



COLORADO

**Office of Judicial
Performance Evaluation**

The Honorable Justice Maria E. Berkenkotter
2024 Judicial Performance Survey Report
Supreme Court

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Summary of Results

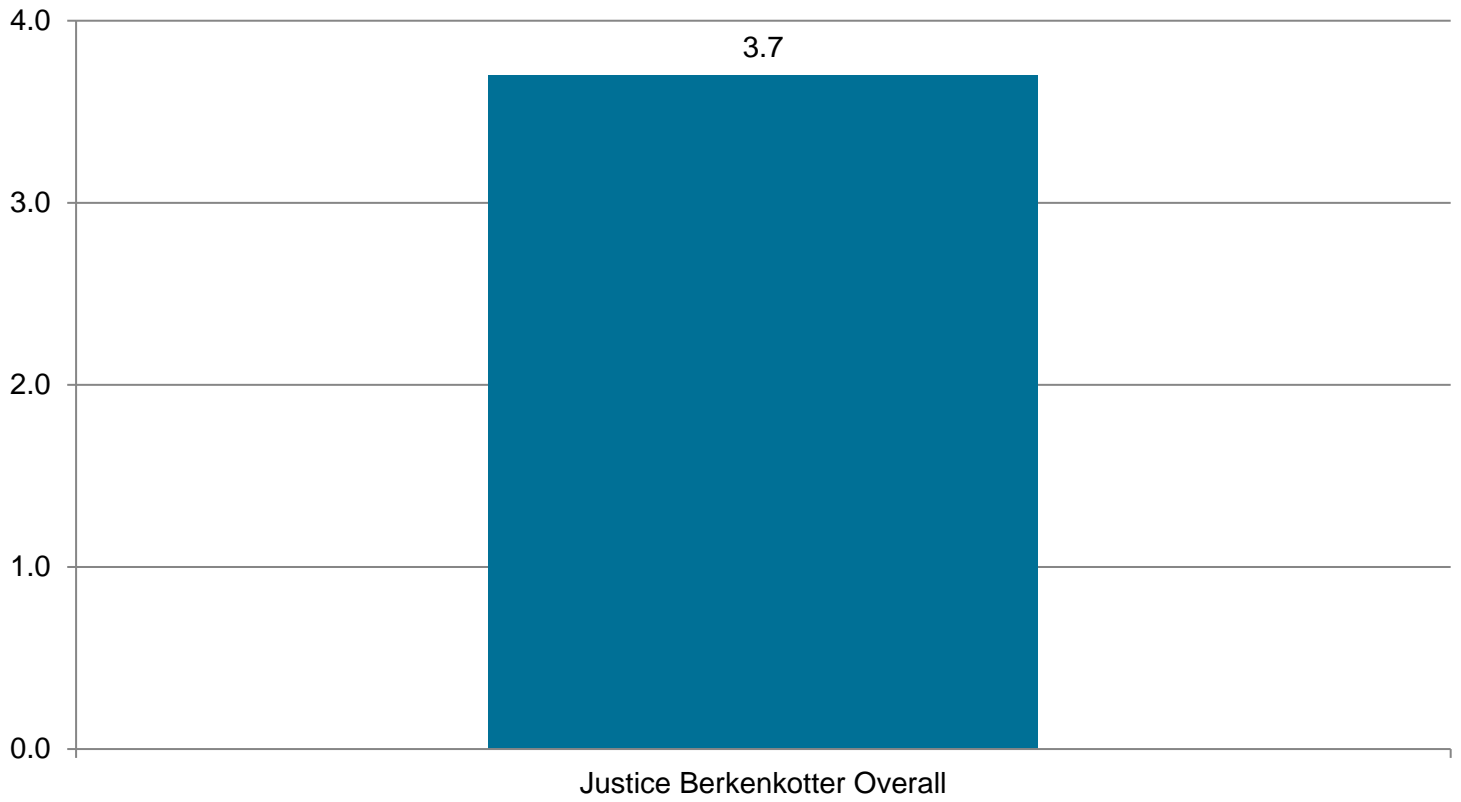
For Justice Berkenkotter, 54 individuals completed surveys with at least a single rating question answered. This report reflects these 54 responses.

Respondent Type	Invitation Sent	Number of Responses
Attorney email invite	531	20
Attorney Survey Website	N/A	0
Court Attorney (self-select)	58	1
Total Attorneys	-	21
Judges		
	260	33
Total	N/A	54

Respondents were asked to rate the judges on these aspects of judicial performance using the categories of Never or Almost Never, Once in a While, Some of the Time, Frequently, and Every or Almost Every Time.

These categories were converted into a numeric scale from 0 to 4: Never or Almost Never – 0; Once in a While – 1; Some of the Time – 2; Frequently – 3; Every or Almost Every Time – 4.

Overall Score



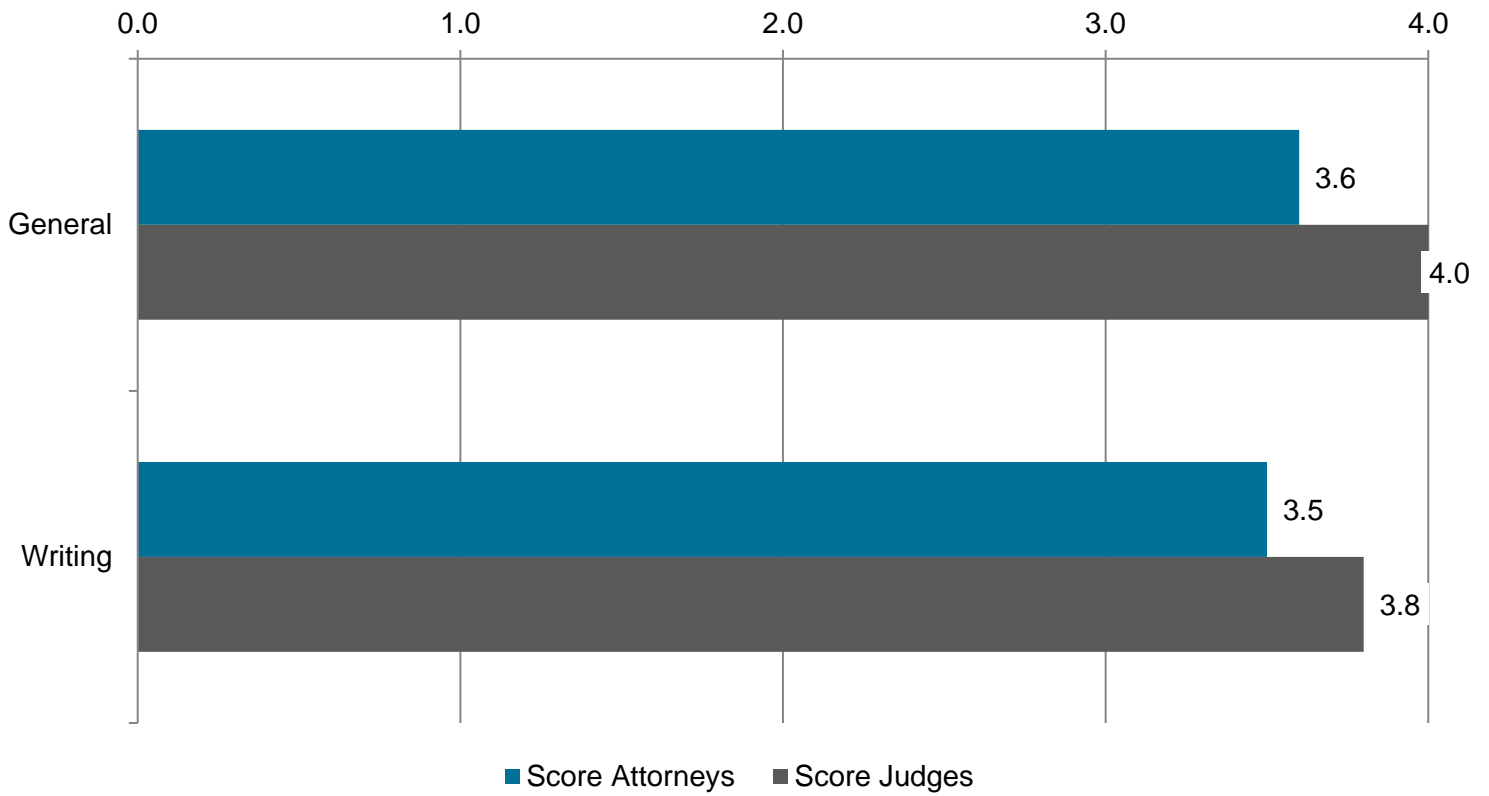
	Justice Berkenkotter Overall	Number of Responses
Overall Grade	3.7	54

