



## **PUBLIC POLICY & MANAGEMENT CENTER**

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# **Employee Survey Report**

McPherson Board of Public Utilities | January 2026

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# Acknowledgments

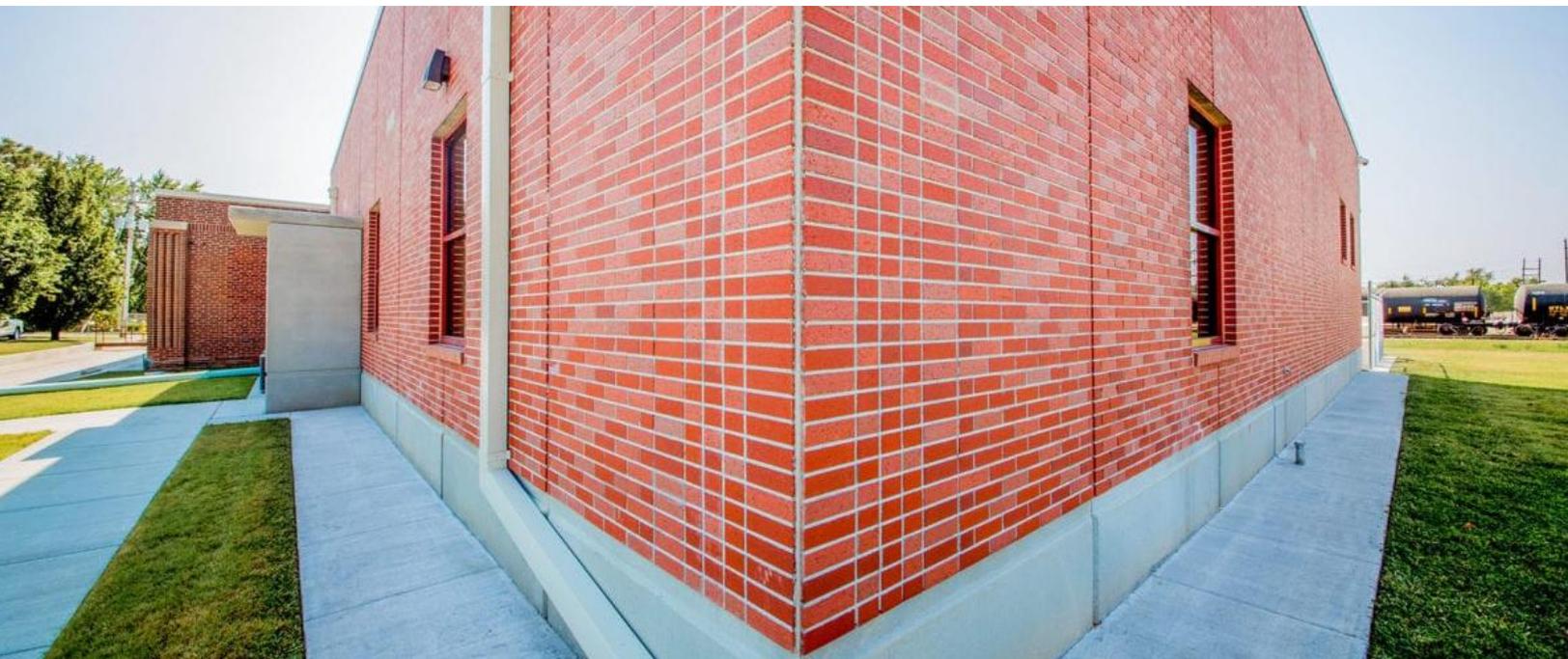
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The Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) would like to thank McPherson Board of Public Utilities who assisted with input into this report, especially General Manager Josh Bedel and HR Generalist Samantha Archer.

# Disclaimer

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This study was conducted by the PPMC at Wichita State University. The PPMC is an independent research body unaffiliated with the McPherson Board of Public Utilities. This report was prepared by the research team and data collected from external sources. PPMC's findings are based on assumption of data accuracy received from internal and external sources. The findings represent the findings, views, opinions and conclusions of the research team alone. The report does not express the official or unofficial policy of Wichita State University.



