

**Ministry of Education**

**Operational Review Report  
Conseil scolaire de district catholique  
de l'Est ontarien**

**October 2009**

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## Executive Summary

This report details the findings and recommendations of the Operational Review of the Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien (CSDCEO) conducted by the Operational Review Team composed of external consultants from Price water house Coopers LLP and Ministry of Education staff. The Operational Review was conducted over four days beginning October 6, 2009.

## Introduction

The Ministry plans to perform Operational Reviews of the 72 district school boards across the province over the next three years. The initiative supports Ministry goals and will increase confidence in public education. The Ministry's goal is to enhance management capacity within school boards by encouraging good stewardship of public resources and by the leveraging and sharing of leading practices. By identifying opportunities for continual improvement, school board administration and operations will be aligned to support the government's highest priority: student achievement.

The Operational Review Team reviewed the school board's operations in four functional areas: Governance and School Board Administration; Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocation; Financial Management; and School Operations and Facilities Management. The purpose of this was to assess the extent to which the school board has implemented the leading practices set out in the "Operational Review Guide for Ontario School Boards". The review also provides, where appropriate, recommendations on opportunities for improvement. Appendix A provides an overview summary of the Operational Review scope and methodology.

The review found that the Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien is well managed. Noted strengths of the school board include a clearly articulated multi-year strategy for student success and a strong and aligned leadership that communicates effectively and shares a common vision. Management monitors student enrolment and staffing levels, invests in leadership development, and implements effective fiscal policy.

A summary of the findings and recommendations identified in each of the functional areas reviewed follows. Details can be found in subsequent sections of the report.

## Governance and School Board Administration

The Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien (CSDCEO) is distinguished by a positive relationship between the Chair and the Director of Education, who work closely together to meet the objectives of the school board. The board of trustees has eight members, seven of whom have served for more than nine years. In addition, two student trustees are elected annually to sit on the board of trustees.

The organization of the school board's senior administration appears to be well founded and operating effectively. The executive council, which has members of the senior administration, is composed of the Director of Education, the Associate Director of Education, two Superintendents of Education, and the Superintendent of Business and Treasurer.

The Board's decision-making process is clearly described and documented. The procedural rules that specify the Board's meeting organization and decision-making processes are documented and communicated to all trustees.

The school board's current strategic direction was developed in 2009 with the introduction of the strategic plan for 2007-2012. The school board's strategic plan, which was developed by the administration and validated by the board of trustees in May 2008, identifies three school board priority axes: 1. student learning and achievement, 2. vitality, and 3. leadership.

The school board's multi-year strategic direction is supported by the annual improvement plan, called the action plan, which identifies for each of the three axes the scheduled activities, resources, products, performance indicators and short- and long-term outcomes. The school board's annual action plan also covers both academic and non-academic departments.

The school board's guidelines can be accessed online on its website.

### **Recommendations:**

- The school board should implement a periodic review cycle for guidelines to ensure they remain effective.
- The school board should implement a formal succession plan to manage the retirements and resignations of key managers/administrators.
- The school board should consider expanding its website by including a departmental organization chart, supplemented with a directory of key staff contact information.

### **Human Resources Management and School Staffing/Allocation**

The human resources department has demonstrated a good level of operational effectiveness. This department has implemented several leading practices, including the following:

- The human resource department has an annual action plan, called the operational action plan, which documents its goals based on the school board's

annual action plan. The HR department's operational action plan includes measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities, as well as a list of activities, resources and products, if necessary.

- The HR department regularly communicates with stakeholders about existing HR guidelines and measures through meetings with union representatives, presentations intended for principals, vice-principals and department heads, as well as several comprehensive personnel information kits.
- The HR department provides regularly scheduled HR policy awareness training sessions to school board staff.
- The HR department developed recruiting and hiring guidelines, which outline Board priorities and by-laws that explain the seven main steps in the recruiting and selection process for each school board member.
- The HR department communicates openly and positively with the unions in many ways, including a pro-active approach to dealing with issues prior to joint meetings.

### **Recommendations:**

- The HR department should complete its guideline for evaluating staff performance with by-laws on the appraisal of substitute teachers, school principals and viceprincipals, OSSTF support staff and CUPE staff, in order to ensure consistency and transparency in the evaluation process of all school board employees.
- The school board should continue its efforts to develop a formal attendance management program that includes the implementation of guidelines and by-laws to reduce absences, methods for monitoring the rate of absences in different employee groups of the school board, and the production of periodic attendance reports to inform the administration, schools and trustees of the efficiency of attendance management programs and methods.
- The school board should conduct periodic reviews of the insurance carrier (Administrative Services only) that manages medical and dental claims, in order to ensure that the school board's claims are processed according to the plan's terms and conditions.
- The HR department should proceed with its project of introducing exit interviews for employees who are leaving their positions.



- The school board should formally document the annual staff allocation process for all employee groups to clarify the duties and responsibilities of all staff while increasing the transparency of the process for the trustees.
- The HR department should consider comparing its staff allocation costs with those of other school boards with a similar funding model in order to ensure an efficient use of resources.

## **Financial Management**

The school board has achieved positive results with respect to financial management due to the implementation of several leading practices, including the following:

- Management has adopted an integrated approach to enrolment forecasting. This supports the development of the staffing plan and annual budget.
- Management identifies all significant risks during budget planning, and develops strategies to mitigate the risk of spending beyond authorized/budgeted levels.
- The school board has adopted an integrated financial system, which combines general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, budget, purchasing, and recently, capital management modules.
- The school board has consolidated banking activities with a single institution to minimize its bank charges and maximize the interest rate on its surplus funds.
- The school board has a guideline and a by-law governing the purchasing of school board goods and services.
- The school board participates in several purchasing consortia, including those for natural gas, school transportation and snow removal.

## **Recommendations:**

- The finance department should continue its efforts to develop an annual departmental plan that is aligned with the school board's annual action plan, and that includes measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities. Once the plan is created, the school board should then consider submitting it to the trustees at the same time as the periodic progress reports.
- The finance department should document the annual budget development process in a guideline in order to clarify staff roles and responsibilities, while making the process more transparent for trustees.

- The school board should consider modifying the format of interim reports, according to the format suggested in section 4.3 of this report.
- The school board should consider formalizing an internal audit function. This would include a broader audit of financial and management controls.
- Once the independent internal audit function is created, the school board should ensure that internal audit plans are clearly documented and recommendations are followed up and acted upon by management.
- Trustees should establish an audit committee and invite external advisors to contribute to the effectiveness of the committee.
- The Board should develop an investment guideline to reduce idle cash, in accordance with the *Education Act*.
- The finance department should develop periodic reports on the school board's cash position and the results of future investment activities, and share them with the board of trustees.
- The finance department should consider using electronic registration and payment systems for its non-grant revenues exceeding a minimum amount to be determined.
- The school board should expand the guideline governing the procurement of goods and services so that the vendor selection criteria include elements over and above lowest cost, such as total cost of ownership, value and quality, competitive purchasing or the use of green products.
- The finance department should implement measures to ensure staff compliance with Board purchasing procedures and guidelines.
- The finance department should define purchasing levels of authority that are commensurate with job title/role in its purchasing guideline. Once the purchasing levels of authority are established, the department should ensure that they are communicated to staff and develop a monitoring process for this policy.
- The finance department should ensure that three-way matching (purchase order, receipt/invoice and inspection) is used for all of the school board's purchases, when appropriate.
- The finance department should continue to increase its use of electronic funds transfer (EFT) payments to all appropriate suppliers, to gain greater efficiency and minimize the risk of payments being altered prior to clearing the bank.

## School Operations and Facilities Management

The facilities department, which is responsible for school operations and facilities management, adopted several leading practices for carrying out its activities. The following significant practices are noted:

- The school board has developed an annual training program for its maintenance and custodial staff. This program supports skills development and occupational health and safety.
- The custodial and maintenance department has developed a custodial allocation model for the optimum use of resources in custodial activities.
- The school board has developed a multi-year maintenance plan that addresses its preventative, critical and deferred maintenance, in accordance with the school board's standards. The school board's maintenance and renewal activities are reassessed annually through individual school assessments.
- To address air quality problems, the facilities department is equipped with a device to analyze air quality, which allows the school board to reduce expenses by reducing the number of visits from specialists or external consultants who are sent to schools to conduct tests or take measurements.
- The Board has an approved pupil accommodation review guideline.
- The school board has a multi-year capital plan and a capital liquidity template that were approved by the Ministry.

### Recommendations:

- The facilities department should continue its efforts to develop an annual department plan that is aligned with the school board's annual action plan, and that incorporates the department's goals and priorities as well as measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities. Once the plan is created, the school board should then consider submitting it to trustees at the same time as the periodic progress reports.
- The facilities department should go ahead with its project to update the task descriptions of its personnel.
- The facilities department should develop and communicate to all relevant stakeholders the official standards for cleanliness in schools, which could be used as a basis for appraising custodial staff or handling potential complaints.

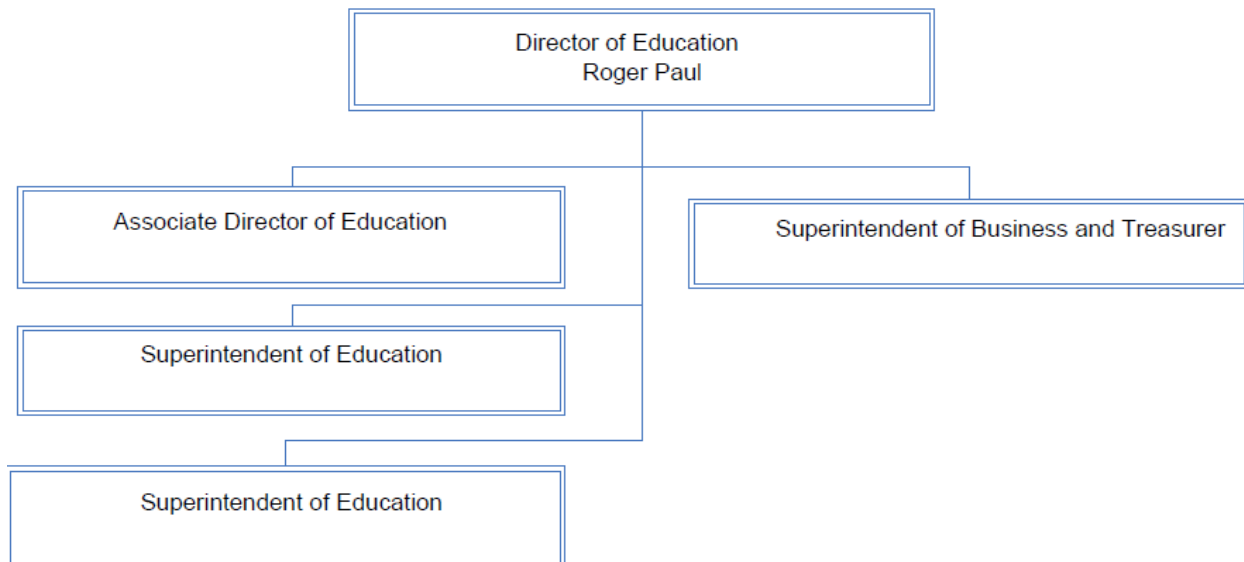
- The facilities department should ensure a greater standardization of the procedure for the procurement of supplies in order to minimize costs and promote operating efficiency.
- The facilities committee should develop a multi-year energy management plan that would incorporate measures to be implemented and the tools to monitor and manage the plan. The facilities committee should also present a formal annual report to the trustees on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.
- The school board should share successful energy conservation initiatives with schools.

