



Extraordinary Governance: How Extension Can Support Constructive Partnerships Between Boards and Administrators and Enhance Community Vitality

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Extraordinary Governance and Community Vitality

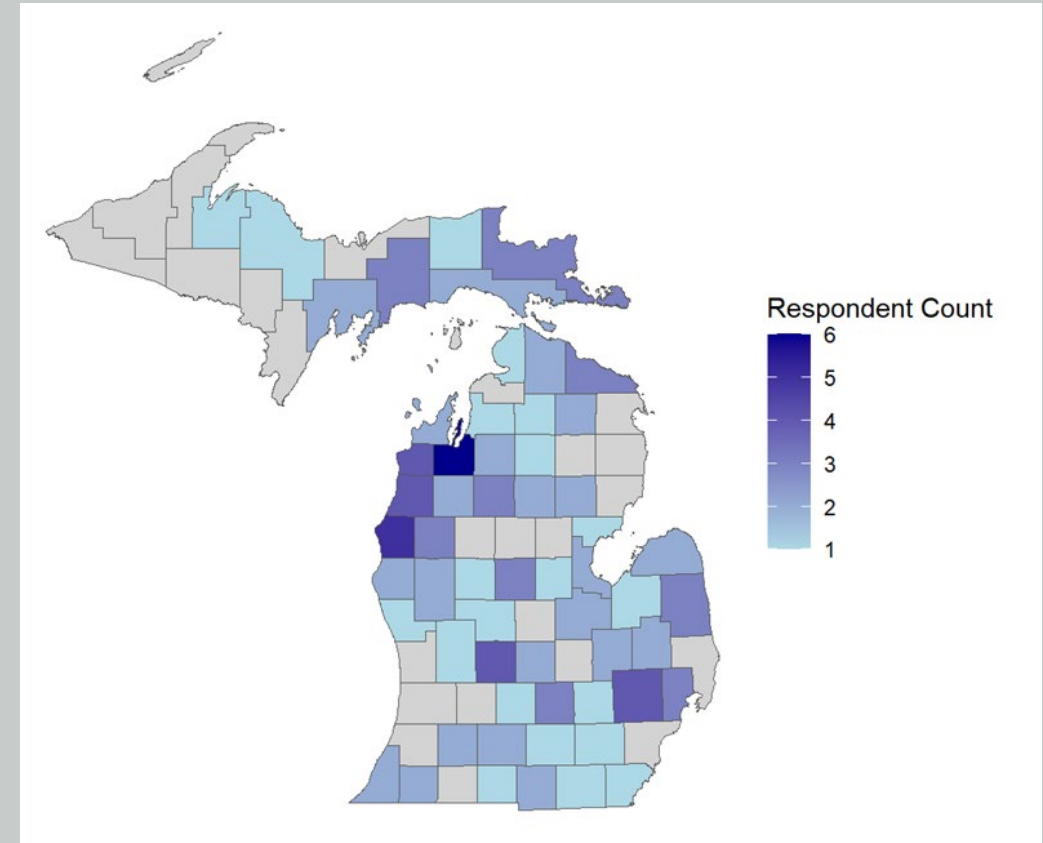
- Extraordinary Governance is a key to community vitality
- A Constructive Partnership
- Extension's Role





2024 Survey

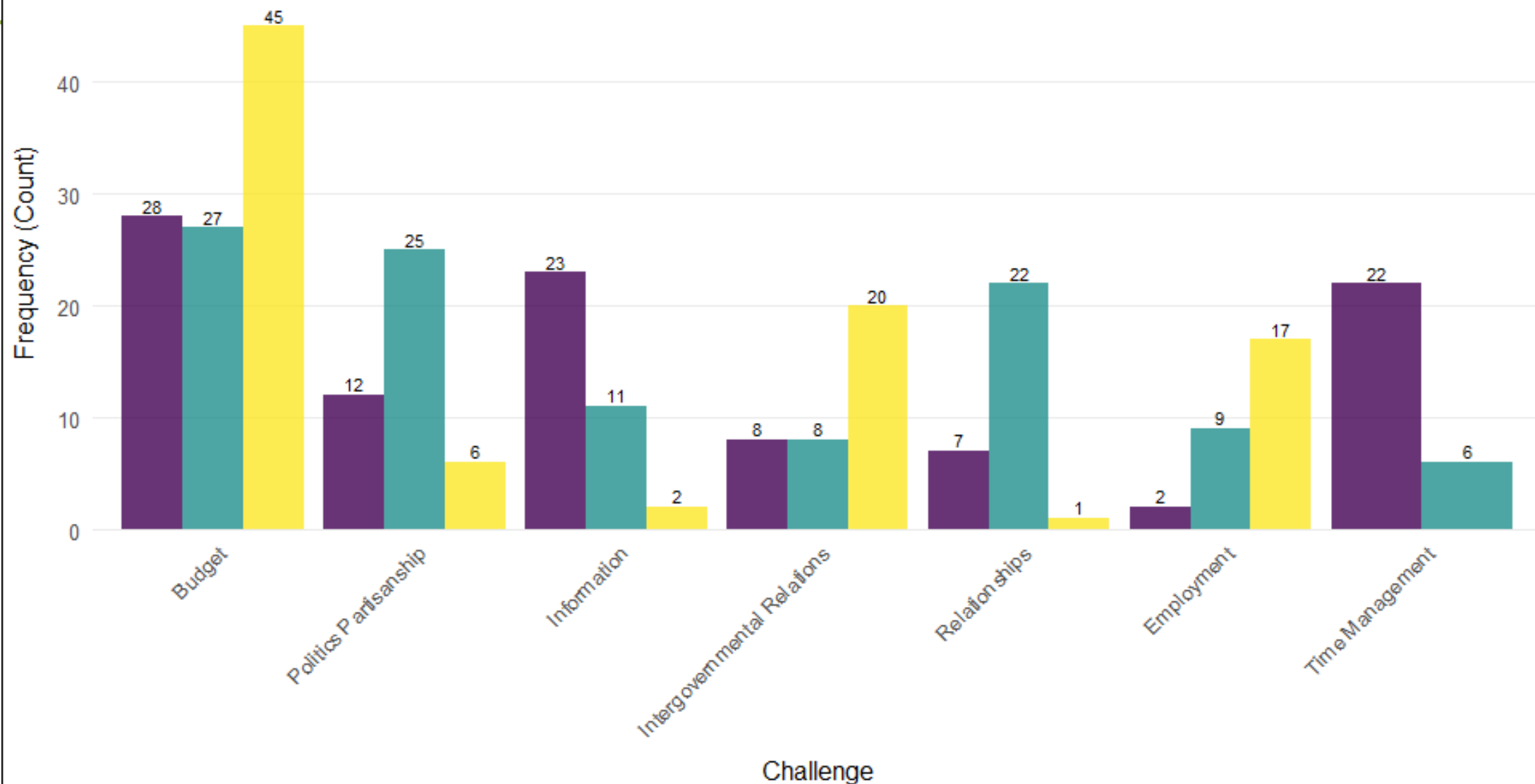
- 121 Commissioners from 60 (out of 83) counties
- Assess their perspective on challenges
- Examine factors that influence their perceptions of board effectiveness