# Executive Summary

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McPherson Board of Public Utilities demonstrates exceptional strengths in leadership, role clarity, and employee support, with strategic opportunities to enhance organizational communication, procedural fairness, and workload management. Survey responses were measured on scales where scores above 3.0 indicate satisfaction or agreement, scores between 2.5 and 3.0 fall in a neutral range, and scores below 2.5 indicate dissatisfaction or disagreement. Scores reported here indicate the proportion of employees scoring 3.0 or higher, indicating satisfaction or agreement. Survey findings reveal 3 evidence-based priorities that are likely to yield returns in employee engagement, commitment, and burnout prevention.

## **Organizational Strengths**

BPU demonstrates exceptional strengths in leadership, role clarity, and employee support. These assets provide a strong foundation for organizational effectiveness and position BPU well for addressing improvement opportunities.

- Trust in leadership stands out as a major organizational strength. 85% of employees demonstrate high confidence in the General Manager's competence, integrity, and decision-making.
- Role clarity represents BPU's highest-rated characteristic, with 96% of employees clearly understanding their job responsibilities and how their work contributes to organizational goals.
- Employee support systems function well across the organization. 90% of employees feel supported in taking breaks and time off when needed. 89% have access to necessary tools, equipment, and materials. These resources enable effective work and support employee wellbeing.

## **Strategic Opportunities**

3 areas scored lower than other organizational factors but remain within acceptable ranges, representing strategic opportunities to enhance employee experience. Each area offers clear pathways for moving from satisfactory to exceptional performance and is associated with important employee outcomes.

- Statistical modeling revealed that organizational communication is the strongest predictor of employee engagement. Improvements in organizational communication would likely yield substantial returns in workforce engagement.
- Approximately 1/3 of staff desire greater consistency and transparency in how decisions are made and policies are applied. Statistical modeling revealed that procedural fairness is the strongest predictor of organizational commitment. Procedural fairness also shows an association with lower burnout. Strengthening fairness perceptions would likely enhance both commitment and resilience.
- Workload management is BPU's most pressing employee concern. Employees across multiple groups report challenging workload levels. Statistical modeling revealed that workload demands are the strongest predictor of employee burnout.

Despite workload concerns, BPU employees report low burnout levels, indicating current work demands have not yet resulted in widespread exhaustion. This represents organizational health and employee resilience. However, sustained high demands without intervention may erode this resilience over time. Addressing workload proactively may help prevent escalation to burnout.

# Background

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In fall 2025, BPU leadership partnered with the Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) at Wichita State University to conduct a comprehensive employee survey. The PPMC designed the survey to assess multiple dimensions of employee experience, including organizational communication, leadership relationships, access to resources, workload demands, work engagement, organizational commitment, and burnout. Survey design incorporated Job Demands-Resources theory, a well-established framework in organizational research that examines how workplace demands and resources influence employee wellbeing and performance.

All BPU employees received invitations to participate in the confidential survey. All 75 employees completed the survey, providing substantial data to understand employee experiences across the organization. The survey captured information about employees' perceptions of organizational factors as well as demographic characteristics including reporting structure, age, gender, work location, and supervisory status.



## Method

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The employee survey was developed to assess key dimensions of the employee experience and identify opportunities for organizational improvement. Survey design incorporated established organizational research frameworks to examine how workplace demands and resources influence employee wellbeing and performance.

The survey included measures of multiple organizational factors: organizational communication, procedural fairness, role clarity, executive trust, supervisor relationships, compensation satisfaction, development resources, recovery resources, workload demands, work engagement, organizational commitment, and burnout. Items were drawn from validated scales used in previous organizational research and adapted to BPU's context.

All measures used 4-point Likert-type response scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, or from low to high frequency or intensity. For these 4-point scales, 2.5 represents the mathematical midpoint. Analysis uses 3.0 as the threshold for identifying areas of strength, as this provides a more stringent benchmark requiring general agreement rather than simple neutrality. Scores are interpreted as follows: scores below 2.5 indicate dissatisfaction or disagreement, scores between 2.5 and 2.9 represent a neutral range, scores between 3.0 and 3.4 indicate satisfaction or agreement, and scores between 3.5 and 4.0 indicate high satisfaction or strong agreement.

When results are presented as the percentage of employees expressing satisfaction with a factor, this refers to employees scoring 3.0 or higher. Scores below 3.0 include both neutral responses (2.5-2.9) and responses indicating disagreement or dissatisfaction (below 2.5). Therefore, when interpreting results, if a given percentage of employees expresses satisfaction with a factor, the remaining percentage represents a combination of neutral and dissatisfied responses rather than exclusively dissatisfaction.