# 1. Background and Overview

## 1.1 School Board Profile and Structure

The Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien is responsible for French-language Catholic education over a territory covering nearly 5,300 km<sup>2</sup> and including the Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Prescott and Russell counties. The Board provides elementary and secondary education for more than 11,000 students located in 31 elementary schools and 8 secondary schools.

The following table presents key school board administration members. Senior administrators, who report to the Director of Education, make up what the school board designated as the executive council.



## 1.2 Key Priorities of the School Board

The mission and vision of the Conseil scolaire de district de catholique de l'Est ontarien are presented on the school board's website.

Its mission is defined as follows:

*[TRANSLATION] "To ensure education focused on our student achievement and to inspire students with pride in the French language, the Catholic faith, and the heritage of FrancoOntarian culture."*

It has the following vision:

*[TRANSLATION] “The commitment of the Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l’Est ontarien is to foster a collaborative partnership with parents, staff, parishes and the school community. We aim to continuously improve our students’ outcomes, and our senior staff will adopt a transformational leadership approach with respect to student achievement by focusing on:*

- *Students and their learning process*
- *Teachers as leaders in creating changes in the teaching-learning process*
- *Schools committed to achieving the school board’s mission, vision, values and beliefs*
- *Creating a professional learning community.”*

The school board identified three main axes in its 2009-2012 multi-year strategic plan:

1. *Student learning and achievement*

- To improve student achievement by bridging the gaps.

2. *Vitality*

- Recruit more students from the candidate pool and improve the retention rate.

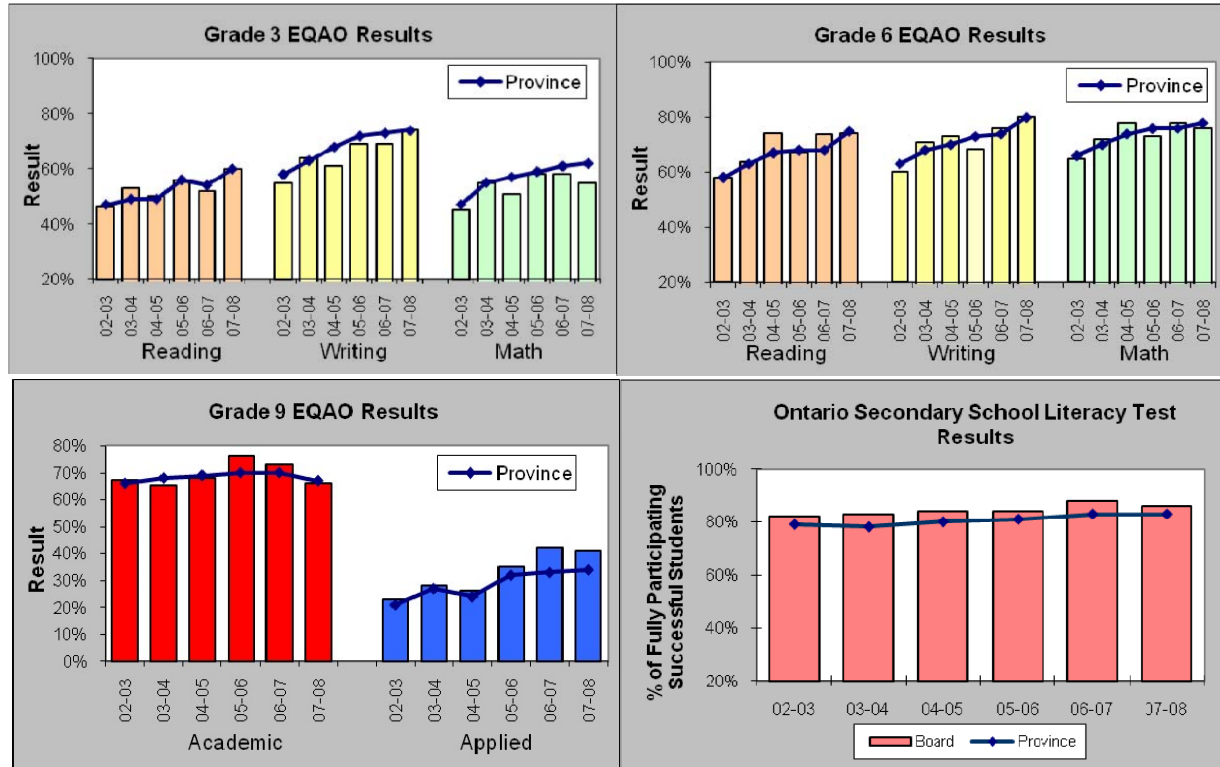
3. *Leadership*

- *All personnel* will possess and use relevant knowledge, key skills and appropriate tools to carry out the *CSDCEO’s strategic plan*.

The school board defined strategic outcomes for each of its three axes.

### 1.3 Student Achievement

The following charts illustrate the school board's EQAO and OSSLT results over the last six years.



### 1.4 Fiscal Overview

Overall, the school board follows conservative fiscal policies to achieve a balanced budget.

#### Summary Financial Data (Revenues)

Revenues	2006-07 Financial Statements	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Revised Estimates	2009-10 Estimates
Legislative Grants	\$109,291,612	\$113,814,197	\$118,916,568	\$122,979,974
Local taxation	\$17,916,157	\$17,583,204	\$17,981,424	\$17,546,372
Board Revenues	\$4,159,525	\$7,787,313	\$6,169,605	\$2,701,892
Other Operating & capital Grants	\$6,840,568	\$5,222,276	\$2,830,248	\$2,147,328
<b>Total Revenues (Schedule 9)</b>	<b>\$138,207,862</b>	<b>\$144,406,990</b>	<b>\$145,897,845</b>	<b>\$145,375,566</b>

## Summary Financial Data (Expenditure)

<b>Expenditures:</b>	<b>2006-07 Financial Statements</b>	<b>2007-08 Financial Statements</b>	<b>2008-09 Revised Estimates</b>	<b>2009-10 Estimates</b>
Operating expenditures	\$125,457,722	\$135,947,714	\$136,655,545	\$136,470,540
Capital expenditures - Before transfers from reserves	\$10,903,880	\$7,688,639	\$7,551,539	\$7,669,437
Transfer to (from) Reserves	\$1,893,346	\$1,901,461	\$273,861	\$885,589
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$138,254,948</b>	<b>\$145,537,814</b>	<b>\$144,480,945</b>	<b>\$145,025,566</b>
<b>In-year Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>-\$47 086</b>	<b>-\$1 130 824</b>	<b>\$1,416,900</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>

## School Board Reserves and Deferred Revenues

<b>School Board Reserve and Deferred Revenues:</b>	<b>2006-07 Financial Statements</b>	<b>2007-08 Financial Statements</b>	<b>2008-09 Revised Estimates</b>	<b>2009-10 Estimates</b>
Retirement Gratuities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Reserve for Working Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
School Activities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
WSIB	\$267,785	\$267,785	\$267,785	\$267,785
Miscellaneous	\$69,912	\$86,494	\$110,993	\$86,493
Pupil Accommodation Debt Reserve	\$6,096,830	\$3,782,262	\$3,985,373	\$4,824,712
GPL Reserve	\$518,013	\$417,460	\$270,182	\$235,676
<b>Total Reserve Funds (Schedule 5)</b>	<b>\$6,952,540</b>	<b>\$4,554,001</b>	<b>\$4,634,333</b>	<b>\$5,414,666</b>
Reserve for Classroom Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Special Education Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Distant School Reserves	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0



<b>School Board Reserve and Deferred Revenues:</b>	<b>2006-07 Financial Statements</b>	<b>2007-08 Financial Statements</b>	<b>2008-09 Revised Estimates</b>	<b>2009-10 Estimates</b>
Pupil Accommodation Allocation Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Program Improvement Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Improved Access for Special Education Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Operating Deferred Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Proceeds of Dispositions Reserve- School Buildings	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Proceeds of Dispositions Reserve- Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
MECR/ BECR Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Education Development Charge Reserve	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Capital Deferred Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Deferred Revenues (Schedule 5.1)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total Board Reserves and Deferred Revenues</b>	<b>\$6,952,540</b>	<b>\$4,554,001</b>	<b>\$4,634,333</b>	<b>\$5,414,666</b>

## 1.5 Key School Board Statistics

The following table highlights key statistics for the school board.

