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Is the School Board Evaluated Formally?

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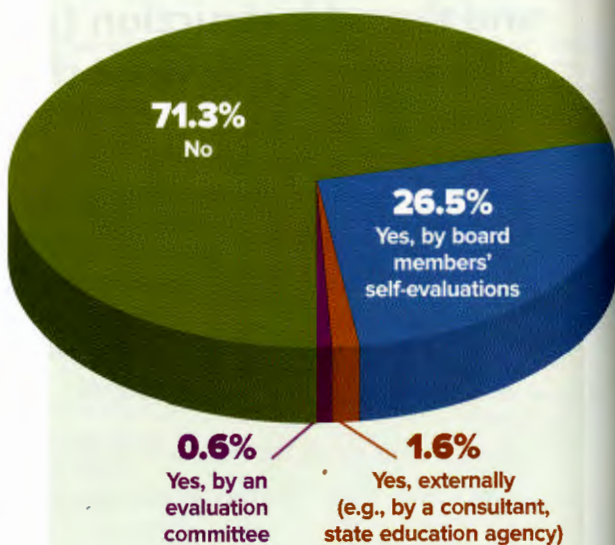
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STATE OF THE SUPERINTENDENCY

Is the School Board Evaluated Formally?



LITTLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE with respect to evaluating the performance of local boards of education, according to the most recent decennial, nationwide study of superintendents. Seven in 10 boards do not receive any form of formal evaluation, and among the 30 percent that do, almost all engage only in self-evaluation.

Advocates for formal evaluation contend the process would identify and clarify a board's purpose. Moreover, it would reveal collective strengths and weaknesses, limit abuses of power, and enhance accountability. Yearly evaluation would facilitate goal setting for continuous school improvement and ensure ethical and effective board member behavior.

Opponents of performance reviews contend most board members are subjected to public scrutiny via the ballot box. Yet elections do not ensure accountability, and participation in board elections usually is low, with many voters unfamiliar with a school board's legal authority and responsibility.

SOURCE OF DATA: "THE AMERICAN SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT: 2010 DECENNIAL STUDY" (2011) PUBLISHED BY ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD EDUCATION AND CO-SPONSORED BY AASA AND PEARSON. ANALYSIS BY THEODORE J. KOWALSKI, STUDY LEAD AUTHOR AND PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON.