UPSTREAM MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

ORMI Q2 2026 Intelligence Brief

Part I — Executive Summary

What Ontario Regulatory Boards[1] Are Actually Prioritizing

Executive Summary

The Ontario Regulatory Modernization Index (ORMI) provides an evidence-based view of the issues, initiatives, and priorities receiving attention from Ontario regulatory Boards and Councils.

The Q2 2026 ORMI review analyzed **179 significant agenda items from 24 Ontario health and non-health regulators**[2] to identify recurring themes, modernization activities, and emerging governance priorities. (For ORMI purposes, "modernization" refers to deliberate efforts to improve how a regulator governs, operates, regulates, measures performance, delivers services, or responds to emerging challenges and opportunities.)

Five findings emerged:

1. Governance and oversight continue to dominate Board attention[3].
2. Performance reporting and accountability systems are becoming increasingly prominent.
3. Modernization remains a major focus across the sector.
4. Standards, competence, and registration continue to receive significant attention.
5. Health and non-health regulators exhibit different priority patterns.

Taken together, these findings suggest that regulatory modernization is increasingly being discussed through the lenses of governance, accountability, performance, and organizational effectiveness.

---

[1] Profession regulators typically have an oversight body referred to in their legislation as either Boards or Councils. For the purposes of this Intelligence Brief, we will use the terms Boards and Councils interchangeably.

[2] The Q2 review included all Ontario profession regulators for which Board or Council materials were publicly available between April 1 and June 30, 2026. Most regulators hold quarterly Board or Council meetings, although additional special meetings may occur throughout the year. Special meetings conducted entirely *in camera* and meetings convened solely for Board appointments were excluded from the review. As a result, ORMI reflects governance activity visible through publicly available Board and Council materials rather than all organizational activity occurring during the quarter.

[3] References to "Board Attention" throughout this Brief refer to attention observable through publicly available Board and Council meeting agendas, materials, and minutes.

What These Findings May Mean

Several themes emerged that may be relevant for Registrars, CEOs, Board Chairs, and senior leadership teams.

1. Governance Is Receiving Significant Attention

Governance modernization, governance reviews, Board effectiveness initiatives, governance reporting systems, and governance policy updates appeared frequently across the organizations reviewed. This raises a broader question: **As governance receives increasing attention, how do organizations determine whether Board attention is being directed toward the issues that matter most?**

2. Performance Is Becoming a Governance Discussion

Performance reporting is no longer simply an operational activity. Boards increasingly reviewed dashboards, monitoring frameworks, annual reports, strategic indicators, and accountability systems. This may indicate a growing interest in understanding not only what organizations are doing, but whether they are achieving intended outcomes.

3. Modernization Is Becoming Normalized

Nearly 60% of significant Q2 agenda items were classified as modernization initiatives. Modernization is no longer appearing primarily as a stand-alone project. Instead, modernization-related activities are increasingly embedded within governance, registration, standards, service delivery, and organizational development discussions.

4. Board Attention May Be an Underexamined Resource

Boards have limited time. Every agenda item consumes governance attention, leadership attention, staff effort, and organizational resources. Understanding how Board attention is distributed across governance, performance, risk, strategy, public protection, and modernization may become increasingly important as organizations face growing complexity.

Taken together, the findings suggest that governance, performance, modernization, and organizational effectiveness are becoming increasingly interconnected. While modernization remains a significant area of Board attention, the larger story may be how regulators are attempting to strengthen their capacity to govern, measure performance, implement change, and respond to emerging challenges.

Questions for Leadership

- Does our Board agenda reflect our strategic priorities?
- Are we allocating sufficient attention to future-oriented issues?
- Is performance information supporting decision-making?
- Are modernization initiatives coordinated across the organization?
- What important issues may not be receiving sufficient Board attention?

ORMI Q2 2026 Intelligence Brief

Part II — Detailed Analysis

About This Detailed Analysis

The Executive Summary highlighted five key findings from the Q2 2026 ORMI review. Part II provides additional context, supporting analysis, and comparisons intended to help readers understand not only what issues received Board attention during Q2, but how those priorities may be evolving over time. The analysis proceeds in five stages:

1. Understanding ORMI and its limitations.
2. Reviewing the overall Q2 activity profile.
3. Examining the five key findings.
4. Comparing Q2 results with Q1 2026.
5. Identifying emerging watch areas, leadership questions, and implications.

Taken together, these sections provide a broader view of how governance attention, modernization activity, and organizational priorities may be changing across Ontario regulators.

Section 1 - Understanding ORMI

What ORMI Measures

To identify emerging trends in Ontario regulatory bodies' Council and Board decisions, Upstream Management Solutions has developed the Ontario Regulatory Modernization Index (ORMI). ORMI identifies recurring agenda themes, governance priorities, modernization activity, performance discussions, Board attention patterns, and emerging signals across regulators. ORMI provides a snapshot of what Boards are discussing and what appears to be receiving increasing or decreasing attention over time.

What ORMI Cannot Measure

ORMI has several important scope limitations:

- **Effectiveness and decision quality.**
  Board attention does not indicate success, decision quality or actual time spent on an item.
- **Motivations and intentions.**
  ORMI identifies what Boards discuss, not necessarily why.
- **Visibility limitations.**
  Not all operational activity reaches Board agendas, time allocation is not visible, and in-camera discussions are often unavailable.

Despite these intentional limitations, ORMI provides a useful perspective on the issues regulators consider sufficiently important to bring before their governing bodies. Decisions are usually recorded in Minutes that are approved at a subsequent meeting. Understanding those patterns of attention helps establish the context for the findings that follow.

Section 2 – Q2 2026 Snapshot

The Ontario Regulatory Modernization Index (ORMI) reviewed publicly available Board and Council agenda materials from Ontario profession regulators to identify significant governance, policy, operational, and modernization activities receiving Board attention.

For Q2 2026, ORMI analyzed **179 significant agenda items** drawn from **24 Ontario health and non-health regulators**. The review included Board and Council agenda packages, meeting materials, and associated governance documentation available as of June 30, 2026.

Unlike traditional surveys or self-reporting exercises, ORMI examines issues that organizations actually place before their governing bodies for information, discussion, oversight, and decision-making. As a result, ORMI provides a unique perspective on where regulatory Boards are directing their attention and governance effort.

To better understand the nature of Board attention, ORMI classifies agenda items into three broad Initiative Type categories: Modernization[4] (M), Continuous/Core Activities (C), and Emerging Issues (E). Together, these categories help illustrate whether Boards are focused primarily on ongoing responsibilities, organizational improvement, or future-oriented issues.

Q2 2026 Scorecard

Metric	Result
Regulators Reviewed	**24**
Significant Agenda Items Analyzed	**179**
Health Regulators	**18**
Non-Health Regulators	**6**
Data Coverage	**Q2 2026**
Modernization Initiatives (M)	**59.8%**
Continuous/Core Activities (C)	**25.7%**
Emerging Issues (E)	**14.5%**

[4] For ORMI purposes, "modernization" refers to deliberate efforts to improve how a regulator governs, operates, regulates, measures performance, delivers services, or responds to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Figure 1: Q2 Initiative Type Distribution

Code	Type	Description	Count	% of total
M	Modernization	Improvement or modernization initiative	107	59.8%
C	Continuous/Core	Ongoing governance or operational activity	46	25.7%
E	Emerging	New or emerging issue	26	14.5%
	Total		**179**	**100%**

Section Summary

The findings suggest that **Modernization** continues to dominate Board attention. Nearly six out of every ten significant agenda items involved some form of modernization or organizational improvement activity. Approximately one-quarter of significant agenda items involved ongoing governance and operational activities (**Continuous/Core)**. **Emerging** issues represented a comparatively small share of Board attention, suggesting that many organizations remain focused on implementation, oversight, and ongoing modernization initiatives.

The next section examines where that attention was directed.