### Day School Enrolment

Day School Enrolment	2002-03 Actual	2009-10 Estimates
Elementary Day School ADE	8,743	6,722
Secondary Day School ADE	3,858	3,583
<b>Total Day School Enrolment</b>	<b>12,601</b>	<b>10,304</b>

### Primary Class Size

Primary Class Size	2003-04	2009-10
% of Classes Less Than 20	35%	92%
% of Classes Less Than 23	65%	100%
Average Class Size - Jr/Inter	23.76	23.38
% of 3/4 Classes 23 & Under	67%	100%
% of Combined Classes	25%	23%

### Staffing

Staffing	2003-04	2009-10
School Based Teachers	784	777
Teacher Assistants	123	154
Other Student Support	50	121
School Administration	50	54
School Clerical	82	75
School Operations	108	115
Other Non-Classroom	52	69
<b>Total Staffing</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>1366</b>
<b>Teacher - Pupil Ratio</b>	<b>1:16</b>	<b>1:13</b>
<b>FTE Staff per 1,000 Pupils (ADE)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>132.6</b>

<sup>1</sup> Note: Impacted by Class Size and Special Education

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
<b>Total Salary &amp; Benefits as % of Net Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>79.5%</b>

## Special Education

<b>Special Education</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Special Education incremental expenditures	\$10,695,955	\$18,303,135
Special Education Allocation	\$ 12,729,794	\$ 16,458,214
<b>Spending above Allocation (Reserve)</b>	<b>-\$2,033,839</b>	<b>\$1,844,921</b>

## School Utilization

<b>School Utilization:</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Number of schools	50	54
Total Enrolment (ADE)	12,601	10,304
School Capacity (Spaces)	18,066	18,696
<b>School Utilization</b>	<b>69.7%</b>	<b>55.1%</b>
<b>Board Area (Km2)</b>	<b>5,421</b>	<b>5,421</b>
<b>Number of Trustees</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>

## 2. Governance and School Board Administration – Findings and Recommendations

The school board's governance model and administrative organizational framework make a significant contribution in helping the board of trustees, Director of Education, senior administration and community stakeholders support both student achievement strategies and effective board operations.

Governance and board administration processes are reviewed to:

- Understand how the governance model delineates the division of duties between the board of trustees and the administration and supports operational effectiveness;
- Assess the development of the annual plan (including the goals/priorities) and actions to engage and communicate with key stakeholders and the related reporting against the plan;
- Assess how policies and related procedures are generated and maintained;
- Assess whether staffing levels and organization structures provide for clarity of roles and accountability sufficient to carry out the Board's objectives;
- Identify opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

This section provides a summary of the findings and recommendations of our assessment of the board's adoption of the leading practices relating to the governance and board administration. Our findings are a result of our review of the data provided by the board and our field work, which included interviews with the Chair, the Director and senior staff of the Board.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for governance and board administration, and identifies where evidence showed that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a "No" indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

## Establishment of an Effective Governance Model

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board's governance model clearly delineates the division of duties between the board of trustees and the director of education. The board has established clearly defined duties and responsibilities to support on effective working relationship.	Yes

## Development of the School Board's Strategic Direction and the Annual Board Improvement Plan

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The board of trustees develops and communicates a multi-year strategic plan that provides a framework for annual planning.	Yes
The director of education and senior management develop an annual board improvement plan of their goals/priorities, incorporating both academic and non-academic departments. The plan is aligned with the board's multi-year strategic plan and has goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.	Yes
Senior management periodically/annually report to the board on the status and outcomes of the annual board improvement plan.	Yes

## Decision Making Processes

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The board of trustees and management have established appropriate processes for decision making to address student achievement targets and operational performance.	Yes
The board of trustees and management have appropriate processes for the establishment and regular maintenance of policies for the efficient and effective operation of the board. Policies are posted on the board's web site.	No

## Organizational Structure and Accountability

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The organizational structure has clearly defined organizational units that delineate roles and responsibilities, minimize administrative costs and ensure effective and efficient operation.	Yes
The director has established a formal succession plan to manage retirements and resignations of key managers/administrators.	No
A departmental organization chart (supplemented with a Directory of key staff contact information) is publicly available on the board's web site.	No

## Stakeholder Engagement

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The board of trustees and management proactively engage internal and external stakeholders on a regular basis and through a variety of communication vehicles (e.g., websites, email, memos, town halls, etc.).	Yes
Key senior staffs from all functional areas are members and participants in sector committees of provincial associations and Ministry workgroups.	Yes

## Establishment of an Effective Governance Model

The Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien (CSDCEO) is distinguished by a positive relationship between the Chair and the Director of Education, who work closely together to meet the objectives of the school board. The board of trustees has eight members, seven of whom have served for more than nine years. In addition, two student trustees are elected annually to sit on the board of trustees.

The Board's governance structure is outlined in a meta-policy and a guideline on lines of communication, which clearly delineate the responsibilities of the board of trustees and the administration. According to the school board's meta-policy, the role of the board of trustees is to determine the direction and establish guidelines that meet the needs and expectations of the communities it serves.

According to the guideline on lines of communication, the board of trustees' main responsibility is to make decisions and resolutions that define the Board's direction and ensure harmonized operations. The board then communicates these decisions to the public through the Chair or through the Director of Education and their secretary. The Chair of the Board is the spokesperson for all policy-related matters. The role of the

Director of Education includes being a spokesperson for all administrative-related issues, which includes, among others, all personnel issues. According to the same guideline, school trustees must be informed of the decisions and positions adopted by the Board and serve as intermediaries between the populations they represent and the board of trustees. This guideline also states that the Director of Education is responsible for implementing efficient mechanisms to adequately inform the Board and its members, the administration, personnel, students, parents, school councils and the community of the Board's programs, services and directions. A document on the responsibilities of senior management also describes the Director of Education's responsibilities with respect to organizing the strategic plan and the Board's plenary meetings and following up on guidelines and bylaws.

### **Development of the School Board's Strategic Direction and the Annual Board Improvement Plan**

The school board's current strategic direction was developed in 2009 with the introduction of the strategic plan for 2007-2012. The school board's strategic plan, which was developed by the administration and validated by the board of trustees in May 2008, identifies three school board priority axes:

1. Student learning and achievement;
2. Vitality;
3. Leadership.

The three axes of the school board's strategic direction, which are described in more detail in section 1.2, were identified during the spring of 2008 through consultation days with principals, vice-principals and school trustees, as well as forums with parents and students. To support the development of the new strategic plan, the school board implemented an advisory board composed of superintendents, secondary school principals and department managers, who convened once a month to develop a new strategic direction based on the summary of the school board's accomplishments and the information collected during the consultations. Using an advisory board to develop the CSDCEO's strategic plan is considered a leading practice by the Association Francophone Internationale des Directions d'Établissements Scolaires (AFIDES). The Board is a member of this organization, which publishes annual reports on leading practices.

The development of the school board's strategic plan was also supported by several surveys developed and conducted in 2006 and 2008 by an external firm with more than 400 parents of CSDCEO, 200 parents of students from other school boards and 400 Board employees. By analyzing the survey results, the school board was able to identify

changes in the choice of schools by region, employee satisfaction and appreciation, as well as the parents' satisfaction with respect to the school board's services and image.

An annual improvement plan, called the action plan for the 2009-2010 academic year, supports the strategic plan by identifying the scheduled activities, resources, products, performance indicators and short- and long-term outcomes for each of the three axes. The school board's annual action plan also covers both academic and non-academic departments. The advisory board is responsible for approving the annual action plan. A quality management committee was recently created to develop a template to evaluate the annual plan's status and results in the upcoming weeks and months.

In regards to student achievement, the annual planning process has both a top-down and bottom-up approach. On one hand, the annual numeracy and literacy improvement plan is developed by the language planning department and relevant academic department managers. On the other hand, improvement plans are developed by principals and teaching staff in each school based on the analysis of EQAO test results.

The Director of Education writes an annual report to inform the board of trustees and the community of the school board's results.

## **Decision Making Processes**

The board of trustees' decision-making process is clearly described and documented. A by-law governing board meeting procedures was distributed to all trustees and describes the decision-making and organizational processes for board meetings. This by-law delineates the structure of the agenda for scheduled meetings and how it may be modified by board members. It also defines the procedures for electing the Chair, the required quorum in a scheduled meeting, issues to be discussed in closed meetings, as well as statement of motion and voting procedures.

During the school year, school trustees convene twice a month. During their first meeting held in Cornwall in the middle of the month, trustees become aware of the files and examine the motions for resolution. The second meeting held at the school board's headquarters at the end of the month allows trustees to approve motions as part of the Board's plenary sessions.

The board of trustees created several standing committees to assist in the decision-making process:

- A special education advisory committee
- An ad hoc committee to review guidelines and administrative by-laws



- A suspensions or dismissal appeals committee and a dismissal hearing committee
- A committee on supervised alternative learning for excused pupils
- A parent involvement committee
- Negotiation tables
- Working conditions tables

The Chair of the Board is an ex-officio member and has the right to vote in all board committees. The by-law that governs procedures does not specify the minimum or maximum number of trustees on each of the Board's committees. In practice, at least one trustee sits on each committee. The board of trustees has not created a finance committee, a facilities committee or an HR committee, since the school board's senior management gives an update of these departments' administrative files during the first meeting of the month. As a next step, the school board could publish the list of its committees and their members on the CSDCEO's website.

The school board has approximately 20 guidelines and 40 administrative by-laws that are accessible to the public on its website<sup>1</sup>. The Director of Education, superintendents and department managers are responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining the guidelines and by-laws in their respective fields. There is no established, documented and systematic review cycle for guidelines. The school board's guideline for developing new guidelines presents eight steps that are followed by the board of trustees to establish directions and guidelines. The eighth step states the need to update the guidelines continuously, but does not, however, establish a specific review cycle.

The committee responsible for guideline and by-law review is composed of four trustees, the Director of Education and the superintendent in charge of the files. The committee convenes when needed to review existing guidelines and recommend revised or new guidelines or by-laws to the board of trustees. The stages for developing new guidelines, from drafting to their approval by the board of trustees and various reading stages, are very clearly documented in a guideline accessible on the school board's website.

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<sup>1</sup> [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The guidelines and by-laws are accessible on the CSDCEO's website in French only.] <http://www.csdceo.ca/fr/54.html>

## Organizational Structure and Accountability

The organization of the school board's senior administration appears to be well founded and operating effectively. The executive council is composed of the Director of Education, the Assistant Director of Education, the Superintendents of Education and the Superintendent of Business and Treasurer, who will be called the Superintendent of Business in the remainder of the document. The council convenes every Monday for the entire day. During this meeting, the superintendents can ask questions or inform the Director of Education of the status of their respective files as well as identify the items to be submitted to the board of trustees for information purposes or approval.

Items to be submitted to the board of trustees for discussion or decision-making purposes are identified by the Director of Education based on permanent items on the meeting agenda, such as student achievement, and during weekly meetings with the executive council. The items are added to the draft agenda, which is presented to the Chair or ViceChair for validation a week before the scheduled board meeting. The validated agenda and further information is sent in hardcopy and CD-ROM format to the attendees. During a meeting, the agenda may be modified by vote from two thirds of attending board members.

The Board has not established a formal succession plan to manage retirements and resignations of key managers or administrators. In practice, the school board identifies candidates through an informal process described in a manual entitled "Guide de la planification de la relève des cadres des conseils scolaires publics" by the Centre francoontarien de ressources pédagogiques.