Performance Scores

	Percentage		Number of Responses	
	Attorneys	Judges	Attorneys	Judges
Yes, meets performance standards	91%	100%	19	33
No, does not meet performance standards	10%	0%	2	0
No opinion	0%	0%	0	0

Note: All percentages in this report are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Individual Category Scores



	Score		Number of Responses	
	Attorneys	Judges	Attorneys	Judges
General	3.6	4.0	20	30
Writing	3.5	3.8	21	32

Detailed Report – Attorney Survey

General Evaluation Questions (Attorneys)

	Justice Berkenkotter Overall	Number of Responses
Is fair and impartial toward each side of the case.	3.6	20
Conducts hearings in a neutral manner.	3.6	19

Appellate Writing (Attorneys)

	Justice Berkenkotter Overall	Number of Responses
Writes opinions that are clear.	3.5	20
Writes opinions that adequately explain the basis of the Court's decision.	3.5	20
Issues opinions in a timely manner.	3.6	20
Makes decisions without regard to possible criticism.	3.6	21
Makes reasoned decisions based upon the law and facts.	3.4	21
Refrains from reaching issues that need not be decided.	3.3	19

Detailed Report – Judge Survey

General Evaluation Questions (Judges)

	Justice Berkenkotter Overall	Number of Responses
Is fair and impartial toward each side of the case.	4.0	30
Conducts hearings in a neutral manner.	4.0	22

Appellate Writing (Judges)

	Justice Berkenkotter Overall	Number of Responses
Writes opinions that are clear.	3.8	32
Writes opinions that adequately explain the basis of the Court's decision.	3.8	32
Issues opinions in a timely manner.	3.8	28
Makes decisions without regard to possible criticism.	3.8	31
Makes reasoned decisions based upon the law and facts.	3.9	32
Refrains from reaching issues that need not be decided.	3.9	29

Appendix 1. Survey Methods – Attorney and Non-attorney

Methodology and How to Read Results

For Justice Berkenkotter, 54 individuals completed surveys with at least a single rating question answered. This report reflects these 54 responses. The survey results are divided into eight sections: Case Management, Application and Knowledge of Law, Communications, Demeanor, Diligence, Fairness, Strengths, and Weaknesses.

A. Response Rates

Attorneys

The response rate is the number of attorneys that answered at least one survey question divided by the total number of attorneys that were asked to evaluate judges. During the 2024 cycle, 11,083 attorneys were sampled and asked to evaluate 1 or more judges. Among these attorneys, 4,251 responded. The attorney response rate is 38%.

The judge completion rate is the total number of attorney/judge pairs (each instance an attorney was asked to evaluate an individual judge with an answer to one or more questions regarding this specific judge) divided by the total number of attorney/judge pairs included in the cycle. During the cycle there was a total of 119,479 pairs with 16,041 responses, for a judge completion rate of 13%. This includes 10,359 responses where the attorneys lacked sufficient knowledge to evaluate the judge.

The evaluation completion rate is the number of evaluations with response to the aspects of judicial performance questions (5,682) divided by the total number of responses, including those where the attorney indicated she lacked sufficient knowledge to evaluate the judge (16,041). The evaluation completion rate is 35%.

