

**MSBA School Divisions Survey**  
Final Report  
*Prepared for the*  
*Manitoba School Boards Association*  
July 2010

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

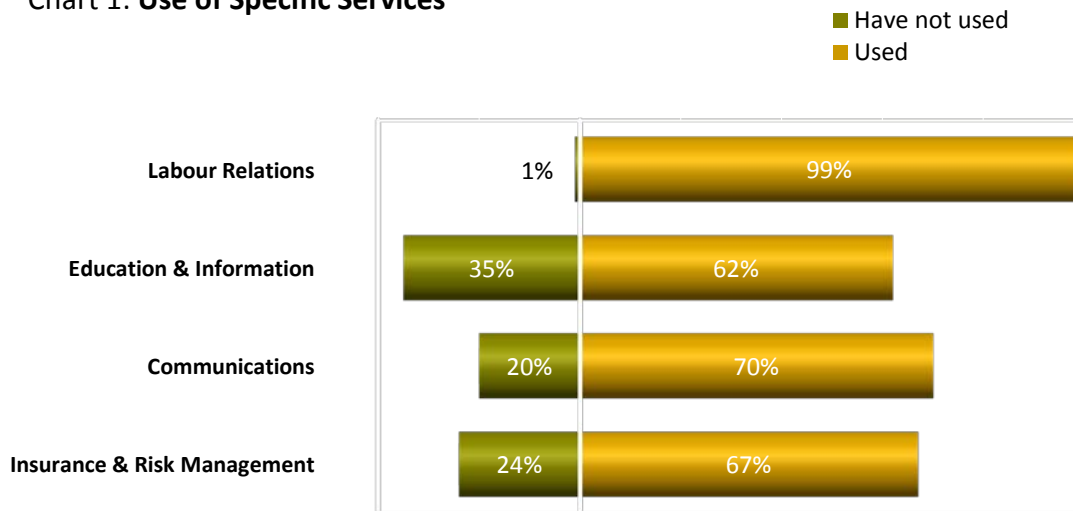
On behalf of the Manitoba School Board Association (MSBA), Viewpoints Research interviewed 100 School Board Chairs, Secretary Treasurers and Superintendents from 37 school divisions in Manitoba from June 2 to 24, 2010.

The survey explored respondents' use and perceptions of, and satisfaction with, the services and work undertaken by the MSBA.

## Use of Services

Use of the services provided by the MSBA in the past 12 months is high, ranging from 62% of respondents accessing education and information services to 99% accessing labour relations services.

Chart 1: Use of Specific Services



### *Labour Relations Services*

The two labour relations services used most widely are contract administration and interpretation (81%) and the services of a collective bargaining spokesperson (76%). Legal advice and workshop presentations were each sought out by 64% of respondents. About half had used each of research and information services, and human resource policy administration services (52%), while 37% have accessed rights and interest arbitration.

### *Education & Information Services*

Of the respondents who had accessed education and information services, almost all had participated in trustee development workshops and seminars at the MSBA convention (98%). Other trustee development workshops and seminars were accessed by 71% of respondents and 65% had used legal and other interpretations

of law and regulations. A third of respondents had participated in customized board development sessions (32%) and one in five had used the sample board policy service (21%).

### ***Communications Services***

The communications service used by most respondents was the newspaper clipping service (84%), followed by the Association website (83%) and bi-weekly e-bulletins (81%). Three in four had used posters provided by the MSBA (74%), while seven in ten accessed resource packages on topics such as communicating school budget information and the Talking About series (69%). Six in ten respondents had used the trustee datebook (61%).

### ***Insurance & Risk Management Services***

Of the respondents who had used insurance and risk management services, 4 in 5 had accessed Manitoba School Insurance (82%) and safety resources (81%). Three in four had accessed risk management publications (73%), two thirds initiated on-site inspections (66%) and more than half had participated in safety training sessions (55%). Three percent (3%) mentioned accessing other services.

## **Ways to Improve Services and Work**

### ***Labour Relations Services***

While two in five respondents could not identify any ways the MSBA could improve their labour relations services and support (40%), several themes emerged from the balance of respondents. Ideas to increase meetings and opportunities to network were expressed by 29% of respondents, while 20% expressed a desire for more, clearer or more current information. Eight percent (8%) mentioned more aggressive negotiations.

### ***Education & Information Services***

When asked what the MSBA should be doing to improve the education and information services it provides to school divisions, responses followed several themes. One in four respondents mentioned more professional development, workshops, seminars and training generally (25%) and 14% mentioned improvements in communication and consultation. One in eight respondents advocated a stronger public presence (12%), while more focus on governance and more strategic planning were mentioned by 12%.

### ***Communications Services***

Two themes emerged regarding what the MSBA should be doing to improve the communications services it provides to school divisions. Eighteen percent (18%) of

respondents suggested ways to increase the diversity of services, while an equal number asked for more frequency of contact with the MSBA and their peers (18%). More than half of respondents could not propose any improvements (53%) and 12% were unsure.

### ***Insurance & Risk Management Services***

When asked what the MSBA should be doing to improve the insurance and risk management services it provides, respondents gave answers along themes of greater communications (16%), more training opportunities (13%), and enhanced insurance policies (8%).

Fifty percent (50%) had no suggestions and another 14% were unsure.

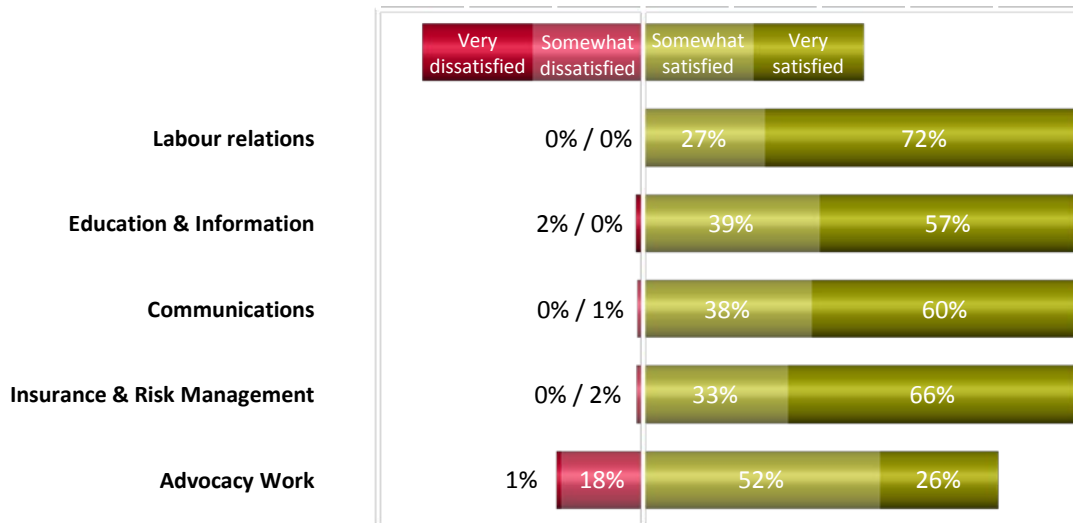
### ***Advocacy Work***

Suggestions for the MSBA to improve its advocacy work generally explored two themes. A third of respondents suggested more advocacy work (33%), while 21% mentioned ideas to increase consultation and collaboration in advocacy work. More than half of respondents either had no suggestions (37%) or were unsure (17%).

## Satisfaction with MSBA

Respondents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the services and supports the Manitoba School Board Association provides to their school divisions, with 98% indicating they are either somewhat or very satisfied. A majority said they are very satisfied (52%), while 46% are somewhat satisfied, allowing some room for improvement. One respondent was somewhat dissatisfied and another was very dissatisfied.

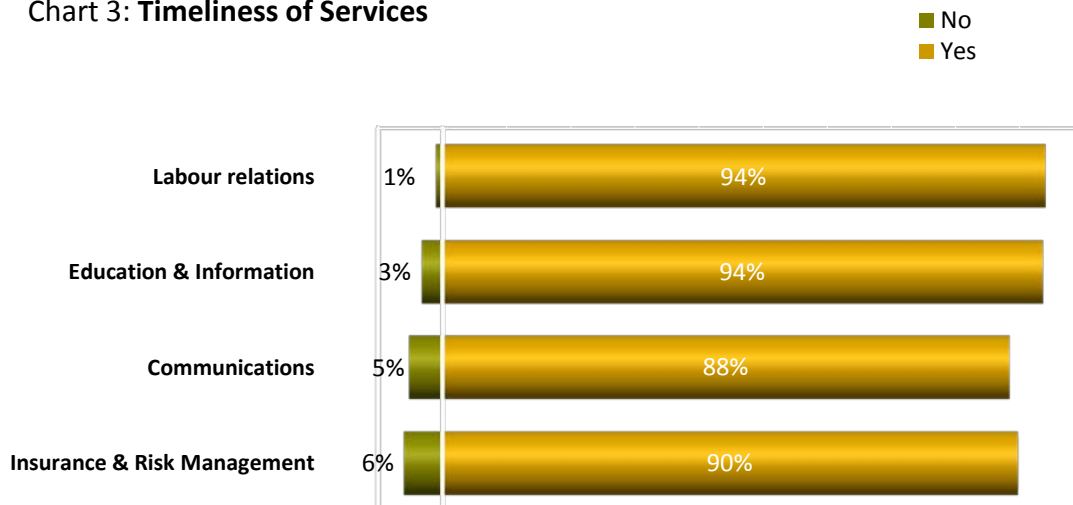
Chart 2: Satisfaction with Specific Services & Activities



## Timeliness of Services

Responses were generally favourable when asked about the timeliness of specific services provided by the MSBA.

Chart 3: Timeliness of Services



## Specific Access and Satisfaction

In the past 12 months 85% of respondents have contacted the MSBA about a difficult or delicate situation, while the balance of respondents had not (15%).

Of those who contacted the MSBA in this way, the overwhelming majority were satisfied with the service they received, with 78% indicating they were very satisfied and a further 19% saying they were somewhat satisfied. Only 3% said they were somewhat dissatisfied and no one expressed strong dissatisfaction.

## Perceptions of the MSBA

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with seven statements about the services and supports provided by the MSBA.

Three statements regarding communications received strongest agreement, from 93% to 99% overall agreement.

Although at least 3 in 4 respondents agreed to all statements, agreement to those about the mandate and activities of the MSBA were somewhat weaker than statements regarding communications, ranging from 76% to 86% overall agreement.

## MSBA Conventions, AGMs & Regional Meetings

### *MSBA Conventions and AGMs*

Asked about the timing and location of the MSBA's convention and AGM, a majority of respondents prefer the status quo.

Regarding timing, 56% of respondents would like to continue to have the convention and AGM held in March of each year, 24% favour the fall and 18% feel it does not matter.

A similar number would like the convention and AGM to continue to take place in Winnipeg (56%), while 39% would either prefer it alternating between Winnipeg and Brandon (26%) or Winnipeg, Brandon and a third location (13%).

### *Regional Meetings*

Almost nine in ten respondents have attended an MSBA regional meeting in the past 12 months (87%), while 13% have not.

Seven in ten respondents favour continuing with two regional meetings per year (69%), rather than switching to the mandated minimum of one meeting (20%).

# GOALS & METHODOLOGY

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## Goals

On behalf of the Manitoba School Board Association (MSBA), Viewpoints Research undertook to interview the School Board Chairs, Secretary Treasurers and Superintendents from 37 school divisions in Manitoba. Of these 111 contacts, Viewpoints completed interviews with 100 individuals from June 2 to 24, 2010. The survey explored:

- satisfaction with the services and supports provided by the MSBA
- general perceptions of the MSBA
- access, timeliness and satisfaction with specific MSBA services and supports
- ways the MSBA could improve specific MSBA services and supports
- the timing, frequency and locations of MSBA conventions, AGMs and regional meetings
- topics of discussion at regional meetings

## Methodology

### *Questionnaire Design*

In consultation with the Manitoba School Board Association, Viewpoints Research drafted a survey to explore the perceptions of, and satisfaction with, the services and supports provided to Manitoba school boards by the MSBA. School boards were advised of the research, and copies of the survey were distributed to interviewees in advance, to allow them to consult with their board members, and consider and prepare thoughtful responses to the survey questions.

From June 2 to 24, 2010, Viewpoints conducted 100 interviews by telephone, from a contact list of 111 names. Numerous attempts were made to contact each potential respondent, and call backs were arranged at times that were convenient to him or her.

The survey results have a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

### *Data Analysis*

The analysis of the data includes cross-tabulations of responses to each question by region and by the three positions.

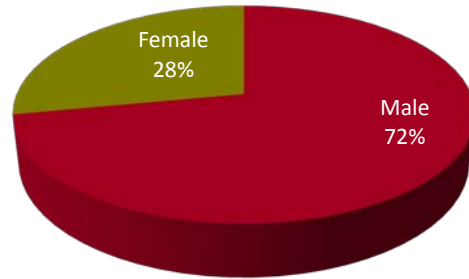
The relatively small sample size limits the reliability of differences observed among these sub-groups, and statistically significant differences were few.

## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

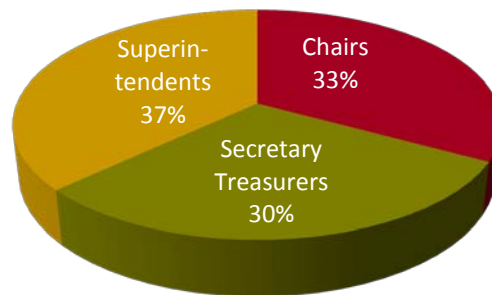
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The following charts outline attributes of the 100 school board chairs, secretary treasurers and superintendents interviewed.

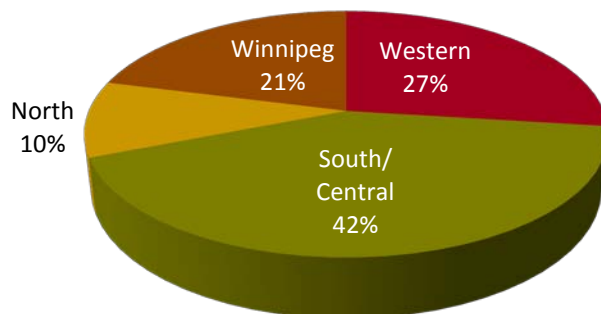
### Gender



### Position



### Region



## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

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### Satisfaction with MSBA

Respondents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the services and supports the Manitoba School Board Association provides to their school divisions, with 98% indicating they are either somewhat or very satisfied. A majority said they are very satisfied (52%), while 46% are somewhat satisfied. One respondent was somewhat dissatisfied and another was very dissatisfied.

### Specific Access and Satisfaction

In the past 12 months 85% of respondents have contacted the MSBA about a difficult or delicate situation, while the balance of respondents had not (15%).

Of those who contacted the MSBA in this way, the overwhelming majority were satisfied with the service they received, with 78% indicating they were very satisfied and a further 19% saying they were somewhat satisfied. Only 3% said they were somewhat dissatisfied and no one expressed strong dissatisfaction.

### Perceptions of the MSBA

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with seven statements about the services and supports provided by the MSBA.

Three statements regarding communication received strongest agreement. *“Responds to your School Division’s requests in a timely manner”* garnered overall agreement of 99% (64% strongly agree), followed by *“communicates well with your School Division”* at 94% (46% strongly) and *“practices open communication and shares information freely with School Divisions”* with 93% overall agreement (45% strongly).

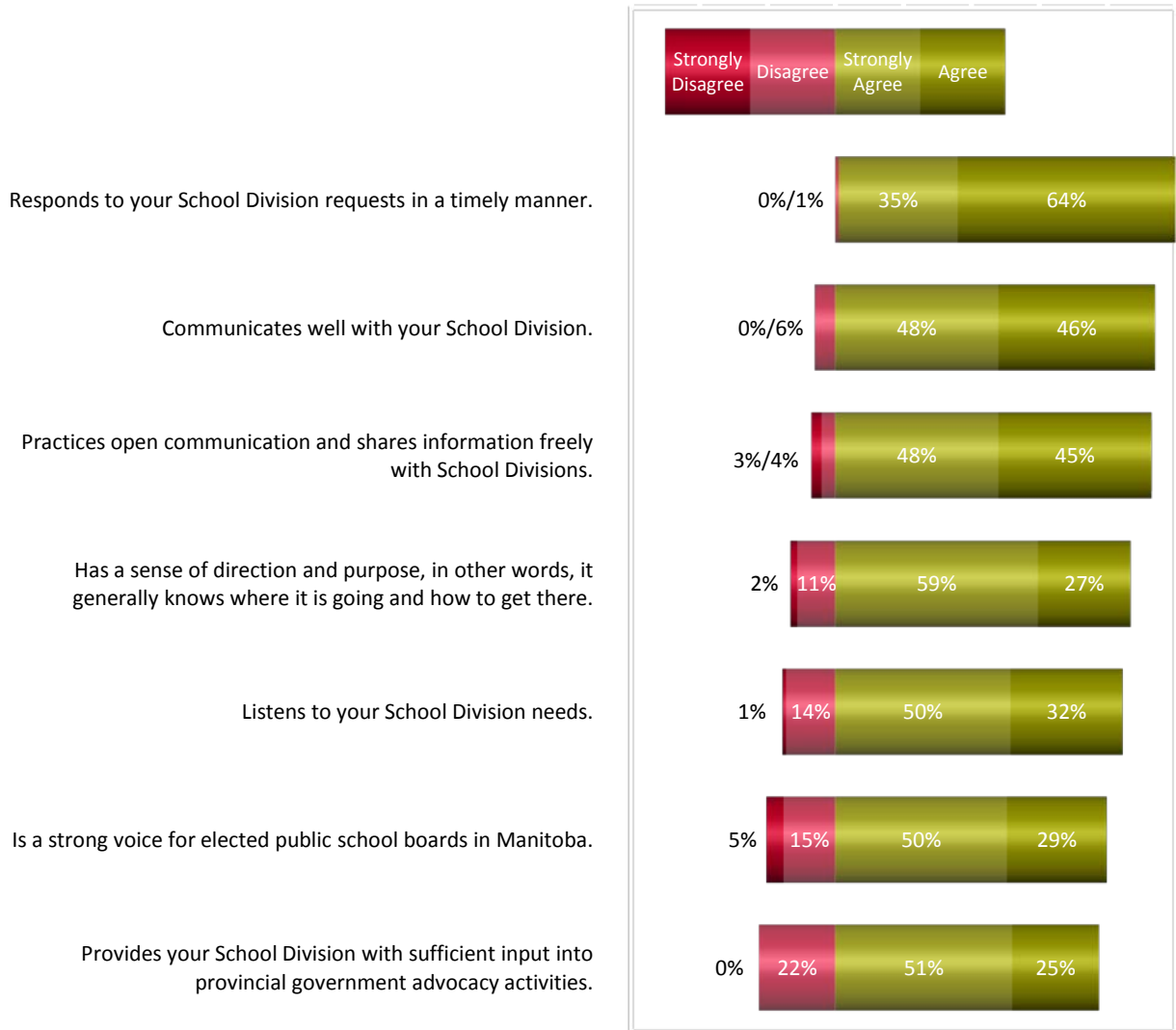
Although at least 3 in 4 respondents agreed to all statements, agreement to those about the mandate and activities of the MSBA were somewhat weaker than statements regarding communications. The statement *“has a sense of direction and purpose, in other words it generally knows where it is going and how to get there”* found overall agreement with 86% of respondents (27% strongly). *“Listens to your School Division’s needs”* received 82% agreement (32% strongly). Next came *“Is a strong voice for elected public school boards in Manitoba”* with 79% agreement (29% strongly), followed by *“provides your School Division with sufficient input into provincial government advocacy activities”* at 76% overall agreement (25% strongly).