A description of the school board's departments as well as the contact information of trustees and senior management is published on the CSDCEO's website. As a next step, the school board could consider completing its website with a departmental organization chart, along with a directory of key staff members and their contact information.

## Stakeholder Engagement

The board of trustees and management proactively engage internal and external stakeholders on a regular basis. Through a variety of communication vehicles (website postings, emails, memos, press releases, school calendars, bookmarks, flyers, etc.) are used to ensure the participation of key stakeholders throughout the year. The school board also relies on its website to communicate to external stakeholders the Director of Education's annual report, minutes from board of trustee meetings or the school board's financial statements.

Six years ago, the school board created a communications department whose manager is the national chair of Canadian Association of Communicators in Education (CACE).

The communications department develops an annual communication plan, which is presented to the board of trustees as an information item. The annual communication plan, which supports the goals of the CSDCEO's strategic plan, is based on the communications department's mission to foster communication within the school board, its schools and communities, so that all stakeholders become ambassadors of the board and its schools. The communication plan describes the school board's identity, contains a market analysis, and presents a description of various external and internal promotional and communication strategies and activities.

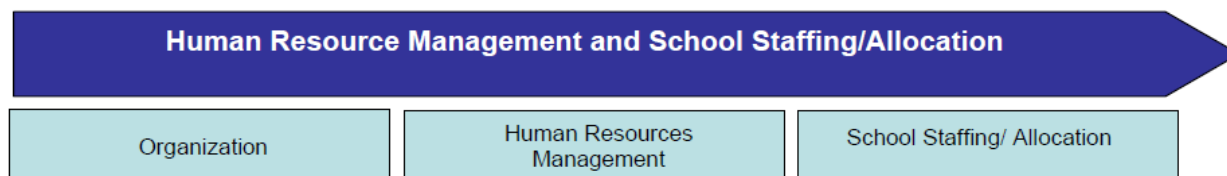
In 2006 and 2008, the school board hired an external firm to develop and conduct a series of surveys with more than 3,000 stakeholders including parents, students and school board employees. By analyzing the survey results, the school board was able to state its mission, vision and values, as well as define priorities within the framework of its multi-year strategic plan.

Key members of management staff participate actively in various national and provincial forums including the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones (FNCSF), the Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC), the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), the Conseil ontarien des directions de l'éducation en langue française (CODELF), the Conseil ontarien des directions de l'éducation catholique (CODEC), the Réseaux national des directions générales (RNDGÉ), the Office provincial de l'éducation de la foi catholique de l'Ontario (OPECO), and the Comité de regroupements des évêques de l'Ontario. The school board also participates in international education associations, such as the Association Francophone Internationale des Directions d'Établissements Scolaires (AFIDES). These activities enable the school board to acquire and share leading practices on regional, national and international levels.

### **Recommendations:**

- The school board should implement a periodic review cycle for guidelines to ensure they remain effective.
- The school board should implement a formal succession plan to manage the retirements and resignations of key managers/administrators.
- The school board should consider expanding its website by including a departmental organization chart, supplemented with a directory of key staff contact information.

### 3. Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocation – Findings and Recommendations



Effective management of human resources ensures an adequate number of qualified staff throughout the organization can perform their prescribed duties. Policies and procedures to develop staff are in place, through performance appraisals, professional development and support services. Staff allocations to schools and classrooms meet the Ministry's class size requirements, and are congruent with the school board's collective agreements and allocation models. The allocation models adopted by the school board ensure the most effective teaching and learning practices.

The following is a summary of our assessment of the school board's adoption of the leading practices under the processes identified above. All findings are a result of a review of the data provided by the school board and on-site field-work, which included interviews with all key HR staff, as well as follow-up and confirmation of information.

#### 3.1 Human Resource Organization

The review of the organization of the HR department assesses:

- Whether appropriate policies and procedures have been established and maintained to support the HR functions and required priorities, and whether they are aligned with the school board's directions;
- Whether an annual plan setting out the goals and priorities and their alignment to the school board's strategic directions has been established;
- Whether the roles and responsibilities of staff support the key functions, activities and practices of HR;
- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for HR organizations, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full.

Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The HR department’s goals and priorities are documented in an annual department plan. They are aligned to the annual board improvement plan, accessible by key stakeholders. The plan incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines, and identified responsibilities.	Yes

### Organizational Structure and Accountability

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The HR department has clearly defined organizational units and delineates the respective roles and responsibilities. A current organizational chart is available.	Yes
Senior HR staff has appropriate designations (e.g., Certified Human Resource Professional, etc.).	Yes

### Monitoring and Communication of Policy

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
HR Management has processes in place to monitor HR guideline compliance.	Yes
HR Management provides regularly scheduled HR policy awareness, training, and education sessions.	Yes

### Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

The HR department is responsible for labour relations and the school board’s organizational development. Its mission, vision, beliefs and organizational values are presented on the school board’s website. Its mission with respect to labour relations is to collaborate with the CSDCEO in achieving its mission and in implementing the Board’s strategic plan. Its mission regarding organizational development is to support all employees in achieving the CSDCEO’s mission by acting as a strategic counsellor whose leadership, expertise and quality of service contribute to the success of all students.

The HR department developed an annual improvement plan, called an operational action plan, which describes departmental objectives and is based on the school board's annual action plan. The HR operational action plan incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities, as well as a list of activities, resources and products, if necessary. The objectives of the HR department for the current year are managing effectively supervision schedules in schools, establishing a systemic human resource development program (HRDP), analyzing the reasons for employee departures, finalizing the succession plan, improving internal communications and the visibility of the HR department, maintaining pay equity, and preparing HR management indicators.

### **Organizational Structure and Accountability**

The HR Manager reports to the Superintendent of Education responsible for HR, who is a member of the executive council. During weekly meetings, the HR Manager shares his files with his direct supervisor, the superintendent responsible for HR. One of the reports the HR Manager submits to the superintendent contains HR management indicators for each month. This report presents absence and job separation rates within the school board and its schools. The HR department plans to share the monthly results of HR management indicators with the schools in the next few months. The department also plans to add other systemic management indicators to the report in the future.

In managing the school board's human resources, the HR Manager is supported by two teams responsible for labour relations and organizational development, respectively. The labour relations team is composed of a secretary and a manager in charge of teaching staff allocation, recruiting activities, the preparation of grievance files, collective bargaining, and the follow-up of collective agreements and performance evaluations. The organizational development team is composed of a non-unionized secretary, an organizational development manager, an organizational development supervisor, and a part-time officer working on document management. This team mainly works to develop and implement HR management tools, which include, among others, training sessions, guidelines and administrative by-laws, and evaluation guides and templates.

The HR Manager is directly involved in labour relations, collective bargaining, recruiting and disciplinary procedures, as well as any file relating to developing programs or tools that aim to support the human resources management of the Board. The Manager is in charge of coordinating teacher allocation with the finance department and Superintendents of Education.

The roles and responsibilities of each HR staff member are clearly defined. There is a detailed, up-to-date organizational chart of the HR department; however, it not publicly accessible via the school board's website. As a next step, the school board could ensure that a departmental organization chart is posted on the school board's website.

Department staff has appropriate HR qualifications or relevant experience.

### **Monitoring and Communication of Policy**

HR guidelines and by-laws are published on the school board's website. The school board developed over a dozen guidelines on performance evaluation, staff recruiting and hiring, staff recognition, criminal background checks, harassment, modified work programs, welcoming new staff members, training and ongoing skills development. The guidelines are not subject to a documented, systematic review cycle; however, a review of the material demonstrates that the department is focused on maintaining and updating them so that they remain up-to-date. As a next step, the school board should consider adding review dates to guidelines and by-laws that currently do not have one.

The HR department regularly communicates with stakeholders about existing HR guidelines and by-laws, namely through presentations to department managers during their monthly meetings. The HR department also disseminates information through various information packages such as the CSDCEO welcoming kit, or the welcome and integration kit distributed to new employees on their first day at work. To facilitate communication and ensure HR policies are respected, the department also developed by-laws that are communicated to staff through emails or memos, or during meetings with school principals.

To ensure the guidelines are well communicated to the school board's employees, the HR department offers regularly scheduled staff training sessions. During an orientation day at the beginning of the school year, new staff members are informed of the mission and vision of the school board, as well as the different departments within the CSDCEO and the staff's responsibilities with respect to the guidelines. The HR department also launched a mentorship training program. The HR department organizes mentorship training sessions every two months to provide supervisors with relevant tools for managing staff as well as to raise awareness of staff management guidelines.

These various communication methods raise awareness and understanding for the school board's HR guidelines and by-laws.

### **Recommendation:**

There are no recommendations for this section.

## **3.2 Human Resource Management**

The purpose of reviewing the HR management processes is to assess whether:

- Planning and processes are in place for the recruitment of the appropriate number of qualified staff to support the student achievement targets;

- Appropriate processes are in place to promote the personal and professional growth of all staff;
- Adequate systems and procedures are in place to manage employee compensation plans, labour relations, employee performance and attendance and other support services to foster employee satisfaction;
- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes can be identified.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for HR management, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### Staff Recruitment

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Recruiting policies and practices are reviewed annually, and are aligned with staff planning in support of student achievement.	Yes
New hire policies and procedures for the respective staff groups are harmonized.	Yes

### Labour Relations

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
HR Management and the board of trustees have established labour/management committees.	Yes
HR Management has established policies and procedures to minimize grievances.	Yes

### Employee Performance Evaluation Processes

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
HR Management has policies and procedures for an employee evaluation/performance system for all staff.	No



Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
HR Management maintains and communicates formal disciplinary policies and procedures for all staff.	Yes

### Attendance Management Processes/Programs

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Attendance management process/programs exist that include employee supportive policies and procedures to minimize the cost of absenteeism.	No
Management periodically reports on the effectiveness of the attendance management process/programs to senior management and the board.	Yes

### Management of HR and Payroll Data

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Payroll processing is segregated from employee data records, and changes to data are adequately controlled.	Yes
HR records are current, including the formal tracking of teacher qualifications and experience.	Yes
HR Management has implemented an approved pay equity plan, which is reviewed periodically and amended as necessary.	Yes

### Management of the School Board's Benefit Plans

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
HR Management periodically conducts independent compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier to ensure adherence to benefit plan's terms and conditions.	No
Employee data is automatically synchronized among the board and external carriers such as TPP, OMERS and the board's benefit provider(s).	Yes
Policies and procedures ensure the school board's benefit plans are managed appropriately.	Yes

## Monitoring Staff Satisfaction

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management has established policies and procedures for staff/professional development and monitors staff take-up, budget, and outcomes.	Yes
Confidential staff satisfaction surveys are performed periodically.	Yes
Confidential exit interviews are performed for all staff.	No

## Staff Recruitment

The school board has a guideline on recruiting and staff selection that applies the principles of equity and transparency in the hiring process. The process for staff recruiting and selection is supported by three by-laws for different employee groups: one for regular teaching staff and long-term substitute teachers, one for school principals, vice-principals and department managers, and one for non-teaching staff. By-laws for each staff group describe the seven main steps that govern the process for staff recruiting and selection for each employee of the school board.

1. The HR department posts the announcement of the position opening.
2. CV analysis and selection.
  - School principals, department managers or superintendents analyze all CVs received for the position and fill out a CV selection grid. Selected applicants are invited to an interview.
3. Establishment of a selection committee and interview process.
  - Each by-law specifies the composition of selection committees according to the nature of the position.
4. Applicants write an exam and their results are compiled.
5. Evaluation of candidates according to specific selection criteria.
6. Verification of references.
7. Candidate selection and hiring recommendation.

A separate guideline on criminal background checks ensures that criminal history reports of all current and potential employees are collected. Criminal history reports

must be sent to the HR department before any employment offers by the school board can be made.

The Board maintains consistency in its recruiting and selecting process by developing standardized tools such as interview guides by function type or CV and interview evaluation grids that are used by members of different selection committees. Each hiring recommendation is systematically reviewed by the HR department before any employment offer can be made. Along with the hiring recommendation, school principals, department managers or superintendents must also forward documents justifying their selection, such as the candidates' CV, exam results and interview evaluations, to the head office.

When a hiring recommendation for a permanent position is approved, the HR department first identifies in-house candidates according to appropriate collective agreements. If the position remains vacant following an internal search for applicants, the HR department then looks for external resources by publishing job offers on the school board's website, in regional newspapers and occasionally on the websites of select professional associations.

To identify candidates for teaching positions, the school board relies primarily on its substitute teachers list. The Board also participates in job fairs such as the one held at University of Ottawa in the beginning of February. During this fair, potential candidates receive a Board information package and are invited to submit their CV.

## **Labour Relations**

In November 2008, the school board negotiated four collective agreements with its employee groups: general education teachers and substitutes of elementary and secondary schools (general and substitute AEFO), secretarial staff, library technicians, computer technicians, supervisors and custodians (CUPE), and support staff (OSSTF). The collective agreements are administered by the labour relations department. Since the beginning of 2009, the labour relations department has been implementing new allocation processes and has developed staff information tools, such as a guide explaining the main changes to collective agreements.

The school board has put joint committees in place. The HR Manager organizes joint committee meetings three or four times a year. During these meetings, members are able to exchange information, answer questions, organize brainstorming sessions on various topics, and present new projects. One of these projects consists of implementing a system to exchange information between employers and employees by using a web application to manage substitute teachers

The Board has maintained good labour relations with unions through monthly and weekly meetings with the HR Manager and union officers and through their proactive

approach in dealing with incidents. In 2008, only one out of 31 grievances was resolved through arbitration.

### **Employee Performance Evaluation Processes**

The Board has a guideline on the evaluation of employee performance, which describes the goals and objectives of the evaluation process and its main principles. Three by-laws support the guideline on employee performance evaluation for non-unionized staff, experienced teaching staff and new teaching staff, respectively. The HR department monitors compliance with the guideline and by-laws.

The performance appraisal of teaching staff conforms to the current requirements of the Ministry of Education. Experienced teachers are evaluated on a five-year cycle, while new teachers are reviewed twice during their first year as part of the New Teacher Induction Program. In accordance with the *Education Act*, those who have not achieved two “satisfactory” ratings in their first year follow the additional support program, and may succeed by obtaining two “satisfactory” ratings within 24 months of starting teaching.

According to the by-law, non-unionized staff is evaluated on a three-year cycle.

For the employee groups mentioned above, the HR department coordinates the performance evaluation process by producing an annual schedule of evaluations and by providing superintendents, school principals and department managers with a list of employees to evaluate. The HR team in charge of labour relations ensures that evaluations are completed within the deadlines and that performance evaluations are filed in personnel records. The HR team in charge of organizational development offers training sessions and support to supervisors throughout the evaluation and management process by producing guides such as the supervisor’s guide for evaluating the performance of non-unionized employees.

The Board does not currently have a guideline or by-law for appraising the performance of substitute teachers. In practice, long-term substitute teachers are evaluated by school principals if needed and appropriate. The school board is currently developing a by-law to evaluate the performance of teaching staff with contracts of 60 days and more.

The school board does not have a guideline or by-law to evaluate school principals, vice-principals, CUPE employees and OSSTF support staff. By-laws for evaluating the performance of principals and vice-principals are currently being drafted. Before developing by-laws for CUPE staff and OSSTF support staff, the school board wishes to develop a skills profile for all employees in these groups.

The school board has a by-law governing disciplinary actions. In practice, the school board has adopted the progressive discipline principle. This principle consists of one or

several meetings with the supervisor and an HR department representative during which the employee is informed of potential shortfalls and standards to be achieved. The supervisor and member of the HR department also suggest methods to correct the issue, a timeframe to achieve the standards and resources available to the employee for support. These discussions are documented in the employee's personnel file. The direct supervisor follows up on the situation to evaluate whether expected changes in conduct have occurred. If the situation persists or the appropriate standards have not been met despite prior attempts to take corrective measures, the direct supervisor can consult with the HR Manager and submit a letter recommending the employee's demotion, transfer or dismissal.

According to the by-law, any letter of recommendation to demote, transfer or dismiss an employee must be submitted to the superintendent in charge of the employee, the HR Manager and the employee in question. A copy of the letter must also be kept in the employee's personnel file. The by-law states that employees can present their version of the facts verbally or in writing to the Director of Education. If the Director of Education believes the recommendation for dismissal should be forwarded to the board of trustees, he or she may suspend the employee with or without pay until the Board has come to a decision.

### **Attendance Management Processes/Programs**

In 2008, the school board hired the services of SBCI (School Boards' Co-operative Inc.) to conduct a study on absenteeism and on existing measures to encourage attendance. The results of the study placed Board below average relative to other school boards with an average of 11.2 days of absence per FTE. The results also revealed that by reducing absences by one day per FTE, the school board could save more than \$600,000.

The SBCI study identified that the school board lacks a guideline or administrative process regarding attendance or an official absence management program. In practice, the school board has taken a few initiatives such as requesting a medical certificate after three consecutive days of absence, and implementing an efficient return to work program that contains a modified work plan for both WSIB and disability cases.

Currently, each school manually gathers and registers absenteeism data on time sheets and faxes them to the school board's payroll department at headquarters. Employees returning to work are required to fill out a time sheet. The school principal signs the time sheet and sends it to headquarters so that the payroll department can enter the data into SAP. To analyze absenteeism, the school board currently extracts data from SAP into an Excel spreadsheet. Every month, the HR department monitors the school board's rate of absenteeism and submits a monthly report to the Superintendent of Education in charge of human resources. The school board has recently started

developing reports on absenteeism rates in each school, which should soon be communicated to the schools

Following the SBCI study, the school board implemented an attendance committee composed of the HR Manager, the Superintendent of Business, the Facilities Manager, the Superintendent of Human Resources and the Finance Manager. One of the committee's objectives is to implement SBCI's recommendations to introduce a formal absenteeism management program that includes administrative procedures, training sessions and the use of technological tools to automate processes for analyzing, tracking and producing absenteeism reports. The committee is currently examining several examples of administrative procedures and evaluating the relevance of software such as Parklane or Smart Find to support the school board in managing absenteeism.

### **Management of HR and Payroll Data**

As part of a consortium with other French-language school boards, the school board bought a SAP licence, which includes a payroll management module. The school board's payroll is managed internally by six payroll clerks who report to the payroll/SAP supervisor, who in turn reports to the Finance Manager.

Official personnel files containing socio-demographic data, evaluations and potential disciplinary measures are kept at the school board's central office. Personnel files are maintained by HR staff. Any modifications to personnel files are made by the HR department. For internal control purposes, the HR department cannot modify any employee data in SAP that can affect pay such as years of experience or time sheets. When a modification affects an employee's pay or benefits, the HR department sends a request to the payroll department, which makes the changes in SAP.

The division of tasks between HR and the payroll department, the approval system to modify personnel files, as well as the use of two separate modules for payroll and the management of personnel records are examples of best practices in terms of internal control.

The school board has developed effective processes to ensure that teacher qualifications and experience are formally tracked and updated. Teachers who have successfully completed courses resulting in a category change are required to send their QECO evaluations to the HR department, which stamps the evaluation to authorize the payroll department to make the category change in SAP. A printed copy of the documents related to the category change and the QECO evaluation are added to the employee's personnel file.

The Board developed a pay equity plan for all non-unionized staff in 2007 and for CUPE staff in 2008. The Board plans to continue pay equity discussions with the OSSTF this year.

## **Management of the School Board's Benefit Plans**

The school board offers a range of employee benefits. The school board manages its benefits plan through an insurance company's management services, as part of a consortium with 10 other French-language school boards in Ontario. Neither the school board nor the consortium of French-language school boards employs a third-party consultant to annually review the insurance company or to verify the validity and accuracy of claims processing.

An information kit developed by the insurance company is sent directly to new employees' homes to inform them of their benefits plan. In addition, the collective agreement received by each new employee on their first day of work contains a section describing employee benefits.

Employee data is automatically synchronized between the school board and the external carriers such as the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP), the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) and the school board's benefit provider(s). At every pay, the SAP/payroll supervisor ensures employee data uploaded to the OTPP, OMERS and Cowan sites is up-to-date.

## **Monitoring Staff Satisfaction**

The school board carried out formal, general staff surveys to solicit feedback on the priorities of the school board or on general attitudes. The last internal survey with school board stakeholders was in June 2009. The analysis of survey results demonstrated very high levels of employee satisfaction. The last survey conducted by an external consultant with stakeholders including school board employees was carried out in 2008. This survey as well as the previous survey conducted in 2006 identified employee satisfaction levels and their evolution over time according to various themes, such as work appreciation or quality of services offered by the school board.

The school board does not currently conduct exit interviews with its staff; however, the HR department plans to incorporate this practice in its action plan for 2009-2010.