Section 3 – What Ontario Regulatory Boards Are Prioritizing

While the initiative-type analysis provides a high-level view of Board activity, it does not identify the specific issues receiving attention. Analysis of agenda content revealed five recurring themes that appeared consistently across organizations during Q2 2026.

Five Key Findings from Q2 2026

Analysis of 179 significant agenda items from 24 Ontario regulators identified five recurring themes receiving substantial Board and Council attention during Q2 2026.

Finding 1: Governance Dominates Board Attention
Governance and oversight represented the largest concentration of Board attention during Q2. Governance reviews, Board effectiveness initiatives, governance dashboards, strategic planning oversight, risk management frameworks, and governance policy updates appeared frequently across regulators, suggesting increasing attention to governance effectiveness, accountability, and decision-making.

> 💡 **ORMI Insight:** Governance and oversight activities represented approximately one-third of all significant Board attention identified during Q2 2026.

Finding 2: Performance Reporting Is Becoming Strategic
Boards increasingly reviewed dashboards, monitoring frameworks, annual reports, performance indicators, and accountability systems. Many performance-related discussions focused on implementation oversight, organizational outcomes, and strategic monitoring rather than operational reporting alone.

> 💡 **ORMI Insight:** Performance reporting increasingly appears to be functioning as a governance and decision-support tool rather than solely an accountability mechanism.

Finding 3: Modernization Remains a Major Focus
Nearly 60% of significant agenda items reviewed were classified as modernization initiatives. These activities appeared across governance, registration, standards development, policy reform, organizational development, performance reporting, service delivery, and technology-related initiatives, suggesting modernization is increasingly embedded within routine governance and oversight activities.

> 💡 **ORMI Insight:** Modernization is increasingly appearing as part of normal organizational activity rather than as a standalone transformation effort.

Finding 4: Standards, Competence, and Registration Remain Core Priorities
Standards reviews, competency initiatives, registration modernization, licensure processes, registration fairness matters, and quality assurance activities continued to receive substantial Board attention, particularly among health regulators. This suggests modernization is occurring alongside, rather than replacing, core public-protection functions.

> 💡 **ORMI Insight:** Standards, competence, and registration activities remain among the most consistently recurring areas of Board attention

Finding 5: Health and Non-Health Regulators Show Different Priority Patterns
Health regulators devoted proportionally greater attention to standards, competence, registration, quality assurance, and performance-related activities. **Non-health** regulators devoted proportionally greater attention to governance modernization, strategic planning, and organizational development. Both sectors, however, demonstrated significant interest in governance effectiveness, modernization, and organizational performance.

> 💡 **ORMI Insight:** While modernization is occurring across both sectors, the pathways through which modernization occurs appear to differ.

Section Summary

Taken together, the findings suggest that governance, performance, modernization, and core regulatory functions remain central areas of Board attention. The next question is whether those priorities are changing over time.

Section 4 – Board Attention Analysis

Understanding Board Attention

In addition to categorizing agenda items by topic, ORMI assesses the relative significance of each item using the Regulatory Intensity Level (RIL) framework, correlated to the type of Board attention required (information, discussion, or decision (see Appendix A for the complete scoring criteria). RIL scores range from routine oversight activities (Level 2) to transformational initiatives affecting organizational direction, mandate, or operating model (Level 5). Comparing RIL patterns over time provides additional insight into the nature of Board attention.

The Average Regulatory Intensity Levels (RILs) for Q2 2026 declined from 3.8 to 3.4. This suggests a shift from higher-consequence agenda items toward implementation, oversight, and modernization activities.

ORMI also groups agenda items into fourteen reporting categories (see Appendix B) representing the major areas of Board attention observed across regulators. These categories provide a useful view of how governance attention is distributed and how those patterns may be changing over time.

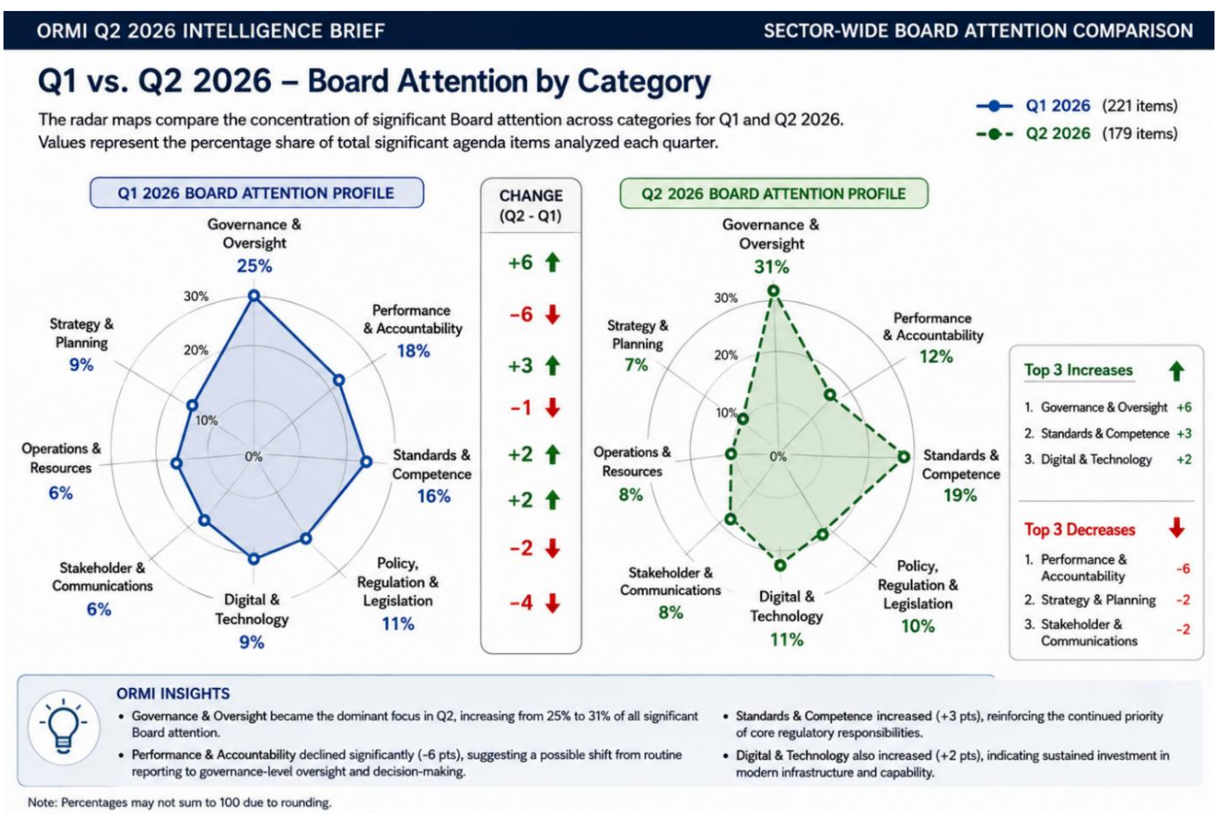

Figure 2: Q1 vs. Q2 Board Attention Profile

Figure 2 compares Board attention patterns across Q1 and Q2 2026. Governance & Oversight showed the largest increase (+6), while Performance & Accountability (-6) and Strategy & Planning (-2) declined modestly.

Three Notable Shifts from Q1 to Q2

Shift 1: Governance Became an Even Larger Area of Board Focus

The Governance & Oversight category increased in Q2 from 25% to 31% of significant agenda items, reflecting continued attention to governance reviews, Board effectiveness, strategic monitoring, and risk oversight.

> 📡 **ORMI Watch:** Governance Modernization increasingly appears focused on the effectiveness of governance systems themselves rather than solely on organizational structure or compliance requirements.

Shift 2: Core Regulatory Functions Remained Strong

Standards, Competence, Registration, and Licensure issues remained prominent in Q2, suggesting modernization efforts continue alongside core public-protection responsibilities.

> 💡 **ORMI Insight:** Modernization and core regulation do not appear to be competing priorities. Across many organizations, both are receiving sustained Board attention.

Shift 3: Performance Is Becoming Integrated into Governance Oversight

In Q2, performance discussions increasingly appeared within governance dashboards, strategic monitoring frameworks, and accountability systems, suggesting performance information is becoming more integrated with governance oversight.

> 📡 **ORMI Watch:** Performance reporting appears to be evolving from a compliance and reporting function toward a governance and decision-support function.

Board Attention by Initiative Type

In addition to examining where Board attention was directed, ORMI also analyzes the nature of the activities receiving attention. Agenda items are classified as Modernization (M), Continuous/Core Activities (C), or Emerging Issues (E) to provide insight into whether Boards are primarily focused on organizational improvement, ongoing governance and operational responsibilities, or future-oriented issues.

Figure 3 compares initiative types over time to help illustrate whether governance attention is shifting toward implementation, oversight, innovation, or emerging challenges.

Figure 3: Q1 vs Q2 Initiative Type Distribution

Initiative Type	Q1 Count	Q1 %	Q2 Count	Q2 %	Change
Modernization (M)	77	33.0%	107	59.8%	**+26.8 pts**
Continuous/Core (C)	72	30.9%	46	25.7%	**-5.2 pts**
Emerging (E)	84	36.1%	26	14.5%	**-21.6 pts**
Total	233	100%	179	100%	

Compared with Q1, Board attention shifted substantially toward modernization initiatives (+26.8 percentage points) while emerging issues declined (-21.6 percentage points).

💡 **ORMI Insight:** Emerging issues may represent a relatively small share of Board attention today, but often provide the earliest indications of future regulatory priorities and modernization pressures.

📡 **ORMI Watch:** Taken together, the Q1–Q2 comparisons suggest a possible shift **from issue identification toward implementation and oversight**. Governance activities expanded, modernization initiatives became more prominent, and a smaller proportion of Board attention was devoted to emerging issues. While additional quarters will be required to confirm whether this pattern persists, the findings may indicate increasing emphasis on execution, accountability, and organizational effectiveness.

Section Summary

The next section looks beyond current findings and comparisons to identify several areas ORMI will continue monitoring in future quarters.

Section 5 – What ORMI Will Be Watching

Looking Beyond Q2

The findings and Q1–Q2 comparisons provide a snapshot of current Board priorities and highlight several areas where governance attention appears to be evolving.

While it is too early to draw definitive conclusions from a single quarter, several themes emerged frequently enough to warrant ongoing observation. These themes do not necessarily represent the largest areas of Board attention today. Rather, they may provide early indications of issues that could receive increasing attention in future quarters.

The following watch areas will be monitored through subsequent ORMI reviews.

Watch Area 1: Governance Effectiveness

Governance and oversight represented the largest concentration of Board attention during Q2. However, much of that attention was directed toward governance effectiveness, Board performance, strategic oversight, governance reviews, and accountability systems rather than governance structure alone.

> 📡 **ORMI Watch:** Governance modernization increasingly appears focused on improving the effectiveness of governance systems rather than simply updating governance frameworks or compliance

Watch Area 2: Performance and Accountability

Performance reporting appeared frequently within dashboards, implementation updates, strategic monitoring frameworks, accountability systems, and governance discussions.

Rather than functioning solely as a reporting mechanism, performance information increasingly appeared connected to governance oversight and decision-making.

> 📡 **ORMI Watch:** Performance reporting appears to be evolving from a compliance and reporting function toward a governance and decision-support function.

Watch Area 3: Organizational Capacity

Workforce planning, succession planning, organizational learning, governance development, digital enablement, and performance systems appeared with increasing frequency across multiple categories.

Although these issues were often discussed separately, many appeared connected to broader questions of organizational readiness, capability, and sustainability.

> 📡 **ORMI Watch:** Governance, performance, workforce development, organizational learning, and technology discussions increasingly appear to be converging around questions of organizational capacity.

Watch Area 4: Artificial Intelligence and Digital Enablement

Artificial intelligence remained a relatively small area of Board attention during Q2. However, AI-related discussions continued to appear in governance, workforce readiness, policy development, technology modernization, and risk-management contexts.

Digital infrastructure and technology modernization initiatives also remained visible across multiple regulators.

> 📡 **ORMI Watch:** AI remains an emerging rather than dominant governance topic, but its implications increasingly extend across multiple organizational domains.

Watch Area 5: Policy and Legislative Reform

Several regulators continued to devote attention to legislative modernization, regulatory policy reform, standards modernization, registration reform, and broader regulatory framework reviews.

These activities varied significantly across organizations but remain an important source of future modernization activity.

> 📡 **ORMI Watch:** Policy and legislative reform initiatives may become increasingly important drivers of modernization activity as regulators respond to evolving expectations, government priorities, and sector

What We Will Be Watching in Q3

Based on the Q2 findings, ORMI will continue monitoring:

- Governance effectiveness reviews
- Strategic monitoring frameworks
- Performance reporting evolution
- Registration modernization
- Standards modernization

- Workforce planning and succession
- Organizational learning
- Artificial intelligence
- Digital enablement
- Legislative reform initiatives

Section Summary

The Q2 review suggests that governance, performance, modernization, and organizational capacity discussions are becoming increasingly interconnected. While additional quarters will be required to determine whether these patterns persist, the emerging watch areas provide an indication of where future governance attention may be directed.

The next section considers several questions these observations may raise for Boards, Registrars, and senior leadership teams.

Section 6 – Questions Raised

Beyond identifying patterns and shifts, ORMI is intended to encourage reflection and discussion. The findings raise several questions that Boards, Registrars, and leadership teams may wish to consider.

Questions for Regulatory Leaders

The Q2 findings raise several questions for Boards, Registrars, and senior leadership teams to ponder:

1. Does Board attention reflect strategic priorities?
2. Are issues reaching the Board because they are important—or because they are ready?
3. Is governance attention being used strategically?
4. Are performance systems supporting decision-making?
5. How coordinated are modernization efforts?
6. What organizational capacities will be needed next?

Board attention is a finite resource. Understanding how that attention is allocated may become increasingly important as organizations face growing complexity, competing priorities, and expanding expectations.

The purpose of these questions is not to suggest definitive answers, but to encourage reflection on how governance attention is allocated and how organizations determine which issues receive Board focus. As regulatory environments become more complex, the ability to identify, prioritize, and govern emerging issues may become increasingly important.

The next section considers several implications that may arise from the findings, shifts, and watch areas identified through the Q2 review.

Section 7 – Implications for Regulatory Leaders

Implications for Regulatory Leaders

The findings, shifts, and emerging watch areas identified through ORMI have several potential implications for Boards, Registrars, and senior leadership teams. While the observations are exploratory rather than prescriptive, they suggest several areas that may warrant attention in the months ahead:

- **Governance Capacity:** Governance effectiveness may be becoming as important as governance structure.
- **Performance Capacity:** Performance systems increasingly support governance and decision-making.
- **Modernization Coordination:** Modernization initiatives may benefit from stronger integration.
- **Organizational Capacity:** Governance, learning, workforce readiness, and performance systems appear increasingly interconnected.
- **Board Attention:** Board attention itself may be an underutilized strategic resource.

💡 **ORMI Insight:** Taken together, the Q1–Q2 comparisons suggest a possible shift from issue identification toward implementation and oversight. Governance activities expanded, modernization initiatives became more prominent, and a smaller proportion of Board attention was devoted to emerging issues. While additional quarters will be required to confirm whether this pattern persists, the findings may indicate increasing emphasis on execution, accountability, and organizational effectiveness.

📡 **ORMI Watch:** As governance, performance, modernization, workforce development, technology, and organizational learning become increasingly interconnected, regulators may face growing pressure to ensure these capacities evolve together rather than through separate initiatives. The challenge may be less about identifying what needs to change and more about coordinating change across the organization as a whole.