Perceptions regarding *“(the MSBA) provides your School Division with sufficient input into provincial government advocacy activities”* varied significantly among the three positions interviewed. About seven in ten school board chairs (66%) and

superintendents (70%) expressed overall agreement with this statement, compared to 93% of secretary treasurers.

Interestingly, while overall agreement to this statement was higher among secretary treasurers, their strong agreement was lower at 20% compared to chairs and superintendents (both 27%).

Chart 4: Perceptions of the MSBA



## Labour Relations Services & Support

Respondents were asked a number of questions about specific services, supports and activities of the MSBA. All but one respondent interviewed had used the labour relations services provided by the MSBA in the previous 12 months (99%).

### Services Used

The two labour relations services used most widely were contract administration and interpretations (81%) and the services of a collective bargaining spokesperson (76%). Legal advice and workshop presentations were each sought out by 64% of respondents. About half had used each of research and information services, and human resource policy administration services (53%), while 37% had accessed rights and interest arbitration.

Chart 5: Use of Specific Labour Relations Services



### Satisfaction and Timeliness

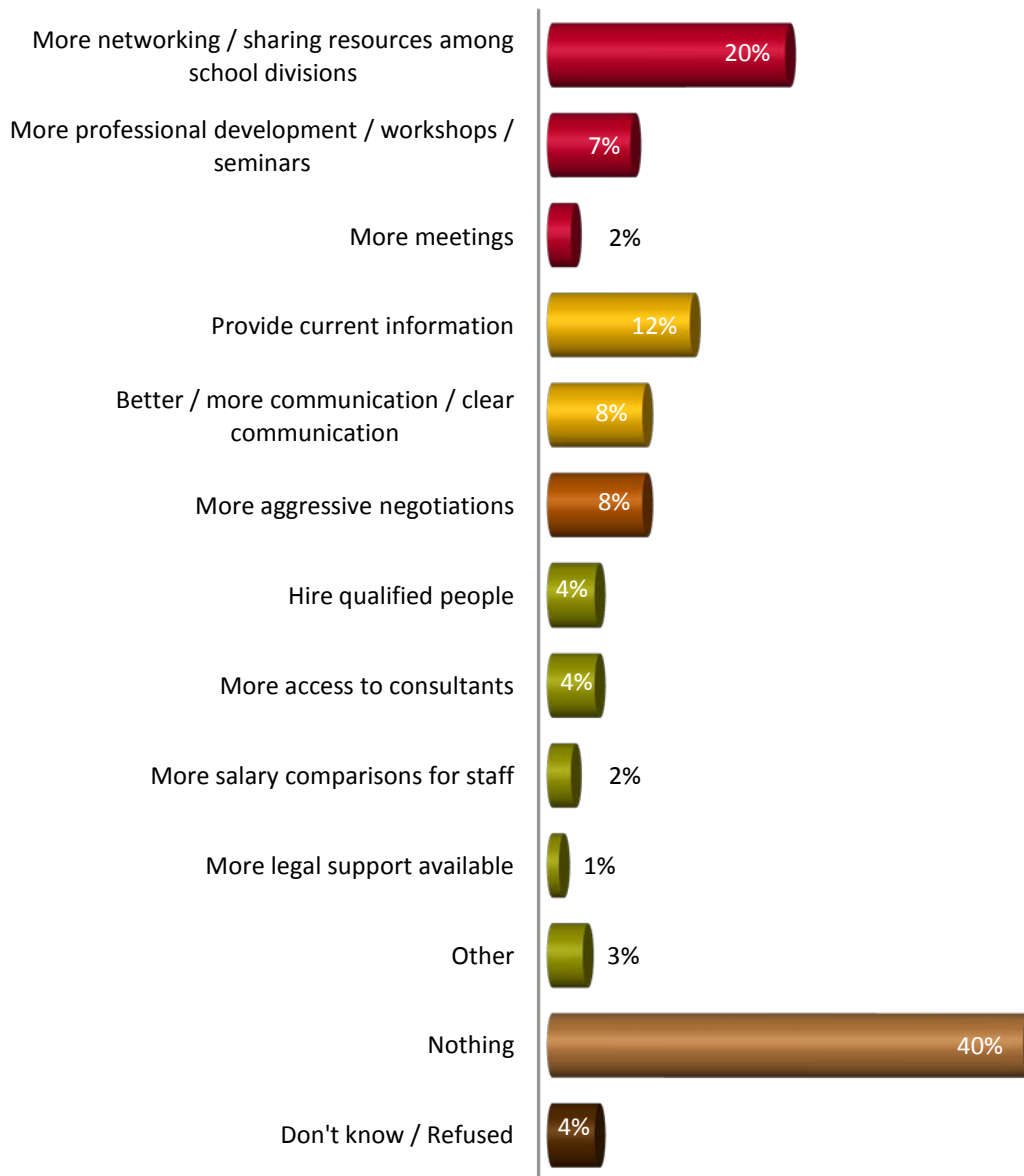
Satisfaction with labour relations services is high with overall satisfaction of 99%. Almost three in four said they were very satisfied (72%) while 27% were somewhat satisfied.

Ninety-four percent (94%) of respondents felt labour relations services were provided in a timely manner, 1% said they were not and 5% were unsure.

**Ways to Improve**

While two in five respondents could not identify any ways the MSBA could improve their labour relations services and support (40%), several themes emerged from the balance of respondents. Ideas to increase meetings and opportunities to network were expressed by 29% of respondents, while 20% expressed a desire for more, clearer or more current information. Eight percent (8%) mentioned more aggressive negotiations. Other ideas were mentioned by fewer than 5% of respondents and are summarized in the following table.

**Chart 6: Ways to Improve Labour Relations Services**



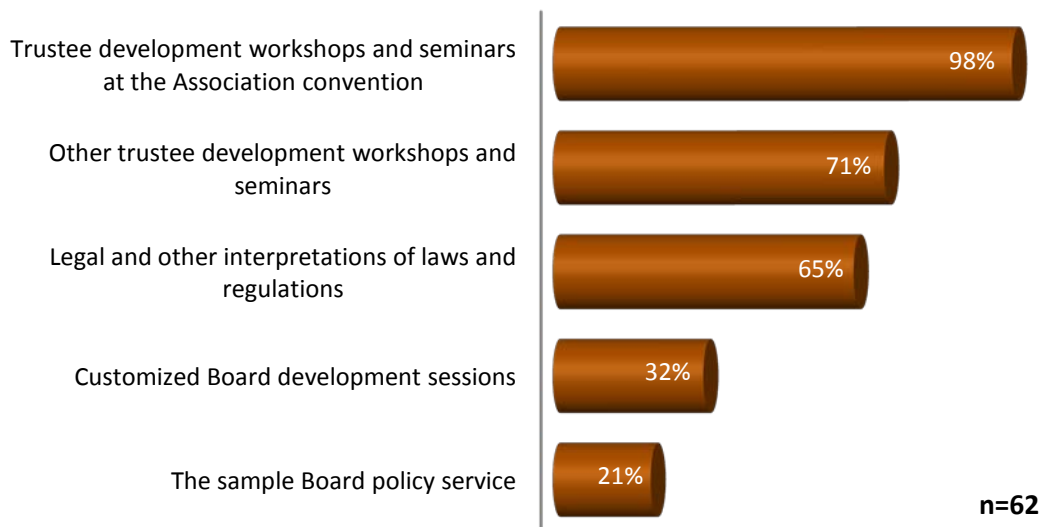
## Education & Information Services & Supports

Three in five respondents used education and information services and supports in the past 12 months (62%), while 35% had not and 3% were unsure.

### Services Used

Of the 62 respondents who had accessed education and information services, almost all had participated in trustee development workshops and seminars at the MSBA convention (98%). Other trustee development workshops and seminars were accessed by 71% of respondents and 65% had used legal and other interpretations of law and regulations. A third of respondents had participated in customized board development sessions (32%) and one in five had used the sample board policy service (21%).

Chart 7: Use of Specific Education & Information Services



### Satisfaction and Timeliness

Overall satisfaction with education and information services was high at 95%. More than half said they are very satisfied (56%) while 39% are somewhat satisfied.

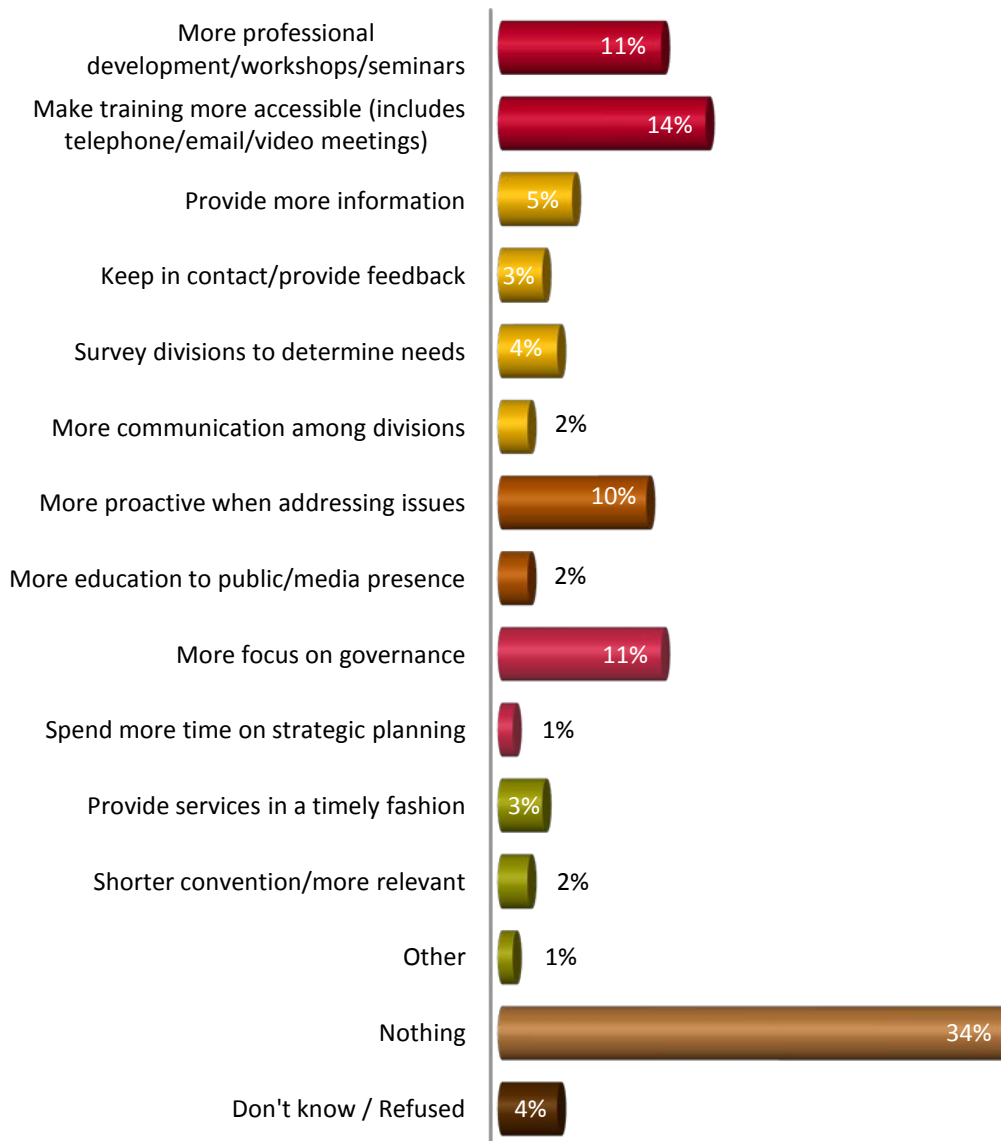
Ninety-four percent (94%) of respondents felt education and information services were provided in a timely manner, 3% said they were not and 3% were unsure.

**Ways to Improve**

When asked what the MSBA should be doing to improve the education and information services it provides to school divisions, responses followed several themes. One in four respondents mentioned more professional development, workshops, seminars and training generally (25%) and 14% mentioned improvements in communication and consultation. One in eight respondents advocated a stronger public presence (12%), while more focus on governance and more strategic planning were mentioned by 12%.

A third of respondents could not think of any ways of improving these services (34%) and another 4% were unsure.

**Chart 8: Ways to Improve Education & Information Services**



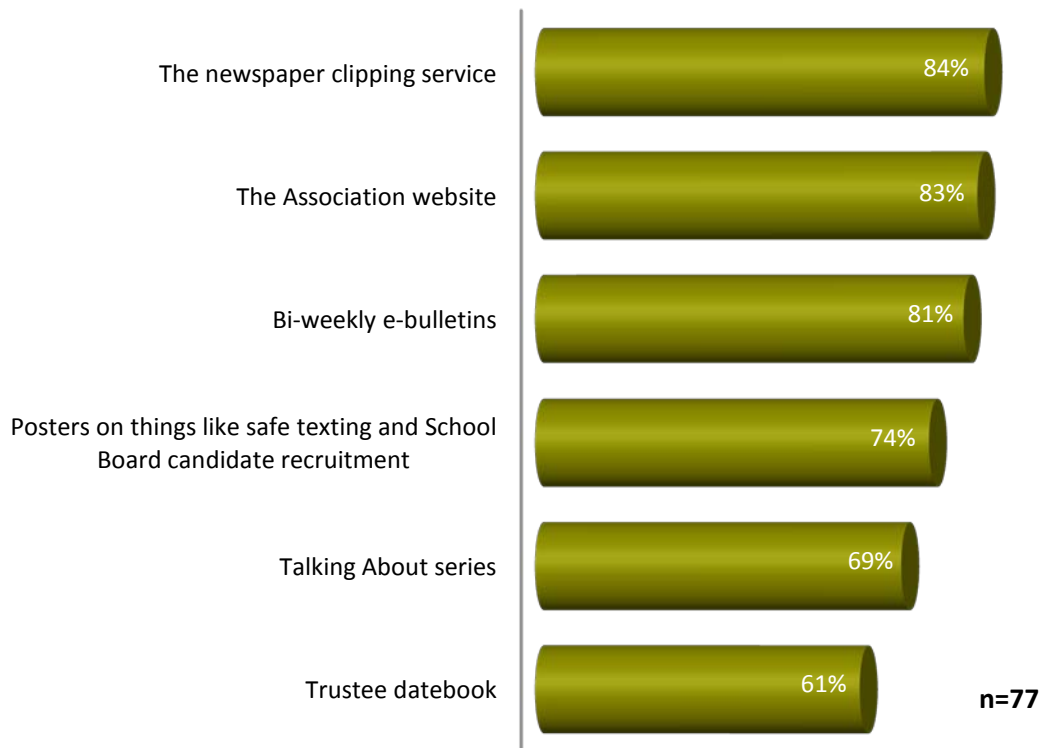
## Communications Services & Supports

Three in four respondents had used the communications services and supports provided by the MSBA (77%) while 20% had not and 3% were unsure.

### Services Used

The communications service used by most respondents was the newspaper clipping service (84%), followed by the Association website (83%) and bi-weekly e-bulletins (81%). Three in four had used posters provided by the MSBA (74%), while seven in ten accessed resource packages on topics such as communicating school budget information and the Talking About series (69%). Six in ten respondents had used the trustee datebook (61%).

Chart 9: Use of Communications Services



### Satisfaction and Timeliness

Overall satisfaction with communications services was high at 98%. Six in ten said they were very satisfied (60%) while 38% are somewhat satisfied.

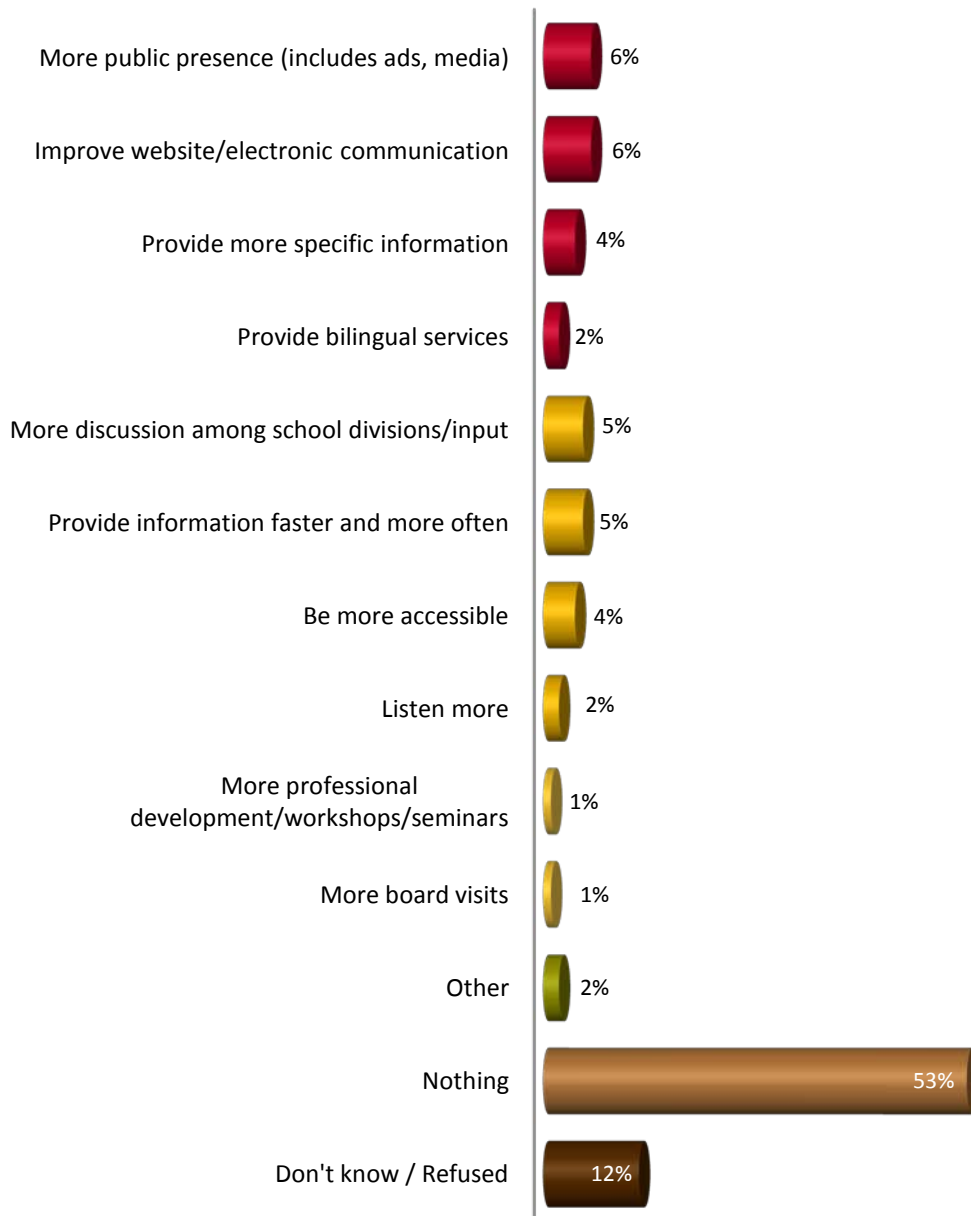
Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents felt education and information services were provided in a timely manner, 5% said they were not and 7% were unsure.

**Ways to Improve**

When asked what the MSBA should be doing to improve the communications services it provides to school divisions, two themes emerged. Eighteen percent (18%) of respondents suggested ways to increase the diversity of service, while an equal number asked for more frequency of contact with the MSBA and their peers (18%).

More than half of respondents could not propose any improvements (53%) and 12% were unsure.

**Chart 10: Ways to Improve Communications Services**



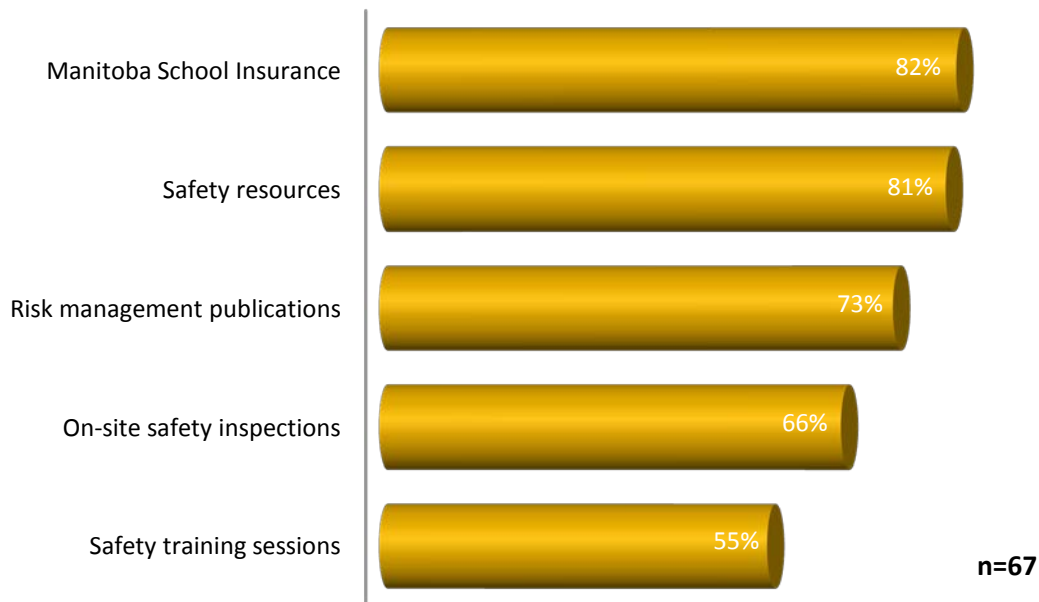
## Insurance & Risk Management Services & Supports

In the past 12 months, two thirds of respondents had used insurance and risk management services provided by the MSBA (67%), while 24% had not and 9% were unsure.

### Services Used

Of the 67 respondents who had used insurance and risk management services, 4 in 5 had accessed Manitoba School Insurance (82%) and safety resources (81%). Three in four had accessed risk management publications (73%), two thirds initiated on-site inspections (66%) and more than half had participated in safety training sessions (55%). Three percent (3%) mentioned accessing other services.

Chart 11: Use of Insurance & Risk Management Services



### Satisfaction and Timeliness

Overall satisfaction with insurance and risk management services was very high (99%), with 66% indicating they were very satisfied and 33% who were somewhat satisfied. One respondent indicated he or she was somewhat dissatisfied and no one was very dissatisfied.

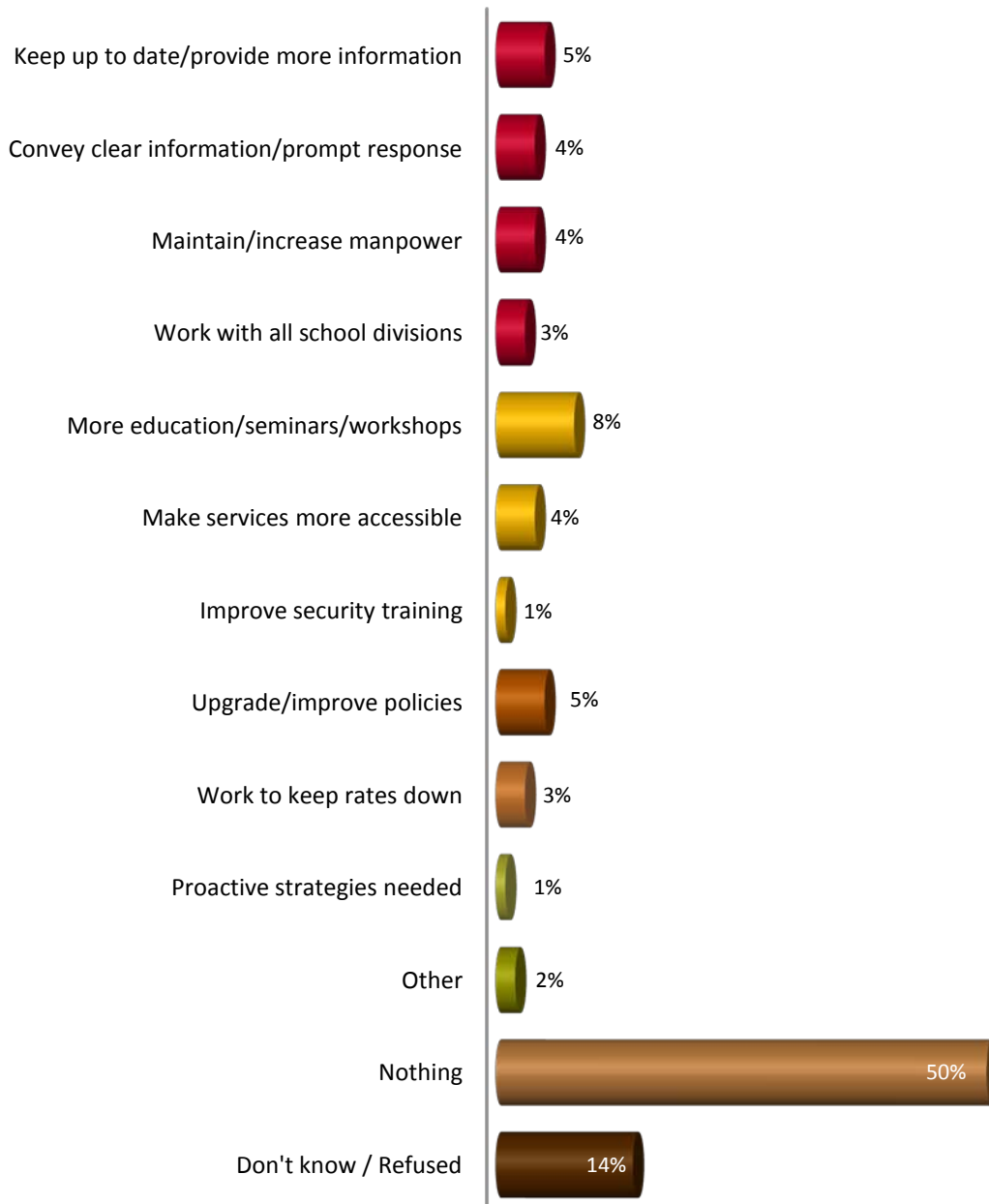
Ninety percent (90%) of respondents felt insurance and risk management services were provided in a timely manner, 6% said they were not and 4% were unsure.