## **Recommendations:**

- The HR department should complete its guideline on employee performance evaluation with by-laws on the appraisal of substitute teacher staff, school principals and vice-principals, OSSTF support staff and CUPE staff in order to ensure consistency and transparency in the performance evaluation process for all school board employees.
- The HR department should continue its efforts to develop a formal attendance management program that includes the implementation of guidelines and by-laws

to reduce absences, methods for monitoring the rate of absences in different employee groups of the school board, and the production of periodic attendance reports to inform the administration, schools and trustees of the efficiency of attendance management programs and methods.

- The school board should conduct periodic reviews of the insurance carrier (Administrative Services only) that manages medical and dental claims, in order to ensure that the school board's claims are processed according to the plan's terms and conditions.
- The HR department should proceed with its project of introducing exit interviews for employees who are leaving their positions.

### 3.3 School Staffing/Allocation

The purpose of reviewing school staffing/allocation processes is to:

- Assess whether accurate and efficient processes are in place to forecast and plan for staffing needs to support student achievement target strategies;
- Ensure that staff optimization allocation processes are in place, supported by an effective attendance management system;
- Identify opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for School Staffing/Allocation, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a "No" indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

#### Planning and Processes for Annual Staffing and Allocation

Leading Practices – School Staffing/Allocation	Evidence of Adoption?
Policies and procedures govern the annual staff allocation process.	No



## Monitoring and Reporting on Staff Allocation

Leading Practices – School Staffing/Allocation	Evidence of Adoption?
Systems are in place and accessible by both HR and Finance staff to establish and track an approved level of staff.	Yes
Systems and processes monitor adherence to key Ministry and board policy parameters, such as: class size, prep time, collective agreement requirements and other board principals.	Yes
Management periodically reports on the actual allocation of staff, compared to the original approved allocation plan and budget (FTE's by function, department and program, actual versus budget).	Yes
Procedures are in place to enable adjustment of staff allocations for school based staff, if estimates for enrolment and funding change after budget approval.	Yes
Plans for student support services and staffing are based on a student-needs analysis.	Yes

## Benchmarking Costs with Other Boards and Funding

Leading Practices – School Staffing/Allocation	Evidence of Adoption?
Staffing costs are compared with similar school boards and the funding model to ensure efficient use of resources.	No

## Planning and Processes for Annual Staffing and Allocation

The Board has not established guidelines governing the determination of total needs and staff allocation in schools. In practice, Board follows staff allocation processes established by collective agreements and formulas shared with unions. The allocation processes for teaching staff in elementary and secondary schools is based on two different calendars that determine the allocation deadlines.

Staff allocation is established by the Superintendent of Business, the Superintendents of Education, the HR Manager, school principals and department managers. The enrolment forecasting process is developed on a school-by-school basis, and considers both a top-down (Board level, trend analysis) and a bottom-up (local, school-by-school) approach. The Superintendent of Business, who prepares the enrolment forecasts, begins the allocation process for teaching staff in January. To calculate enrolment forecasts for each school, the Superintendent of Business considers average student retention rates from one grade to the next in each school over the past three years. For Kindergarten enrolment forecasts, the school board considers the average number of

students registered in the past three years. In February, the Superintendent of Business sends each school a spreadsheet containing enrolment forecasts for the school. Principals are invited to respond to the forecast according to actual enrolment. Once they receive feedback from the schools, the Superintendent of Business and Superintendents of Education convene in the beginning of March to address any significant discrepancies between the initial planned forecasts and actual forecasts given by the principals. Based on the validated forecasts, the Superintendents examine teaching staff allocation in each school and submit a preliminary allocation report to the Director of Education. The Director of Education validates the staff allocation report and presents it to the board of trustees for approval before the end of March.

Allocation planning for special education staff is based on a detailed evaluation of each student's needs, the school's profile and subsidies that will be received. School principals, the manager of the special education department and the Finance Manager collaborate to plan the special education staff allocation in February and March. The school board's special education department developed templates to identify each student's needs and has many tools to efficiently allocate special education staff.

In mid-March, members of the executive council evaluate potential changes to the planned allocation for non-teaching staff. Any addition or reduction in staffing for non-teaching personnel is determined based essentially on the funding available for each function. The school board has a staffing model for CUPE staff, excluding library technicians, which is shared with union representatives each year. Detailed spreadsheets on year-over-year staffing variations are presented to the trustees in April as an information item.

The allocation plan for teaching staff that is approved by the Board in March and the allocation plan for non-teaching staff that is submitted for information purposes to the Board in April are integrated into budgeting forecasts, which are submitted to the Board in June.

### **Monitoring and Reporting on Staff Allocation**

The executive council and the school board's HR department are responsible for ensuring adherence to the Ministry's guidelines on matters such as class size, preparation time and collective agreement requirements. Members of the administration are responsible for monitoring staff allocation. The Superintendent of Business and the Superintendents of Education are responsible for ensuring the average class size is 20 students at the elementary level and that the preparation time specified in collective agreements for the upcoming year is taken into account in staff allocation formulas. Compliance of staff allocation with various requirements, namely those related to collective agreements, is monitored by the HR Manager, who compares actual and planned allocations on a regular basis. One of the HR Manager's roles consists of

meeting union representatives throughout the budgeting process from January to May to present the allocation report to them and answer their questions.

The Board develops a conservative staffing allocation plan to avoid surplus staff, and periodically follows up on the original allocation plan by monitoring actual staff allocation.

In September, the Superintendent of Business and the Superintendents of Education revise the original allocation plan based on actual enrolment data and produce a report for the board of trustees, which summarizes the changes between the approved and the actual allocation plan for the upcoming year.

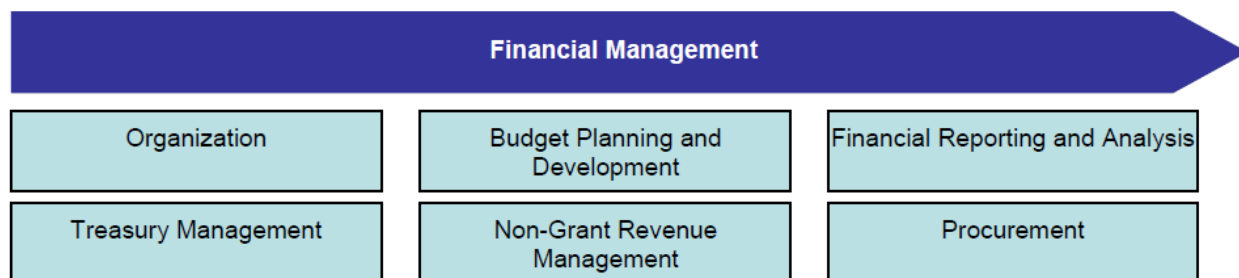
### **Benchmarking Costs with Other Boards and Funding**

The Board does not perform a regular and formal comparison of staffing costs with those of other school boards.

### **Recommendations:**

- The school board should formally document the annual staff allocation process for all employee groups to clarify the duties and responsibilities of all staff while increasing the transparency of the process for the trustees.
- The HR department should consider comparing its staff allocation costs with those of other school boards with a similar funding model in order to ensure an efficient use of resources.

## 4. Financial Management – Findings and Recommendations



The financial management of the school board contributes to the efficient and effective use of fiscal resources. Financial management ensures that the annual budget is developed within the Ministry's allocation and is aligned with student achievement targets, and that appropriate financial policies and procedures are in place to manage resources.

The financial and related business processes contribute to an appropriate level of transparency in the allocation and use of the budget by the various departments. They also ensure that the reporting of results to the board of trustees and other school board stakeholders reflects the approved goals/priorities relating to student achievement.

The following is a summary of our assessment of the school board's adoption of the leading practices under the processes identified above. All findings are a result of a review of the data provided by the school board and on-site field work, which included interviews with all key finance management staff, as well as follow-up and confirmation of information.

### 4.1 Finance Organization

The purpose of reviewing the organization of the finance department is to assess:

- The establishment of policies and procedures to support the key finance functions, activities and required business priorities and their alignment with student achievement targets;
- Financial services branch support of the overall goals/priorities and accountability measures established by the school board;
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the departmental structure and support of the roles and responsibilities for the key functions, activities and practices;

- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for the finance organization, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Leading Practices – Finance Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The finance department’s goals and priorities are documented in an annual department plan that is aligned to the annual board improvement plan accessible by key stakeholders. The plan incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines, and identified accountability.	No

### Organizational Structure and Accountability

Leading Practices – Finance Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The finance department has clearly defined organizational units and delineates the respective roles and responsibilities. A current organization chart is available.	Yes
Finance department staff have the appropriate finance/accounting designations and experience.	Yes

### Monitoring and Communication of Policy

Leading Practices – Finance Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
Management has processes in place to monitor finance guideline compliance.	Yes
Management provides scheduled finance policy and procedures awareness, training and skills development educational sessions.	Yes

### Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

The finance department is responsible for budgeting, accounting, purchasing, accounts receivable and school board employee payroll. The mission, vision, beliefs and organizational values of the department are presented on the school board’s website. The mission of the finance department is to ensure healthy management of the school board’s funds and to support schools and departments in their financial management.

As part of the 2005-2008 strategic plan, the finance department developed an annual operational plan that incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities, as well as a list of activities and tasks to accomplish for each target. The finance department does not yet have an operational action plan for 2009 that defines departmental targets and that is in line with the school board's annual action plan. The Finance Manager held two meetings with department staff to identify priorities for the current year, which he soon plans to use as a basis for the operational action plan.

The Finance Manager reports to the Superintendent of Business and is part of the executive council. During an annual meeting, the Finance Manager presents the department's accomplishments to the Superintendent of Business. Apart from the annual meeting and frequent, informal contact between the Finance Manager and the Superintendent of Business, there is no defined structure for submitting financial reports to senior management.

### **Organizational Structure and Accountability**

The Finance Manager is supported by three teams: an accounting team led by a chief accountant, a payroll team led by a SAP/payroll supervisor, and a purchasing team, whose manager is currently on secondment to the new school transportation consortium of the CSDCEO and the Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario (CEPEO). The finance department is supported by six payroll clerks, three purchasing clerks, a printer, a supervisor and four finance department clerks.

The duties and responsibilities of each member of the finance department staff are well-defined. There is a detailed, up-to-date organizational chart of the finance department; however, it not publicly accessible via the school board's website. As a next step, the school board could ensure that a departmental organization chart is posted on its website.