### Survey Administration and Response Rate

The Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) at Wichita State University administered the survey electronically in November 2025. The survey received 75 responses, representing a 100% response rate from all employees. While response rates vary across organizations and survey types, this rate provides a substantial foundation for understanding employee experiences.

### Measures and Constructs

The survey assessed the following constructs:

- Job Resources
  - Organizational communication: clarity, consistency, and timeliness of information from organizational leadership.
  - Procedural fairness: perceived fairness and consistency of organizational decision-making processes.
  - Role clarity: understanding of job responsibilities and how work contributes to organizational goals.
  - Executive trust: confidence in the General Manager's competence, integrity, and decision-making.
  - Supervisor communication: quality of communication with immediate supervisor.
  - Development resources: access to training and professional development opportunities.
  - Recovery resources: support for work-life balance, breaks, and time off.
  - Overall job resources: access to tools, equipment, and materials needed to perform effectively.
- Job Demands
  - Workload demands: level of time pressure, work intensity, and volume of responsibilities.

- Employee Outcomes
  - Work engagement: energy, enthusiasm, and dedication brought to work.
  - Organizational commitment: emotional attachment to BPU and intention to remain.
  - Work burnout: work-related exhaustion and fatigue.
  - Personal burnout: general life exhaustion and depletion.
- Additional Factors
  - Core benefits satisfaction: satisfaction with overall compensation and benefits package.
  - Benefits satisfaction (specific): satisfaction with particular benefit components.

### Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting findings.

The survey captures employee perceptions at a single point in time (November 2025), which has important implications for interpretation and application. Point-in-time data provides a snapshot of organizational conditions as they existed during the survey period. Because organizations are dynamic systems, conditions may have evolved since data collection, whether through natural organizational changes, leadership initiatives, or improvement efforts undertaken in response to preliminary findings.

This does not diminish the value of the results. Rather, point-in-time surveys serve as baseline assessments that establish current patterns, identify areas warranting attention, and reveal relationships between organizational factors and employee outcomes. These patterns and relationships, such as the associations between communication and engagement, or workload and burnout, reflect underlying organizational dynamics that warrant attention even as specific circumstances evolve.

The findings provide actionable direction for continuous improvement efforts while recognizing that follow-up assessment would be needed to measure the impact of interventions over time. This temporal limitation also constrains the ability to make definitive causal claims, as establishing causation requires tracking changes across multiple time points or experimental manipulation of organizational factors.

While the theoretical framework (Job Demands-Resources theory) and statistical modeling provide strong evidence about likely relationships between organizational factors and employee outcomes, cross-sectional data cannot establish causation with certainty. Unmeasured variables may confound observed relationships. For example, personality traits such as conscientiousness could influence both workload reports and burnout levels, creating correlations that are not directly causal.

Reverse causality also remains possible—burned-out employees may perceive and report higher workload even if objective demands are similar to those of their colleagues. Throughout this report, language reflects predictive and associational relationships rather than definitive causation. Establishing causal relationships would require longitudinal data tracking employees over time or experimental designs manipulating organizational factors.

The analysis conducted numerous statistical tests across multiple organizational factors and demographic groups. No correction was applied for multiple comparisons, which increases the likelihood of identifying some statistically significant differences by chance alone. Readers should interpret individual significant findings with appropriate caution.

Sample sizes vary considerably across reporting structures, with some supervisors overseeing larger employee groups while others supervise smaller groups. Results for smaller groups should be interpreted with particular caution, as 1 or 2 employees' responses can substantially influence group averages. Patterns that appear consistently across multiple measures within a group, or that align with theoretical expectations, warrant greater confidence than isolated findings.

The survey design prioritized breadth over depth, measuring many factors with relatively few items per factor. This approach provides a comprehensive organizational snapshot but limits detailed examination of any single factor.

Despite these limitations, the survey provides valuable insights into BPU's organizational dynamics and identifies clear priorities for action. The findings align with established organizational research and theory, increasing confidence in their validity and practical utility.

## Overall Employee Experience

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### **Overview**

BPU employees report strong organizational foundations across most areas, with particularly high trust in leadership, clear role expectations, and supportive supervisor relationships. The primary challenge facing the organization is workload management, which emerged as the most significant employee concern.

Survey results reveal a generally positive employee experience. Employees express high trust in the General Manager and strong relationships with immediate supervisors. Nearly all employees clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff report adequate access to resources and professional development opportunities.