**Ways to Improve**

When asked what the MSBA should be doing to improve the insurance and risk management services it provides, respondents gave answers along themes of greater communications (16%) more training opportunities (13%), and enhanced insurance policies (8%).

Fifty percent (50%) had no suggestions and another 14% were unsure.

**Chart 12: Ways to Improve Insurance/Risk Management Services**



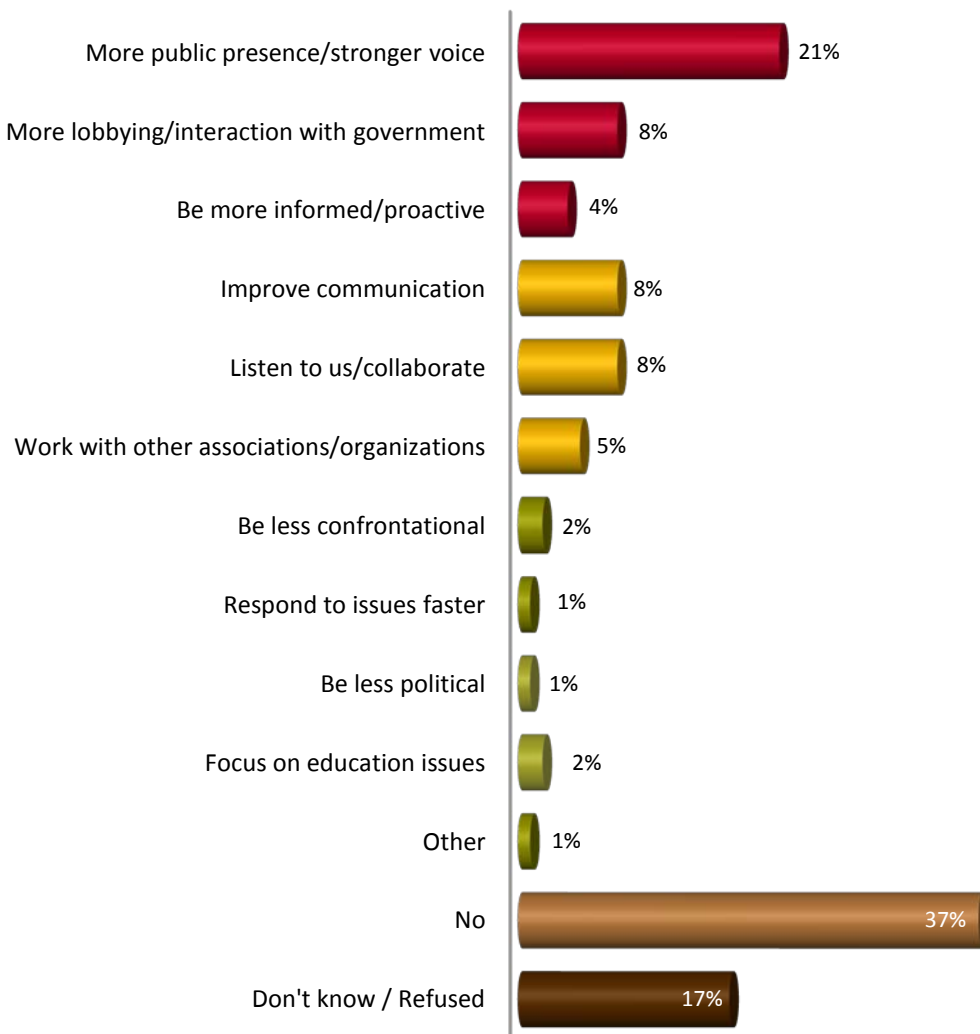
## Advocacy Work

Satisfaction with the MSBA’s work advocating with the provincial government and other organizations on behalf of school divisions was lower than in other areas explored. Overall satisfaction was 78%, with one in four respondents who are very satisfied (26%) and a little over half who are somewhat satisfied (52%). Eighteen percent (18%) indicated they are somewhat dissatisfied, one respondent is very dissatisfied (1%) and 3% are unsure.

### Ways to Improve

Suggestions for the MSBA to improve its advocacy work generally explored two themes. A third of respondents suggested more advocacy work (33%), while 21% mentioned ideas to increase consultation and collaboration in advocacy work. More than half of respondents either had no suggestions (37%) or were unsure (17%).

Chart 13: **Ways to Improve Advocacy Work**



## Other Services

Respondents were asked if there were any additional services they feel the MSBA should be offering to school divisions in Manitoba. Almost three in four said no (72%) while another 10% were unsure. Among those who did respond, greatest emphasis was on more information on legal advice, labour relations and salary comparisons (4%) and more training on governance issues (4%). Several respondents mentioned the association needing to be more cohesive and work together (3%), two requested more relevant in-services (2%) and one person suggested each of a greater focus on First Nations education, being more transparent, and more personal contact (1%).

## MSBA Conventions, AGMs & Regional Meetings

### *MSBA Convention and AGM*

Asked about the timing and location of the MSBA's convention and AGM, a majority of respondents prefer the status quo.

Regarding timing, 56% of respondents would like to continue to have the convention and AGM held in March of each year, 24% favour the fall and 18% feel it does not matter.

A similar number would like the convention and AGM to continue to take place in Winnipeg (56%), while 39% would either prefer it alternating between Winnipeg and Brandon (26%) or Winnipeg, Brandon and a third location (13%).

### *Regional Meetings*

Almost nine in ten respondents have attended an MSBA regional meeting in the past 12 months (87%), while 13% have not.

Seven in ten respondents favour continuing with two regional meetings per year (69%), rather than switching to the mandated minimum of one meeting (20%).

There is a notable difference in perceptions on this question by region. Winnipeg respondents are least likely to prefer two regional meetings per year (48%) while Northern respondents unanimously favour two meetings (100%). The Western region (70%) and the South/Central regions (71%) come up the middle on this question.