During the course of this cycle, most attorneys were asked to participate in more than one quarterly data collection administration to evaluate different judges, with a maximum of three administrations during the cycle.

In addition, attorneys were allowed to evaluate judges who were not included in their invitations. A total of 637 surveys were completed among those attorneys selecting other judges to evaluate. These surveys were not factored in the survey response or completion rates but were factored into the percentage and counts of evaluations with answers to the aspects of judicial performance questions.

Non-attorneys

Court staff select judges to evaluate. Because they selected judges themselves, the response rate cannot be calculated. Similarly, we don't know the sample size of the juror survey because the survey was administrated by the court. We also don't know the sample size of the citizens feedback survey because citizens self select to participate. Thus, the response rate of these groups cannot be calculated.

During the 2024 cycle, 117,355 non-attorneys (not including court staff, jurors, and citizens) were sampled and asked to evaluate one or more judges. Among these non-attorneys, 6,614 responded. The non-attorney response rate is 6%. Note that the judge completion rate is equal to response rate among non-attorneys.

The evaluation completion rate is the number of evaluations with responses to the aspects of judicial performance questions, 3,794, divided by the total number of responses, including those where the attorney indicated they lacked sufficient knowledge to evaluate the judge (6,641). The evaluation completion rate is 57%.

Summary of Response Rates for Reporting

Details of the responses from each group used in reporting aspects of judicial performance are included in the table below.

Table 1:

Invitation Method	Invitations Sent	Answered Questions About Aspects of Judicial Performance
Attorney		
Attorney email	119,479	5,682
Attorney Survey Website	N/A	21
Court Attorney (self-select)	58	37
Non-attorney		
Non-attorney email	117,355	3,794
Court Staff Email Invite (Self-select)	2497	793
Appellate Judge	260	992
Citizen Feedback	N/A	43
Juror Survey	Unknown	42

B. Methodology

The 2024 attorney survey was conducted in four cycles online, beginning on September 10, 2023. Invitations were emailed to attorneys with appearances during the first and second quarters of 2023, 2023. Reminders were sent on September 18 and October 10, 2023.

This process was repeated among attorneys with appearances in the third quarter of 2023 with email invitations sent on November 2, 2023, with reminders sent on November 9, 2023, and November 16, 2023.

The final data collection occurred in January 2024. On January 14, 2024, invitations were emailed to attorneys with appearances during the fourth quarter of 2023. Reminders were sent on January 23 and January 28, 2023. Invitations were sent out by request throughout the data collection process.

In addition to emailed invitations, throughout the entire data collection period attorneys could self-select via a public link. Data was downloaded for analysis on February 5, 2024.

Data collection for non-attorneys began on September 9, 2023, and ran through the response deadline of February 4, 2024. Survey invitations were sent via email in quarterly batches to most non-attorneys, mirroring the process used for attorneys. Court staff members were also invited via email but using a different process. Rather than be invited to evaluate specific judges, staff are provided with a list of all judges in their district or county and allowed to choose which to evaluate.

Jurors received email invitations and were also allowed to self-select via publicly posted links. The general public was also allowed to self-select via a separate public link. This survey was open for the entire data collection period and data was downloaded for analysis on February 4, 2024. The survey remained open and any responses for judges received after February 4 were held over for the 2025 evaluation cycle.

Citizens could evaluate judges by accessing the survey through a link available on the Colorado OJPE website.

C. Questions

In the core of the survey, attorneys and non-attorneys (27 attorney and 24 non-attorney) evaluated district and county judges on 50 aspects of judicial performance. These aspects represent the behaviors that judges should or should not demonstrate. The questions asked of attorneys and non-attorneys are listed in the following table:

Questions for Attorney to evaluate district and county judges

Case Management
Promptly issuing a decision on the case after trial
Maintaining appropriate control over proceedings
Promptly ruling on pre-trial motions
Setting reasonable schedules for cases
Provides an alternative to in-person hearings when appropriate
Application and Knowledge of Law
Is able to identify and analyze relevant facts
Bases decisions on evidence and arguments
Issues consistent decisions when the circumstances are similar
Rulings cite the applicable substantive law
Consistently applies laws and rules
Fails to provide a proper legal basis for a decision
Communications
Makes sure all participants understand the proceedings
When issuing a ruling, the judge fails to provide an explanation for the decision
Provides written communications that are clear, thorough, and well- reasoned
Listens carefully during court proceedings
Demeanor
Gives proceedings a sense of dignity
Treats participants with respect
Overreacts to an incident(s) in the courtroom
Addresses individuals (e.g., attorneys, court staff, litigants, public witnesses) disrespectfully in the courtroom
Maintains a professional demeanor in the courtroom
Diligence
Uses good judgment in application of relevant law and rules
Is willing to handle cases on the docket even when they are complicated and time consuming
Does the necessary “homework” and is prepared for cases
Fairness
Conducts their courtroom in a neutral manner
Is fair and impartial to both side.
Appears to decide the outcome of the case before all evidence
Unnecessarily restricts a party’s presentation

Questions for Attorney to evaluate appellate judges

General
Is fair and impartial toward each side of the case
Conducts hearings in a neutral manner.
Writing
Writes opinions that are clear.
Writes opinions that adequately explain the basis of the Court's decision.
Issues opinions in a timely manner.
Makes decisions without regard to possible criticism.
Makes reasoned decisions based upon the law and facts.
Refrains from reaching issues that need not be decided.

Questions for Non-Attorney to evaluate district and county judges

Case Management
Promptly issuing a decision on the case after trial
Maintaining appropriate control over proceedings
Promptly ruling on pre-trial motions
Setting reasonable schedules for cases
Provides an alternative to in-person hearings when appropriate
Application and Knowledge of Law
Is able to identify and analyze relevant facts
Gives reasons for rulings
Willing to make decision without regard to possible outside pressure.
Communications
Makes sure all participants understand the proceedings
Uses language that everyone can understand
Speaks clearly so everyone in the courtroom can understand what's being said
Gives reasons for a ruling when needed
Demeanor
Gives proceedings a sense of dignity
Treats participants with respect
Has a sense of compassion and human understanding for those who appear in court
Diligence
Begins court on time
Maintains appropriate control over proceedings.
Sets reasonable schedules for cases.
Is prepared for cases
Manages court proceedings so there is little wasted time.
Fairness
Gives participants an opportunity to be heard
Treats those involved in the case without bias
Treats people fairly who represent themselves
Gives each side enough time to present their case

D. Analysis and Reporting

Attorneys were asked to rate the judges on these aspects of judicial performance using the categories of Never or Almost Never, Once in a While, Some of the Time, Frequently, and Every or Almost Every Time.

These categories were converted into a numeric scale from 0 to 4: Never or Almost Never – 0; Once in a While – 1; Some of the Time – 2; Frequently – 3; Every or Almost Every Time – 4.

For the following questions, the scales were reversed because these are behaviors judges should not demonstrate: Never or Almost Never – 4; Once in a While – 3; Some of the Time – 2; Frequently – 1; Every or Almost Every Time – 0.

Application and Knowledge of Law
Fails to provide a proper legal basis for a decision
Communications
When issuing a ruling, the judge fails to provide an explanation for the decision
Demeanor
Overreacts to an incident(s) in the courtroom
Addresses individuals (e.g. attorneys, court staff, litigants, public witnesses) disrespectfully in the courtroom.
Fairness
Unnecessarily restricts a party's presentation
Appears to decide the outcome of the case before all evidence

These aspects were grouped by topic into different categories; six categories for district and county judges. The district and county categories were Case Management, Application and Knowledge of Law, Communications, Demeanor, Diligence, and Fairness. Questions regarding appellate judges were divided into two categories, one for general questions and one specific to their writing (only asked of those who indicated they had experience with the judge's or justice's written opinions).

The results include an overall grade, a grade for each category, as well as a grade for each question. The overall score is calculated by averaging the responses to all questions answered by the attorneys. This score will have the same numerical range as the individual questions, from zero to four.