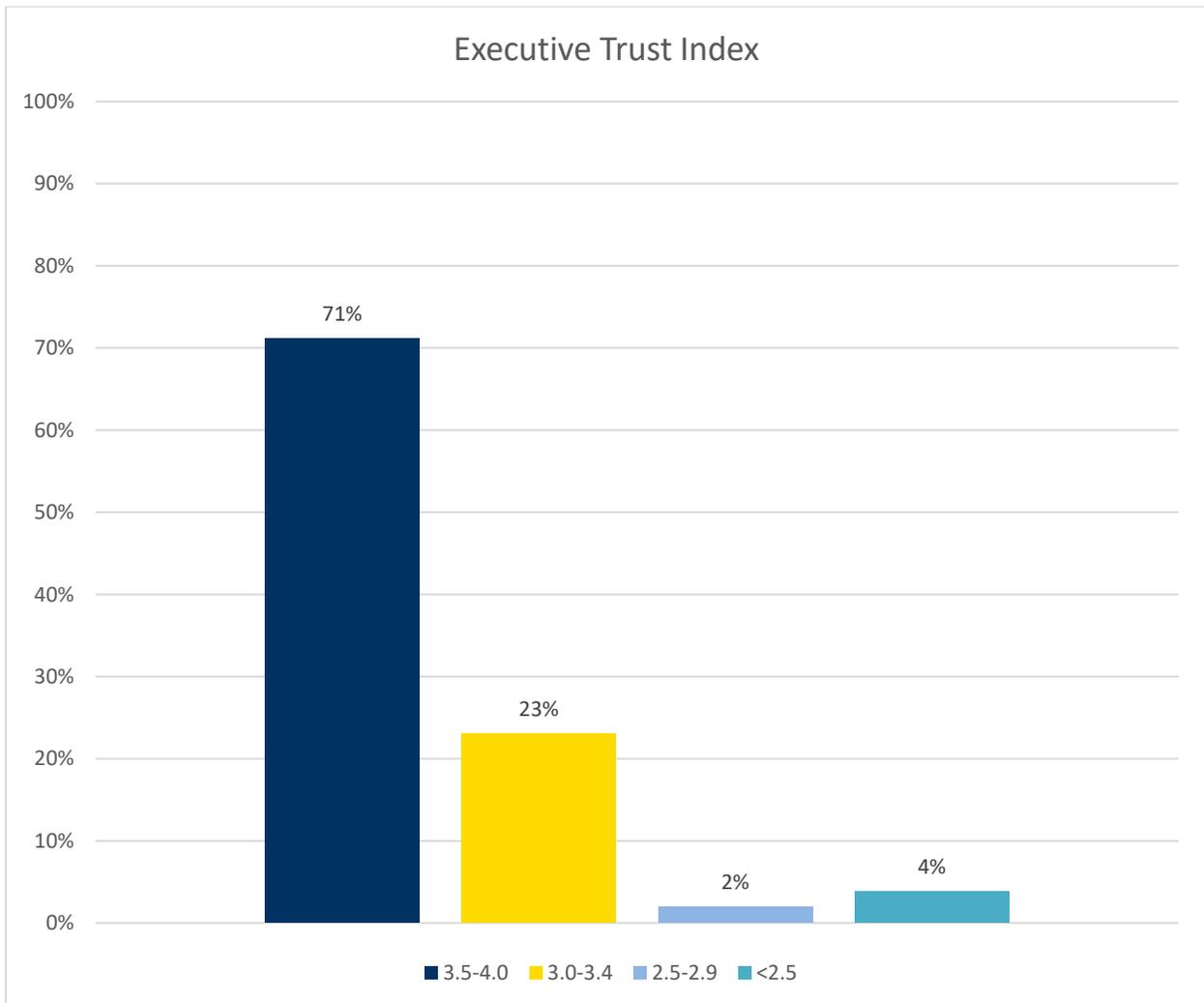
Despite workload challenges, burnout levels remain low, suggesting employees maintain resilience. Strategic opportunities exist to enhance organizational communication, strengthen procedural fairness, and address workload distribution.

## **Organizational Strengths**

Employees rate five areas exceptionally high, with agreement levels ranging from 85 to 96%. These strengths represent organizational assets that should be sustained while addressing improvement areas.

Trust in executive leadership stands out as a major strength. 85% of employees demonstrate high confidence in the General Manager's competence, integrity, and decision-making. This foundation of trust exceeds typical benchmarks for public sector organizations and positions BPU well for implementing organizational changes.

Figure 1: Bucketed Composite Scores for Executive Trust



Role clarity represents BPU's highest-rated organizational characteristic. 96% of employees clearly understand their job responsibilities and how their work contributes to the organization's mission. Clear expectations and well-defined roles support both individual performance and job satisfaction.

Direct supervisor relationships are strong across the organization. 89% of employees report effective communication, support, and guidance from immediate supervisors. Supervisor accessibility and responsiveness function as organizational assets that facilitate daily work and problem-solving.

BPU's supportive culture extends to work-life balance. 90% of employees feel supported in taking breaks and time off when needed. This emphasis on recovery helps sustain long-term employee wellbeing and prevents exhaustion.

Resource availability supports employee effectiveness. 89% of staff have access to necessary tools, equipment, and materials to perform their jobs. Adequate infrastructure reduces frustration and enables productivity

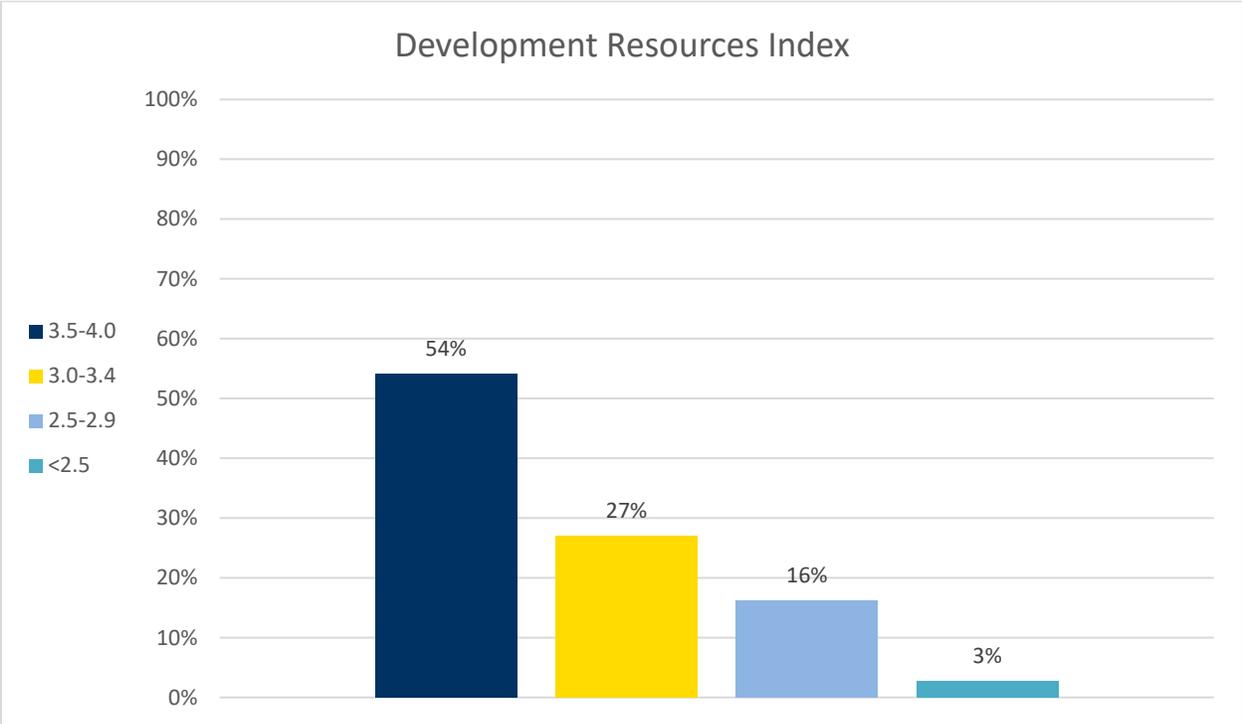
### **Moderate Strengths**

Several areas show solid performance above 80% agreement but offer opportunities to move from good to exceptional.

Work engagement rates at 83%, with most employees feeling energized by their work and committed to BPU's mission. Engagement can be further increased through enhanced organizational communication and transparent information-sharing about organizational decisions and direction.

Development resources receive 81% agreement, as employees generally have access to professional development and training opportunities. Some departments report stronger access to development opportunities than others, suggesting opportunities to ensure equitable access across all departments and to communicate available resources more consistently.