To share departmental priorities and initiatives, the Finance Manager, the chief accountant, the supervisors and clerks informally exchange information on a daily basis.

Department staff has appropriate financial designations or relevant experience to perform their roles.

### **Monitoring and Communication of Policy**

The finance department maintains guidelines and by-laws governing several aspects of financial management such as purchasing, purchasing card use, advertising expenses, travel costs and banking operations. The finance department implemented methods to ensure finance guideline compliance, including the use of memorandums to inform the staff of any changes to by-laws or to remind them of certain guidelines. To ensure that

employees understand their responsibilities, the finance department also uses forms to be completed by staff, such as in the case of purchasing card holders. To reimburse employees for travel costs, the department uses a spreadsheet presenting the approved distances between the school board's schools, and employees must base their claims on this data. This spreadsheet, which is distributed to each new staff member via the information package, ensures consistency in the reimbursement process throughout the school board.

Finance guidelines are posted on the school board's website. The guidelines are not subject to a documented, systematic review cycle; however, a review of the material demonstrates that the department is focused on maintaining and updating them so that they remain up-to-date and applicable. As a next step, the school board should consider adding review dates to guidelines and by-laws that currently do not have one.

The finance department offers formal finance guideline awareness and training sessions to school board employees. In the past two years, school principals were offered training on managing school funds. In addition, during annual orientation days for new employees, members of the finance department, along with members from other departments of the school board, are invited to introduce themselves and raise awareness of finance guidelines and by-laws.

### **Recommendation:**

- The finance department should continue its efforts to develop an annual departmental plan that is aligned with the school board's annual action plan, and that includes measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities. Once the plan is created, the school board should then consider submitting it to the trustees at the same time as the periodic progress reports.

## **4.2 Budget Planning and Development**

The purpose of reviewing budget planning and development processes is to:

- Understand the linkages between the board of trustees' goals and priorities and the operational budgeting process;
- Assess whether sufficient transparency and controls exist in the budget planning and development process;
- Identify opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for budget planning and development, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was

adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### Annual Budget Development Process

Leading Practices – Budget Planning and Development	Evidence of Adoption?
The annual budget development process is transparent, clearly communicated, and incorporates input from all key stakeholders including management (with principals), board of trustees and the community.	No
The annual budget presented for approval demonstrates that it is linked to the board-approved goals and priorities including student achievement targets. It provides useful and understandable information for all stakeholders.	Yes
Budget planning processes account for all required cost and revenue changes.	Yes

### Enrolment Forecasting Linked to Budget Development

Leading Practices – Budget Planning and Development	Evidence of Adoption?
Management has adopted an integrated (at school board and school levels) approach to enrolment forecasting. This supports development of the staffing plan and the annual budget.	Yes

### Identification of Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Leading Practices – Budget Planning and Development	Evidence of Adoption?
Management identifies all significant risks during budget planning, and develops strategies to mitigate the risk of spending beyond authorized/budgeted levels.	Yes

### Annual Budget Development Process

The annual budget process at the school board is neither currently documented nor clearly communicated to stakeholders. The school board does not have a formal budget timetable with deadlines or the responsibilities of various staff members in the budget process.



In practice, the school board's budgeting process begins in January with enrolment forecasts and the preliminary allocation plan for teaching staff, as described in section 3.2. Once the preliminary allocation is validated by the Director of Education, an allocation report for teaching staff is presented to the Board for approval at the end of March.

Potential changes to the allocation plan for non-teaching staff are evaluated by the executive council in mid-March. Staff increases or decreases are determined by the members of the executive council based on the amount of funding for each function. In the past years, very few changes have occurred in the allocation of non-teaching staff. Detailed charts of year-to-year variations of personnel for principals, vice-principals, headquarter staff and school support staff are presented to the trustees in April. These charts are part of the budgeting file that is given to trustees by the Superintendent of Business at the beginning of April and that is supplemented with reports on budget forecasts at each bimonthly meeting of the Board throughout the budgeting process.

The first report in the budgeting file presents changes in formulas, funding amounts or bylaw requirements (e.g., an increase in preparation time) that have an impact on budgeting forecasts for the upcoming year. The subsequent reports present information on the allocation plan, capital projects, service contracts and school supplies. The budgeting file allows management to present budgeting forecasts to the trustees in more detail.

Once the budget forecasts are finalized for the different expense and revenue categories, the budget is presented to the Board for approval during a scheduled meeting in June. Then, the finance department updates the EFIS and submits the budget to the Ministry of Education by June 30.

The Superintendent of Business revises the budget in mid-November based on actual enrolment and current information, and then sends it to the Ministry in December. The revised budget is presented to the Board in January as an information item.

### **Enrolment Forecasting Linked to Budget Development**

The executive council is accountable for the accuracy and budgetary impact of the enrolment forecast. In September, the Superintendent of Business and the Superintendents of Education review the allocation based on actual enrolment data and submit a report to the Board, which summarizes the changes between approved and actual allocation data for the upcoming school year.

During the budget process, the HR Manager and the Superintendents of Education compare the enrolment projections of the Superintendent of Business with those of school principals. Therefore, the enrolment forecasting process considers both a top-down (Board level, trend analysis) and a bottom-up (local, school-by-school) approach.

The school board has also established ten-year enrolment forecasts. These forecasts are based on the average student retention rate from one grade to the next.

### **Identification of Risks and Mitigation Strategies**

According to the Finance Manager, the biggest budgeting risks that the Board can control are related to salaries. These risks are on two levels: staffing and paid salaries. With regard to staffing, once the budget is approved, only upper management or the Board can make changes for any employee group. Paid salaries are negotiated through collective agreements and contracts with non-unionized personnel. For now, four-year contracts and agreements have been negotiated with all employee groups. The payroll function and the HR department are responsible for ensuring that salaries are aligned with collective agreements or contracts.

Budgeting risks are communicated verbally and in writing to the trustees. The budget presented to the Board at the end of June and the revised budget presented in February both contain a section entitled “Important aspects of the budget” which draws the trustees’ attention to budgeting risks and proposed or adopted mitigation strategies.

### **Recommendation:**

- The finance department should document the annual budget development process in a guideline in order to clarify staff roles and responsibilities, while making the process more transparent for trustees.

## **4.3 Financial Reporting and Analysis**

The purpose of reviewing Financial Reporting and Analysis processes is to:

- Assess whether procedures are in place to ensure that management, the board of trustees and the Ministry receives timely, accurate and complete financial information of all school board activities;
- Identify opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for Financial Reporting and Analysis, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

## Integrated System for Variance Analysis and Financial Reporting

Leading Practices – Financial Reporting and Analysis	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board's integrated financial information system provides useful, timely and accurate information for management and stakeholders.	Yes

## Interim Financial Reporting Accountability

Leading Practices – Financial Reporting and Analysis	Evidence of Adoption?
Interim financial reports provide sufficient detail (including a comparison of actual to budget and to appropriate benchmarks and with appropriate variance explanations) for a clear understanding of the status of the current year's budget and the outlook for the year.	No
Senior management is held accountable for the integrity of financial reporting through formal sign-off and approval procedures.	Yes
Management completes and files all financial reports in accordance with established timelines.	Yes

## Audit

Leading Practices – Financial Reporting and Analysis	Evidence of Adoption?
Management maintains an independent internal audit function.	No
Internal audit plans are clearly documented. Internal audit report recommendations are followed up and acted upon by management.	No
The board has an audit committee with external members as advisors.	No
The external auditor's planning and annual reports are presented to the Board's audit committee, and any recommendations are acted upon by management.	Yes

## Integrated System for Variance Analysis and Financial Reporting

The school board uses an integrated financial system to record, track and report financial data. The school board bought a SAP licence as part of a consortium with 10 other Frenchlanguage school boards.

The system integrates general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, budget, purchasing, HR and payroll modules. The financial system facilitates variance analysis

and management reporting. The school board is currently implementing a capital management module.

The chief accountant creates modification requests to the accounts spreadsheet in the financial system, which are sent to the SAP centre of excellence, and manages access to the system. Customer and supplier accounts are created by the accounting supervisor.

The financial system allows budget holders to print cost centre tracking reports at any time. This allows budget holders to track expenses incurred throughout the year with respect to the budget, potential over-budgeting, commitments and the number of purchase orders for their cost centres.

The finance department has created a SAP training binder. New employees are provided with SAP training by the accounting supervisor and a school board clerk.

### **Interim Financial Reporting Accountability**

The Superintendent of Business submits two main financial reports to the Board: budget forecasts as part of the budgeting file described in section 4.2, and an interim report presented with the revised budget in January.

The school board's interim financial report contains the budget forecasts submitted to the Ministry in June, as well as the revised forecasts. Variances between the initial budget and the final budget are presented at nominal value. Explanations are provided in the "important aspects" section for expense/revenue categories where over-budgeting or under-budgeting is expected.

The format of monthly or quarterly financial reporting varies significantly among school boards. As with other school boards in the province, the CSDCEO's interim financial reporting can be enhanced to provide additional information to support informed decision making. A more informative format would include:

1. Comparison of the annual approved budget with the actual spending to date or the revised budget, expressed as a percentage of the initial budget.
2. A comparative percentage for each expenditure/revenue category. This would reflect what the "expected spending to date" should be, relative to either historical averages, prior year's experience or, in the case of salaries and benefits, the number of staff and pays processed to date.

As a next step, the school board could consider increasing the frequency of interim financial reports to every quarter to keep trustees informed of expenses incurred with respect to the initial budget throughout the year.

The Director of Education and the Chair of the board of trustees sign the financial statements, but they do not sign the interim financial reports. Interim financial reports are signed by the Superintendent of Business.

The school board respects, as much is possible, the deadlines for financial reporting to the Ministry.

## **Audit**

The primary function of the internal auditor is to provide added assurance that internal controls established by the school board are operating effectively and in compliance with policies and procedures. The school board currently does not have an internal audit function.

Creating an internal audit function would assist the administrative council and the board of trustees in their overall governance and accountability roles. The internal audit function could also help develop performance measures and indicators for programs and services. The function should report to an audit committee of the Board. The annual audit plans would be presented and approved by the committee, and all reports would be presented to the committee.

Along with significant changes in accounting in recent years, the complexity of the annual financial statements is increasing. Audit committee members must understand what constitutes sound internal accounting and operational control processes. Consideration should be given to adding external members to the audit and finance committee who can act as advisors. The advisors would not be voting members, since current legislation recognizes only trustees as voting members on Board's standing committees. The professional backgrounds of the external members could include accountants, lawyers or other professionals, depending on the needs of the committee and its mandate. This will ensure that an objective third-party view is applied to the review of financial statements, the auditor's report and in-year reports produced by management. The Board does not currently have an audit committee.