Each category score is calculated by averaging the responses to all questions answered by the attorney within each category. This score will have the same zero to four numerical range as the individual questions. Similarly, an average score is calculated for each individual question with the exception of the final question on meeting performance standards.

The overall average and category scores are reported for each judge along with the average scores for the judge's peers. The average score (with the exception noted above) is reported for each question along with the peer group score. In addition, the report includes the distribution of responses for each question, i.e., the percentage of attorneys that indicated they observed this behavior (six categories).

In a final question, respondents were asked if they thought the judge met judicial performance standards. This is reported in the Performance Scores section of the report.

Changes in 2024 Cycle

A new system of ratings was developed and used during the 2024 cycle. Prior to the 2024 cycle, the aspects of judicial performance were rated using a grade scale of A, B, C, D, or F.

E. Comments

At the end of each group of questions, attorneys and court staff had the option of leaving comments about the judge's performance in that area. Attorney and court staff also had the option to leave comments about the judge's strength and weakness. All respondents had the option to leave comments about the judge's performance in general. By statute, these comments are confidential and only provided to the judge and the District Commission on Judicial Performance. They are not released to the public.

Appendix 2. Survey Methodology – Appellate Judges

Methodology and How to Read Results

A. Response Rates

All 223 district judges were invited via email to evaluate each of the 37 Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges receiving retention reports. Appellate judges and justices were invited to evaluate their peers with the exception that no judge was invited to evaluate themselves. A total of 71 judges responded and completed 992 evaluations.

B. Methodology

The evaluation of appellate judges and justices by district judges was conducted online using the Voxco research suite. Invitations were sent to district judges via email on January 16th, 2024 and reminders were sent on January 26th and January 31st, 2024. The survey was closed and data was downloaded on February 4th, 2024.

C. Questions

Questions regarding appellate judges were divided into two categories, one for general questions and one specific to their writing (only asked of those who indicated they had experience with the judge or justice’s written opinions).

Questions for Attorney to evaluate appellate judges

General
Is fair and impartial toward each side of the case
Conducts hearings in a neutral manner.
Writing
Writes opinions that are clear.
Writes opinions that adequately explain the basis of the Court's decision.
Issues opinions in a timely manner.
Makes decisions without regard to possible criticism.
Makes reasoned decisions based upon the law and facts.
Refrains from reaching issues that need not be decided.

D. Analysis and Reporting

Judges were asked to rate the judges on these aspects of judicial performance using the categories of Never or Almost Never, Once in a While, Some of the Time, Frequently, and Every or Almost Every Time.

These categories were converted into a numeric scale from 0 to 4: Never or Almost Never – 0; Once in a While – 1; Some of the Time – 2; Frequently – 3; Every or Almost Every Time – 4.

Questions regarding appellate judges were divided into two categories, one for general questions and one specific to their writing.

The results include an overall grade, a grade for each category, as well as a grade for each question. The overall score is calculated by averaging the responses to all questions answered by the attorneys. This score will have the same numerical range as the individual questions, from zero to four.

Each category score is calculated by averaging the responses to all questions answered by the attorney within each category. This score will have the same zero to four numerical range as the individual questions. Similarly, an average score is calculated for each individual question with the exception of the final question on meeting performance standards.

The overall average and category scores are reported for each judge along with the average scores for the judge's peers. The average score (with the exception noted above) is reported for each question along with the peer group score. In addition, the report includes the distribution of responses for each question, i.e., the percentage of attorneys that indicated they observed this behavior (six categories).

In a final question, respondents were asked if they thought the judge met judicial performance standards. This is reported in the Performance Scores section of the report.

Changes in 2024 Cycle

A new system of ratings was developed and used during the 2024 cycle. Prior to the 2024 cycle, the aspects of judicial performance were rated using a grade scale of A, B, C, D, or F.

E. Comments

Respondents were given the option to leave supporting comments in a box next to where they graded each judge. By statute, these comments are confidential and only provided to the judge and the District Commission on Judicial Performance. They are not released to the public.