Top 7 Overall Commissioner Challenges by Context

Frequency of codes mentioned for Individual, Board, and County challenges

Challenge Context: Individual Board County





Skills Ratings – Proficiency and Importance

Proficiency vs. Importance Summary			
All Commissioners			
	Proficiency	Importance	Gap
Budget Process	7.69	8.91	1.21
Connect Decisions Strategic Plan	7.32	8.53	1.20
Balance Long Short Term	7.46	8.60	1.14
Set Mission Vision	7.57	8.64	1.07
Involving Stakeholders	7.49	8.49	1.00
Regional Cooperation	7.54	8.37	0.83
County Authority	6.80	7.56	0.76
Determine Services	7.74	8.43	0.69
Representing Public Viewpoints	7.82	8.28	0.46
Work with Admin	8.33	8.55	0.23



Skills and Effectiveness

- Skills proficiency and board effectiveness ratings highly correlated
- Proficiency in working with the administrator most correlated

Correlation Between Work With Administrator Proficiency and Board Effectiveness			
Kendall's Tau Correlation Coefficients			
Board Effectiveness Area	Kendall's τ	p-value	¹
Oversee Admin	0.42	0.000	***
Communication with Admin Staff	0.42	0.000	***
Oversee Finances	0.41	0.000	***
Budget Consensus	0.32	0.000	***
Overall Board Performance	0.31	0.001	***
Establish Long Term Goals	0.31	0.001	***
Address Citizen Expectations	0.25	0.007	**
Development Consensus	0.25	0.007	**
Communication Internally	0.21	0.020	*
Consensus Routine Decisions	0.12	0.192	
¹ * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001			



Key Findings

- Confidence in a skill doesn't prevent commissioners from identifying it as a challenge
- Skill in working with the administrator is strongly associated with higher perceptions of effectiveness
 - Positive, significant correlation with 5/10 effectiveness variables
 - Admin can help mitigate political differences as well



Constructive Partnership

- Collaborative Approach
- Trust and Respect
- Effective and Consistent Communication



Practices That Support Constructive Partnerships

- Communicate early and often
- Get to know commissioners
- Address commissioners concerns directly
- Build boundaries
- Define roles




Common Obstacles

- Overstepping boundaries
- Pursuing personal agendas
- Disengagement or being unprepared
- Making assumptions rather than communicating
- Micromanagement of staff and departments



Extension's Role

- Our unique position as educators and facilitators
- Michigan local government examples
 - New Commissioner School
 - Governing Essentials
 - Foundations of Effective County Administration
- Governing Commitments and Discussion Guide



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Sample Governing Commitments for Administrators and Commissioners with Discussion Questions

Cultivate Trust and Respect - Build and maintain a relationship founded on mutual trust and respect.

- Questions:
 1. What specific actions can we take to build and maintain trust between the board and the administrator?
 2. How do we demonstrate respect in our regular interactions and decision-making processes?

Adopt a Collaborative Approach - Work together towards common goals with curiosity, honesty, and openness, fostering a culture of collaborative problem-solving.

- Questions:
 1. What are our shared goals, and how can we work together to achieve them?
 2. What processes can we implement to ensure decisions reflect the county's priorities?

Hold Each Other Accountable - Maintain mutual accountability to agreed practices and standards, with regular evaluations to ensure the partnership remains productive and trustworthy.

- Questions:
 1. What will it look like to hold each other accountable?
 2. How often should we evaluate our partnership to ensure it remains productive and trustworthy?

Ensure Effective and Consistent Communication - Maintain regular and transparent communication to keep everyone informed and aligned with the county's priorities and goals.

- Questions:
 1. What communication channels should we use to ensure all parties are informed and aligned?
 2. What regular updates does the board need from the administrator or departments?

Promote Active Engagement and Preparedness - Encourage active participation and preparedness for meetings to facilitate meaningful discussions and informed decision-making.

- Questions:
 1. What strategies can we use to encourage active participation from all members?
 2. How can we ensure that everyone is prepared for meetings and discussions?
 3. What are the potential consequences of disengagement, and how can we mitigate them?

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Other Applications

- Other applications
 - Non-profit organizations
 - MSU Board of Trustees
- Where else?



Thank you!

Questions?

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