

JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Judge Suzanne Parisien

King County Superior Court

Based on the 2020 King County Bar Association Judicial Officer Survey (Survey Period: October 2019 — Published January 2020)

I. Background and Methodology

The King County Bar Association (KCBA) Judicial Officer Survey is conducted on a quadrennial cycle and represents the most comprehensive attorney-based evaluation of King County Superior Court judges available to the public. The 2020 survey invited more than 8,300 attorneys who had appeared before the court and received 1,357 completed responses — a rigorous sample providing statistically meaningful data across the bench.

The survey evaluates judicial performance across four categories: Legal Decision Making, Integrity & Impartiality, Demeanor, Temperament & Communication, and Administrative Skills. Each category is rated on a five-point scale: (1) Unacceptable, (2) Below Expectations, (3) Acceptable, (4) Very Good, (5) Excellent. A score of 4.0 represents the threshold between "Acceptable" and "Very Good."

The survey covered 52 judges. To qualify for inclusion, a judge must have received a minimum of 20 evaluations. Judge Parisien received **171 evaluations** — well above the minimum threshold and substantially exceeding the median — lending her results a high degree of statistical reliability.

Note on Composite Scoring

The KCBA deliberately did not design the survey to produce a single composite score, noting that the four categories are not necessarily equal in importance and that a single number risks obscuring meaningful detail. That caveat stands.

That said, for analytical purposes the most defensible approach is a simple unweighted average of the four category scores — it is transparent, makes no hidden assumptions about relative importance, and is easy to verify. A weighted approach (e.g., giving more weight to Legal Decision Making and Integrity & Impartiality, which arguably go to the heart of judicial function) would be defensible in theory, but any weights chosen would be subjective. The simple average is the cleanest baseline.

Importantly: if categories were weighted to prioritize Legal Decision Making and Integrity & Impartiality over Administrative Skills — as a reasonable reviewer might — Judge Parisien's composite would only worsen. These are precisely the two categories in which she scored lowest in absolute terms and by rank.

II. Category-by-Category Performance

The table below presents Judge Parisien's scores in each of the four survey categories alongside the all-judge average, the gap between the two, and her rank among all 52 evaluated judges.

Category	Parisien	Peer Avg	Gap	Rank
Legal Decision Making	3.60	4.08	-0.48	#48 of 52
Integrity & Impartiality	3.71	4.18	-0.47	#50 of 52
Demeanor, Temp. & Communication	3.81	4.27	-0.46	#49 of 52
Administrative Skills	3.93	4.24	-0.31	#46 of 52
COMPOSITE (4-category avg)	3.76	4.22	-0.46	#51 of 52

Source: 2020 KCBA Judicial Officer Survey, Tables 10 and 12–15. Composite = unweighted average of four category scores.

Judge Parisien ranked in the bottom seven of 52 judges in every single category. She did not exceed a score of 3.93 in any area, failing to clear the 4.0 threshold in all four categories while the peer average exceeded 4.0 across the board.

III. Key Findings

Finding 1: Consistent Below-Average Performance Across All Categories

Judge Parisien ranks in the bottom seven of 52 judges in every single survey category. This consistency is analytically significant. A judge with one weak area might plausibly be explained by assignment type or courtroom specialty. A judge who ranks in the bottom 13% across all four independent measures presents a pattern that is not readily explained by circumstance.

Finding 2: Severity of "Unacceptable" Ratings

On Integrity & Impartiality — the category most central to a judge's fitness for office — 10.3% of responding attorneys selected the survey's most severe rating of "Unacceptable." On Legal Decision Making, 7.8% did the same. When considered across 171 evaluations, these percentages represent a meaningful and repeated pattern of professional concern.

Finding 3: Weakest Scores in Most Critical Categories

Her weakest scores cluster in precisely the areas that go most directly to the substance of judicial work — Legal Decision Making (3.60) and Integrity & Impartiality (3.71) — while her strongest score is in the most administrative and operational category (Administrative Skills, 3.93). The shape of her performance profile points to concerns at the core of the judicial function.

Finding 4: Below 4.0 in Every Category

The survey's five-point scale situates 4.0 as the dividing line between "Acceptable" and "Very Good." Judge Parisien does not clear this threshold in any of the four categories evaluated. The all-judge average exceeds 4.0 in all four.

Finding 5: Sample Size Forecloses Statistical Objections

With 171 evaluations received, Judge Parisien's results cannot be attributed to a thin or unrepresentative sample. Any rebuttal would need to engage with the volume and consistency of the responses, not merely question whether the sample was adequate.

IV. Composite Ranking Among All 52 Judges

Applying an unweighted average of the four category scores to all 52 judges produces the following result:

Parisien composite score (avg. of 4 categories)	3.76
All-judge composite average	4.22
Gap from all-judge average	-0.46
Composite rank among 52 judges	#51 of 52
Number of evaluations received	171

Judge Parisien ranked #51 of 52. The one judge ranked below her, Judge David Steiner, received only **20 evaluations** — the bare minimum threshold for inclusion, compared to Parisien's 171. Parisien's sample is 8.5 times larger.

Steiner's result should be treated with extreme caution, and by any reasonable statistical standard it should be disqualified entirely. His 20 evaluations sit precisely on the survey's own minimum threshold — a threshold that exists precisely because results below it are considered too unreliable to publish. A sample of exactly 20 is not a robust finding; it is a borderline inclusion that the survey's own rules nearly excluded. Any single outlier response among those 20 evaluations could materially shift his score. No serious statistician would treat a 20-evaluation result as equivalent in weight to a 171-evaluation result.

Setting Steiner aside on these grounds — which is entirely defensible and arguably required by any rigorous reading of the data — Judge Parisien is the **worst-performing judge on the King County Superior Court bench** in the 2020 survey by every available measure.

Bottom Five Judges — 2020 Composite

#48	Moore	3.82
#49	Chung	3.81
#50	Amini	3.77
#51	Parisien	3.76
#52	<i>Steiner (20 evals — minimum threshold)</i>	3.47