registration numbers.

Among factors influencing respondents' decision to attend a conference, program content was the top criteria. The following chart shows the importance of location, cost, timing, and other factors to conference attendance. Several comments indicated that travel time, especially for districts in the northern part of the state, can be problematic.



A total 92% of respondents indicated they receive high or very high value for attending WASBO conferences. Less than 1% felt conferences were low value.

- *“I always work with the premise if I can learn one new item to put into practice that improves our district, then it was worth the cost.”*
- *“Being part of a smaller school district, it allows time for networking and getting ideas from others doing what I do in the business office.”*

Respondents were in favor of alternative professional development opportunities, with 38% interested or very interested in audio recordings, 62% interested or very interested in video recordings, and 68% interested or very interested in live online webinars. The overall top three conferences respondents wanted to see recorded were the Accounting Conference, Wisconsin Federal Funding Conference, and Fall Conference.

## **Communications**

WASBO’s communication to members was evaluated as timely and informative or extremely timely and informative by 95% of respondents. Some suggestions included additional online resources and a streamlined, more frequent newsletter.

WASBO staff was highly rated as well, with 93% rating them very or extremely helpful, 92% very or extremely timely and informative, and 95% very or extremely friendly.

Members indicated that WASBO’s web presence was important, but most respondents visit the site less than once a week. While visits to the site were for a wide range of purposes, the highest numbers used the site for conference registration or membership renewal. A significant number rely on the site for future conference dates, conference materials, the Peer to Peer Communication Forum, and access to the newsletter. A total 80% reported they always or almost always find what they are looking for on the website, with 20% sometimes finding what they needed.

WASBO’s newsletter, *Taking Care of Business*, is available in print and online. Nearly equal numbers reported reading it in print and as an online document.

WASBO members currently are not heavy users of social media other than Facebook. While less than 10% of respondents reported using each of the other media mentioned (LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram) on a daily basis, 40% said they used Facebook at least daily – and 15% more used it at least weekly. LinkedIn was the second-most-used tool, with 13% using it at least weekly and 15% at least monthly.

## Participation

Nearly 100% of respondents reported participating in WASBO in some way. Conference attendance had the highest participation rate, at 98%. Regionals were the second most popular way to participate, with 45% having attended a regional meeting.

- 37% have asked or answered a question on the Peer to Peer Communication Forum
- 22% have participated in a scholarship fundraiser, and 19% have donated money to the scholarship fund
- 22% have volunteered and/or moderated sessions at a conference
- 19% have presented at a conference
- 19% have served on a committee
- 17% have received mentorship training or served as a mentor

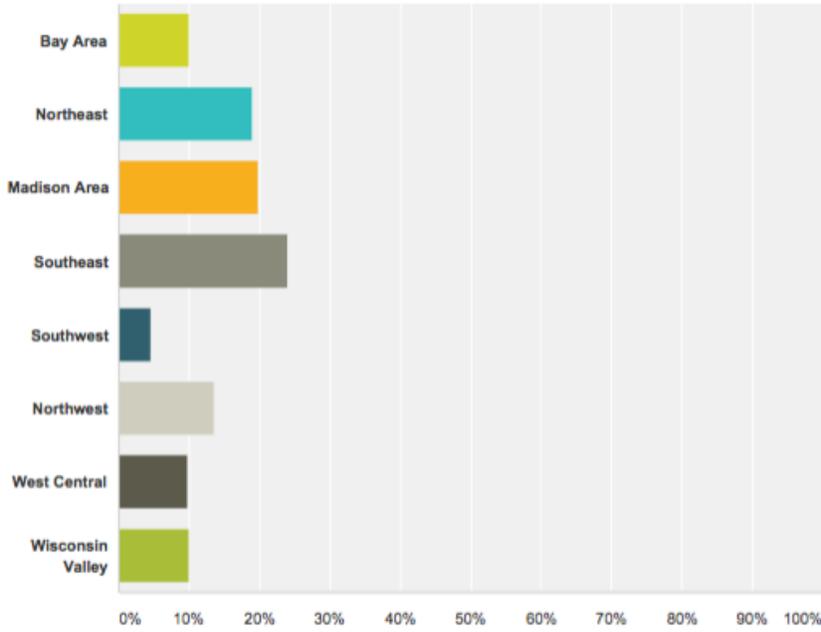
Among those who do not participate in WASBO, 80% indicated it was because of other time commitments, with 30% saying that they did not feel qualified to participate.

- *“Being a new business manager has been overwhelming. After a year and a half I am still trying to get reports done in a timely manner and handle all of the responsibilities at the district. I'm working 50-60 hours per week and see no let up any time soon.”*

*Fundraisers:* Silent Auction, Golf, and Walk/Run fundraisers were the top choices for activities to raise funds for the WASBO scholarship program, with 37% favoring auctions, 31% golf, and 27% a walk/run. Other significant choices were a casino night with 22%, bowling with 17%, direct donation with 14%, and a bike ride with 12%. Suggestions included a 3D archery competition and a trivia night. Those who did not participate in fundraisers indicated time constraints (66%), not golfing or biking (34%), not knowing others who participate (22%), and expense (12%).

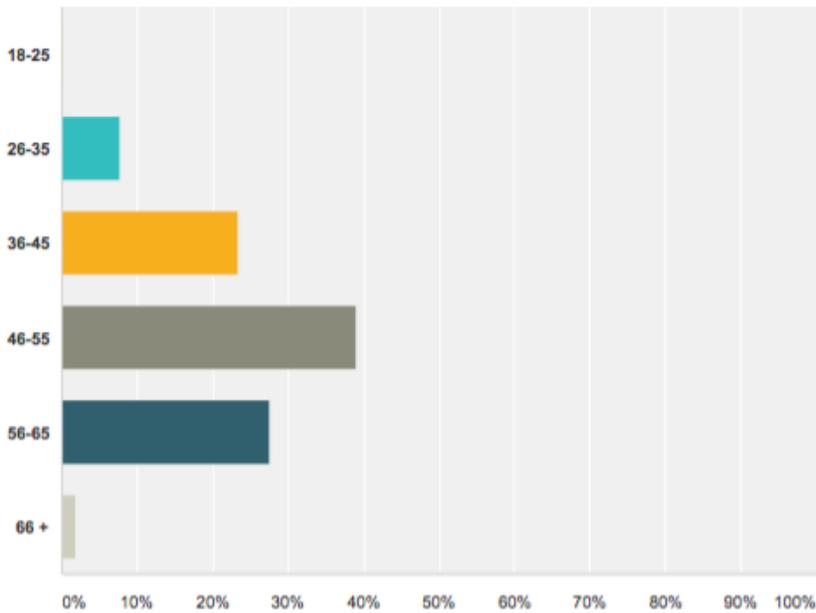
*Regionals:* While 69% of respondents were aware of the eight regional WASBO groups, 32% regularly attend their regional meetings. Some indicated that other staff members attend and then summarize the meetings for others. Several noted their appreciation when the executive director and board members attend regionals.

The distribution of respondents to regionals is as follows:

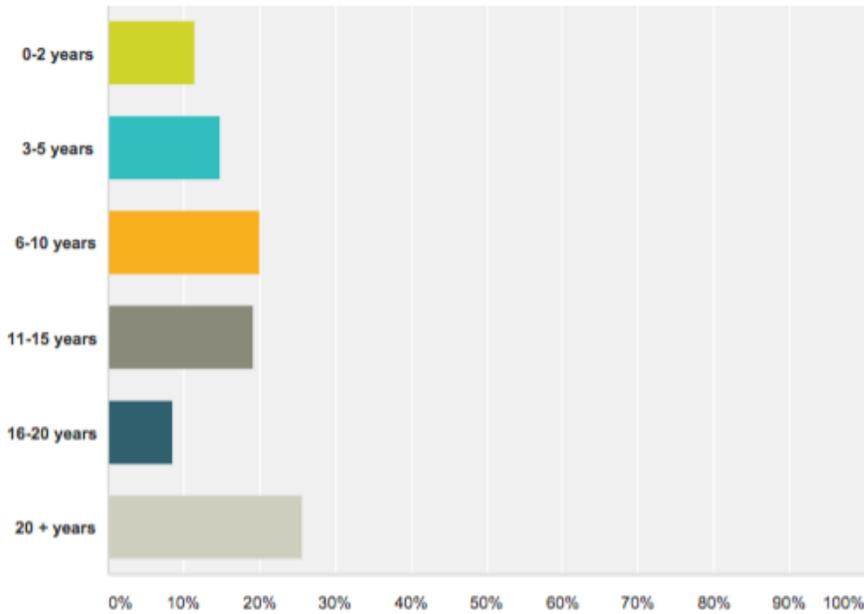


## Demographics

- 54% female, 46% male
- 37% have a School Business Administrator (08) license
- see age distribution below



- see length of time working for operations side of schools below



A wide range of job titles was represented.

- Business Manager (Director of Business Services, etc.): 123
- Buildings & Grounds (Facilities Director, Maintenance Director, etc.): 69
- Bookkeeper: 35
- Finance Manager/CFO: 29
- Comptroller/Accountant: 24
- Human Resources/Payroll: 13
- Administrative Assistant (Business Secretary, Support Specialist, etc.): 10
- Superintendent/District Administrator: 10
- Administrator: 9
- Custodial Supervisor: 9
- Transportation/Bus Maintenance: 4
- Purchasing: 3
- Special Projects: 2
- Risk Manager: 1
- Budget Manager: 1

A number of respondents shared additional comments.

- *“I think WASBO is fantastic and I have much more knowledge because of my membership. I highly recommend joining WASBO to anyone starting off in this career. The only negative had to do when I was a Business Director for an independent charter school. I was enrolled in the 08 program and was not able to get a job in a public district.*

*My only option was the independent charter. I wanted to stay involved with WASBO being in the 08 program and many of the sessions still applied to me at the charter school. However, I often felt as the "enemy" at the conferences. I understand the feeling towards independent charters but hopefully they could feel welcome in WASBO."*

- *"I would love to see a data collection Hub for facility managers in the state. We are called on to benchmark many things and there is nobody to really monitor the integrity of data collection, or an official way to do it."*
- *"It is difficult to balance all the job responsibilities of a district administrator and a business official. WASBO has provided me with very valuable opportunities."*