Section Summary

Taken together, the findings suggest that governance, performance, modernization, workforce readiness, technology, and organizational effectiveness are becoming increasingly interconnected. While regulators continue to address a wide range of priorities, many of the issues appearing before Boards may ultimately reflect broader questions of organizational capacity and readiness.

These observations are exploratory rather than prescriptive. However, they may provide useful context as Boards, Registrars, and leadership teams consider how to allocate attention, resources, and effort in an increasingly complex regulatory environment.

Whether these trends persist will become clearer through future ORMI reviews, but the Q2 findings suggest that attention may increasingly be shifting from identifying issues toward implementing solutions and strengthening organizational capacity.

Section 8 – Concluding Observations

Key Takeaway

The most significant insight from the Q2 review may not be any individual finding, but rather the increasing convergence of governance, performance, modernization, workforce readiness, technology, and organizational effectiveness discussions.

Board Attention as a Resource

Boards have limited attention. Understanding where that attention is directed—and whether it reflects organizational priorities—may become increasingly important.

Looking Ahead

ORMI will continue to monitor governance priorities, modernization activity, emerging issues, and organizational-capacity signals throughout Q3 and Q4 2026. Future quarters will help determine whether the patterns identified in Q2 represent temporary shifts or longer-term changes in governance priorities across the sector.

APPENDIX A

Regulatory Intensity Level (RIL) Framework

RIL Scoring

Level	Description	Typical Governance Stage	Examples
1	Minor operational activity	Information	Routine update, administrative matter, recurring report, housekeeping item. Usually not worth entering.
2	Incremental modernization, oversight, or governance activity	Information / Discussion / Decision	Process improvement, reporting enhancement, committee work plan approval, environmental scan, Fairness Commissioner presentation, small policy update, risk monitoring report.
3	Significant modernization, planning, or organizational initiative	Discussion / Decision	Governance review, risk framework, strategic planning exercise, stakeholder engagement strategy, service redesign, credential modernization, AI assessment or survey, strategic dashboard.
4	Major modernization initiative with organization-wide implications	Decision	Enterprise-wide governance modernization, competency framework reform, standards of practice update, major digital modernization, organization-wide redesign, major policy initiative, reconciliation action plan.
5	Transformational change affecting the regulator's operating model, mandate, or long-term direction	Decision	Strategic plan approval, legislative reform, fundamental regulatory model change, sector-wide transformation, major regulatory restructuring.

Appendix B – Board Attention by Category and Regulatory Intensity Level (RIL)

Category	RIL 2	RIL 3	RIL 4	RIL 5	Total	% by Category
Governance & Oversight	1	21	12	3	37	**30.1%**
Performance & Accountability	0	10	11	0	21	**17.1%**
Standards, Competence & Quality Assurance	0	5	10	2	17	**13.8%**
Registration & Entry-to-Practice	0	2	9	3	14	**11.4%**
Regulatory Policy & Legislative Reform	0	1	5	2	8	**6.5%**
Financial Sustainability & Resource Allocation	1	4	1	0	6	**4.9%**
Digital Transformation & Technology	0	1	4	0	5	**4.1%**
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	0	2	2	0	4	**3.3%**
Risk Management	0	3	0	0	3	**2.4%**
Complaints, Discipline & Fitness to Practise	0	1	0	1	2	**1.6%**
Executive Leadership & Succession	0	1	1	0	2	**1.6%**
Stakeholder Relations & Communications	1	1	0	0	2	**1.6%**
Innovation	0	0	1	0	1	**0.8%**
Strategy	0	1	0	0	1	**0.8%**
Total	3	53	56	11	123	**100.0%**
% by RIL	**2.4%**	**43.1%**	**45.5%**	**8.9%**	**100.0%**	

💡 **ORMI Insight:** Governance & Oversight (30.1%), Performance & Accountability (17.1%), and Standards, Competence & Quality Assurance (13.8%) accounted for approximately **61% of all higher-intensity agenda activity (RIL 2–5)** identified during Q2 2026. Together, these categories suggest that governance effectiveness, organizational accountability, and professional regulation remain the dominant areas of Board attention across Ontario regulators.