Figure 2: Bucketed Composite Scores for Development Resources



Organizational commitment stands at 82%, demonstrating employee attachment to BPU and identification with the organization. Commitment can be strengthened through enhanced procedural fairness—ensuring consistent, transparent decision-making processes and policy application across the organization.

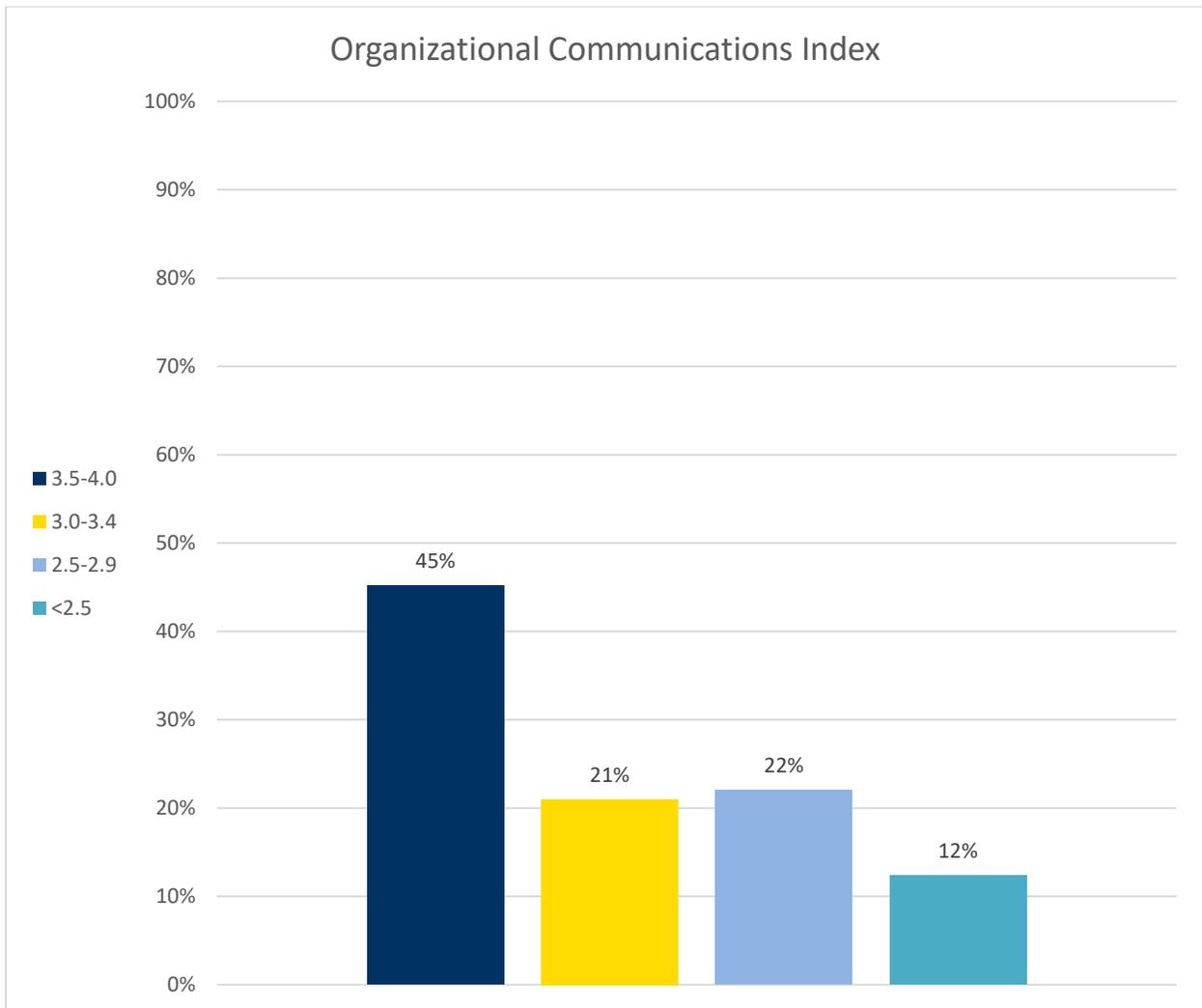
The core benefits package receives 86% agreement, with employees viewing overall compensation and benefits as satisfactory. While overall satisfaction is high, specific components may benefit from review to ensure the package remains competitive and meets employee needs.

## **Improvement Opportunities**

3 areas scored lower than other organizational factors, representing strategic opportunities for improvement. Each area offers clear pathways for enhancement.

Organizational communication receives 66% agreement. 1/3 of employees seek improvement in information flow, transparency, and communications about decision-making at the organizational level. Opportunities include enhancing information-sharing mechanisms, increasing transparency around organizational decisions, and ensuring consistent communication across all departments and work locations.

Figure 3: Bucketed Composite Scores for Organizational Communications

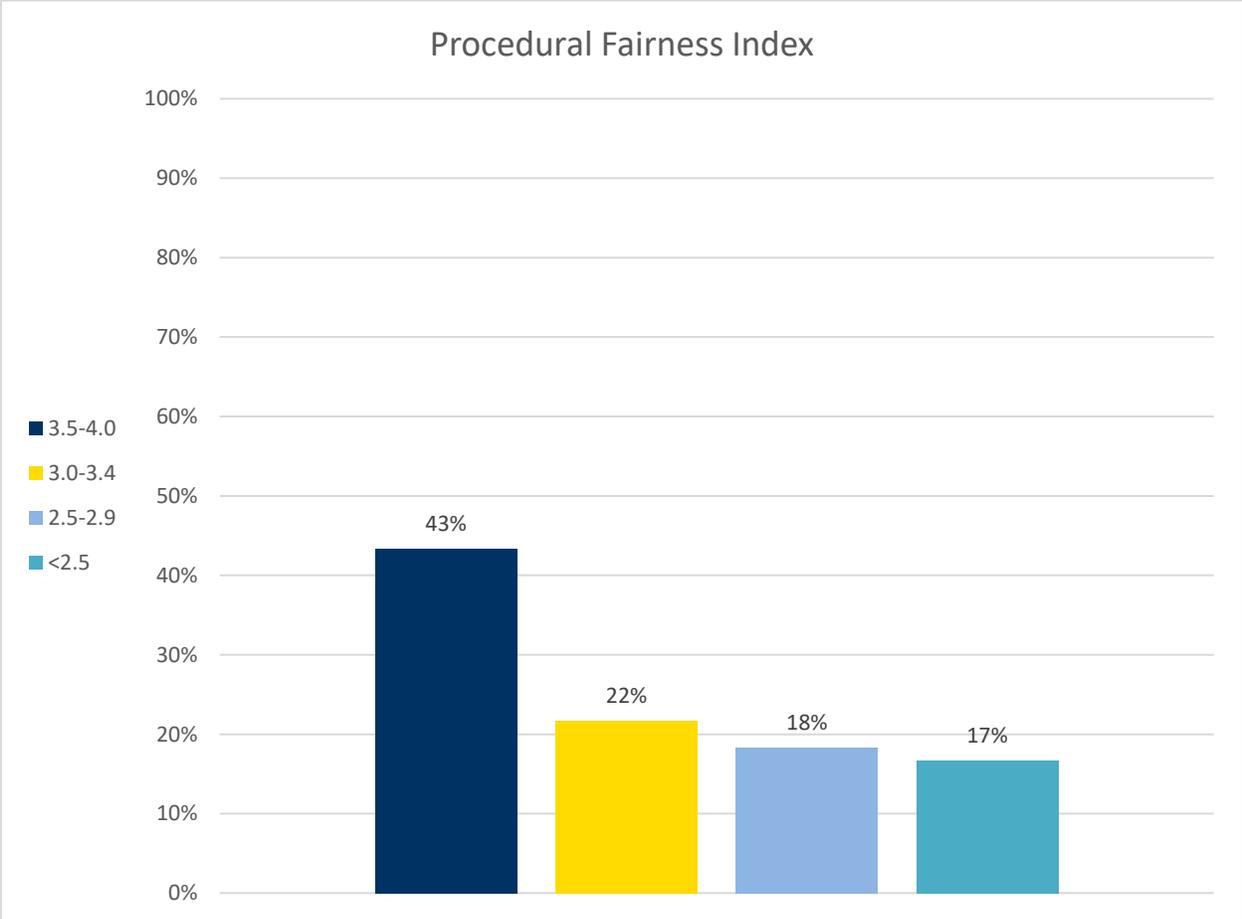


Procedural fairness also receives 66% agreement. Employees perceive organizational decision-making processes and fairness as adequate but not exceptional.

Approximately 1/3 of staff desire greater consistency and transparency in how decisions are made and policies are applied. Opportunities include clarifying decision-making processes, ensuring consistent policy application across departments, and increasing transparency in how organizational choices are made.

Satisfaction with employee benefits stands at 66% agreement. While the overall benefits package rates highly at 86%, satisfaction with specific benefit components falls at the threshold of acceptability. Though benefits satisfaction is not a primary predictor of engagement or commitment, it represents a basic expectation that should be met.

Figure 4: Bucketed Composite Scores for Procedural Fairness



## **Burnout Status**

BPU employees report low burnout levels, indicating current work demands have not yet caused widespread exhaustion. Employees are not experiencing significant work-related fatigue, and current burnout levels are within healthy ranges for public sector organizations. General life stress and exhaustion levels are manageable, with employees maintaining energy and capacity outside of work. Work demands are not spilling over to affect overall wellbeing.

This represents a positive organizational outcome given reported workload challenges. BPU's combination of moderate-high engagement with low burnout represents organizational health. Employees remain energized by their work without experiencing exhaustion; however, this pattern is sustainable only if workload demands are managed proactively. Workload concerns suggest burnout risk if demands are not addressed.

## **Overall Assessment**

BPU demonstrates strong organizational health characterized by high leadership trust, clear expectations, and adequate resources. The organization's success in these fundamental areas creates a stable foundation for addressing workload challenges and enhancing communication and fairness.

Exceptional leadership trust and supervisor relationships provide stability. Clear roles and adequate resources enable effective performance. Employees remain engaged and committed to BPU's mission despite challenges. Strong organizational culture supports recovery and work-life balance.

# Conclusion

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This employee survey reveals an organization with strong foundations and clear opportunities for strategic improvement. BPU demonstrates exceptional strengths in areas that matter most for organizational effectiveness: high trust in leadership, clear role expectations, strong supervisor relationships, and adequate resources. These assets position BPU well for addressing the opportunities identified through this assessment.

## Organizational Strengths to Build Upon

BPU's core strengths deserve recognition and sustained attention.

- Employee trust in the General Manager reaches 85%, providing a stable foundation for implementing organizational changes.
- Nearly all employees (96%) clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, eliminating a common source of frustration and inefficiency in many organizations.
- Supervisor relationships are strong across the organization, with 89% of employees reporting effective communication and support from immediate supervisors. These relationship assets facilitate daily problem-solving and enable effective work.
- The organization supports employee wellbeing through recovery resources and work-life balance, with 90% of employees feeling encouraged to take needed time off.
- Access to necessary tools, equipment, and materials receives 89% agreement.
- Current burnout levels remain healthy despite workload concerns, indicating employee resilience and organizational sustainability.

These strengths are not accidental but reflect intentional leadership practices, effective management, and organizational culture. Maintaining these assets while addressing improvement opportunities will require continued attention and investment.

### Strategic Priorities for Action

3 clear priorities emerge from the analysis, each addressing a distinct employee outcome. These priorities reflect not merely areas of lower satisfaction but factors that statistical modeling identified as the primary predictors of engagement, commitment, and burnout.

- Enhance organizational communication to increase engagement. Organizational communication is the strongest predictor of employee engagement. Improvements in information flow, transparency around decisions, and consistent communication across all employee groups would likely yield substantial returns in employee motivation.
- Strengthen procedural fairness to build commitment. Procedural fairness is the strongest predictor of organizational commitment. Fairness perceptions represent the highest-leverage opportunity to strengthen employee attachment to BPU. Improvements in decision-making transparency, consistent policy application, and clear explanation of organizational choices would likely yield substantial returns in retention. Procedural fairness is also associated with lower burnout, providing dual benefits.
- Address workload demands to prevent burnout. While current burnout levels remain healthy, workload concerns are widespread and create risk for future burnout if left unaddressed. Workload management through staffing reviews, work redistribution, or process improvements represents essential preventive action.

## **A Foundation for Strategic Planning**

These survey findings provide direction for strategic planning and organizational development. The identified priorities are actionable, theoretically grounded, and supported by statistical evidence about which factors most strongly predict employee outcomes. BPU can approach improvement efforts with confidence that investments in communication, fairness, and workload management are likely to yield returns in engagement, commitment, and burnout prevention respectively.

The organization's strong foundation of leadership trust, role clarity, and supervisor relationships provides stability for implementing changes. Employees demonstrate resilience and commitment to BPU's mission despite facing challenges. This combination of organizational assets and clear improvement priorities creates optimal conditions for positive change.