The external auditor presents the audit plan and the annual report to the Board. The letter of recommendation is presented to the Superintendent of Business. As a next step, the school board should consider asking the external auditor to present his or her annual audit plan to the future audit committee. The school board could also formalize the feedback process on the actions taken to address the external auditor's recommendations for change through an annual report to the board of trustees.

## **Recommendations:**

- The school board should consider modifying the format of interim reports, according to the format suggested in section 4.3 of this report.

- The school board should consider formalizing an internal audit function. This would include a broader audit of financial and management controls.
- Once the independent internal audit function is created, the school board should ensure that internal audit plans are clearly documented and recommendations are followed up and acted upon by management.
- The trustees should create an audit committee and invite external members to contribute to the committee's effectiveness.

#### 4.4 Treasury Management

The purpose of reviewing treasury management processes is to assess:

- Whether processes are in place to ensure the optimal use of cash, investments and borrowings within school boards;
- Whether sufficient internal controls exist to support cash management, investments and borrowings;
- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for treasury management, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a "No" indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

#### Cash and Investment Management

Leading Practices – Treasury Management	Evidence of Adoption?
There is an efficient cash management process to maximize interest income, using short-term investments where appropriate.	No
Cash management activities are consolidated with a single financial institution.	Yes
Management periodically reports to the board on the performance of the investment activity, in accordance with the approved investment guideline in accordance with the <i>Education Act</i> .	No
Management periodically compare the school board's banking terms and conditions to those of similar school boards.	Yes
Management monitors financial risk related to cash/investment management, and has a plan to mitigate associated risks. Management	Yes

Leading Practices – Treasury Management	Evidence of Adoption?
performs regular cash/funding forecasting to ensure that the school board's debt service costs can be met to maturity.	

## Management of School-Based Funds

Leading Practices – Treasury Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management ensures adequate controls are in place to safeguard non-school board funds and coordinate the annual reporting of revenues and expenditures from schools and school councils.	Yes

## Cash and Investment Management

The school board has consolidated its cash management activities with a single institution that was selected through an agreement issued as part of a consortium with other Frenchlanguage school boards located throughout the province.

The school board does not have an investment guideline that refers to the provisions of the *Education Act*.

The school board has two types of accounts: one for regular transactions and individual trust accounts for staff members with special working arrangements (e.g., 4/5 work days). The school board benefits from an interest rate on the average monthly cash balance that is based on the prime rate decreased by 1.75%.

Cash balances are monitored weekly by the chief accountant. Bank reconciliations are conducted weekly by the finance department clerk and verified by the chief accountant.

The school board does not have periodic “cash position” reports on the anticipated accounts payable, payroll, cash flow from the Ministry and tax collections. These reports could be used to identify surplus funds for long-, medium- and short-term investments.

The school board's key banking relationships was last reviewed in 1998. Since then, the school board has not conducted any periodic comparisons of its banking conditions with those of other school boards of similar size given that other French-language school boards deal with the same institution.

The school board has set procedures in place to prevent unauthorized transfers by using passwords, limiting the number of authorized employees to four, requiring two signatures to authorize cheques for amounts greater than \$2,100, and having the Superintendent of Business verify every transfer above \$2,100.

The Superintendent of Business performs regular cash/funding forecasting to ensure that the school board's debt service costs can be met to maturity. During the facilities committee meetings held every two months, an Excel file that tracks the school board's long-term debt is updated to ensure the school board's debt service costs can be met to maturity.

The school board has not established a process for maintaining reserve funds in case of contingency. For the long term, the board of trustees and the school board's administration should consider establishing a guideline on a healthy reserve level for the school board, and consider developing a plan to replenish the working fund reserve, as required.

### **Management of School-Based Funds**

Schools maintain their own bank accounts and can choose the banking institution of their choice. The school board limited the number of bank accounts to a single account with the exception of schools that hold bingos and raffles.

The school board adopted a guideline on fundraising, which has been posted on its website. The guideline defines the concept of fundraising and presents several principles, such as requesting approval from principals before beginning fundraising activities. The guideline is completed with a by-law that describes the type of fundraising activities permitted and defines funding management terms. All raised funds are deposited into an account from which only two persons, the school principal and a substitute, can withdraw funds.

Banking in elementary and secondary schools is managed through the banking management application (AGB) in SAP. This banking management module allows each school to post revenues and expenses by respective category: educational trips, school fees, fundraising, etc. School principals and secretaries were trained on the AGB when the application was introduced two years ago.

To assist principals in managing school funds, the administration developed a guide on the financial management of school funds. This guide presents general accounting principles, procedures to follow for raising and using school funds, required controls for bank deposits and withdrawals and accounting methods for financial transactions. The guide also informs schools of the requirement to perform monthly bank reconciliations that are reviewed and signed by the principal and then faxed to the school board's headquarters every month. During the year, the accounting supervisor follows up on the information received with the schools and visits a sample of schools. It should be mentioned that external auditors perform audits in two of the board's schools each year.



## Recommendations:

- The Board should develop an investment guideline to reduce idle cash, in accordance with the Education Act.
- The finance department should develop periodic reports on the school board's cash position and the results of future investment activities, and share them with the board of trustees.

## 4.5 Non-Grant Revenue Management

The purpose of reviewing non-grant revenue management processes is to:

- Assess whether procedures are in place to ensure the timely, complete and accurate recording of the different types of non-grant revenue;
- Assess whether internal controls exist to support appropriate cash handling and cash management;
- Identify opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

Non-grant revenue management is a smaller functional area for the school board. The school board receives Education Programs – Other (EPO) funding from the Ministry for specific initiatives, which requires it to focus on the non-grant revenue line.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for non-grant revenue management, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

## Policies and Procedures and Planning to Support Non Grant Revenues

Leading Practices – Non-Grant Revenue Management	Evidence of Adoption?
The board has established policies and/or procedures for the application of its fee structures.	Yes

## Procedures for all Non-Grant Revenues

Leading Practices – Non-Grant Revenue Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Electronic registration and payment system are used where appropriate (e.g., ConEd, permitting of facilities, leasing, etc.).	No
Staff monitor all sources of revenue to ensure completeness and compliance with policies. Action plans and processes maximize collections including obtaining credit/risk assessments.	Yes
School board budget identifies revenue and expenditure for each EPO program. Management monitors activity to ensure compliance with terms and conditions.	Yes

## Policies and Procedures and Planning to Support Non Grant Revenues

The school board has the following sources of non-grant revenues, which represent an average annual amount of about 2,000,000:

- Community use of schools;
- Daycare operations
- Rentals, and
- Continuing education at the Eastern Ontario Education and Training Centre (EOETC)

The finance department estimates the amount of non-grant revenue every year using historical data. Then, the data is integrated into the school board's overall budget.

The Board established a guideline on community use of school facilities to promote access to school premises outside of school hours to non-profit community organizations. A by-law and a guideline present the fee schedules for community use of schools by category or association group. Activities such as the leasing of facilities and daycare services in school board facilities are subject to formal agreements that include

fee schedules. The fee schedules for continuing education courses are not presented on the EOETC's website; however, they are available in paper format at the different campuses of the EOETC.

The finance department performs a periodical audit of non-grant revenue in comparison with Board-approved budget forecasts.

### **Procedures for all Non-Grant Revenues**

The school board currently does not use an electronic registration and payment system for its non-grant revenue. All payments for non-grant revenue are currently made by cheque.

EPO grants received by the school board are allocated to the Superintendents of Education or project leads. The finance department creates a new project/account code in SAP for each EPO grant. The project lead closely monitors the account and tracks in-year expenses. To help manage EPO budgets, the chief accountant convenes with supervisors and project leads three or four times a year to explain the guidelines and schedule deadlines to submit reports to meet by-law requirements. To inform project leads and the Finance Manager, the chief accountant produces an annual Excel file containing the budget, incurred expenses and the balance of each EPO grant.

### **Recommendation:**

- The finance department should consider using electronic registration and payment systems for its non-grant revenues exceeding a minimum amount to be determined.

## **4.6 Procurement**

The purpose of reviewing procurement processes is to assess:

- Whether procurement policies and practices are in place to ensure that the school board acquires goods and services through an open, fair and transparent process;
- Whether appropriate internal controls exist to support the procurement and related payment process;
- Whether school board processes ensure the receipt of value for money from all acquired goods and services;
- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for procurement, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### Procurement Policies and Procedures

Leading Practices – Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Approved procurement policies and practices are clearly communicated to staff with purchasing authority, and are periodically reviewed and updated.	Yes
Vendor selection criteria include elements other than lowest cost, such as total cost of ownership, value, and quality and competitive procurement (including the use of public advertising for RFPs and tenders over a defined level).	No
Purchasing managers monitor and ensure compliance with the Board's procurement policies and procedures.	Yes

### Participation in Buying Consortia

Leading Practices – Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
The procurement strategy includes the participation in consortia/cooperatives for cost savings.	Yes
Management evaluates and develops strategies to increase purchasing power and minimize the cost of goods and services procured.	Yes

### Purchasing Levels of Authority

Leading Practices – Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Purchasing authorization levels are commensurate to job title/role, and are monitored for compliance by a supervisor or department head.	No

## Policies and Procedures for PCard/Corporate Card Use

Leading Practices – Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Policies and procedures for the use of PCards and corporate credit cards are documented and communicated to users through regular training and monitoring.	Yes

## Accounting for Completeness of Purchase/Payment Cycle

Leading Practices – Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Automated three-way matching (purchase order, receipt/invoice and inspection) is used.	No
Commitment accounting is in place to monitor budget utilization.	Yes
Management has implemented electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing and payment, including the use of supplier portals.	Yes

## Use of Electronic Funds Transfer for Greater Efficiency

Leading Practices – Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Management maximizes use of electronic funds transfers (EFT) for payments.	No

## Procurement Policies and Procedures

The school board has a guideline and a by-law governing the purchasing of goods and services. Both the guideline and the by-law are posted on the school board's website.

As the guideline describes, the school board's procurement objective is to acquire the best products and services at competitive prices, while respecting the legal obligations and principles set out in the ethics code of the Purchasing Management Association of Canada (PMAC) ([www.pmac.ca](http://www.pmac.ca)).

The guideline includes several procurement priorities of the school board such as providing a consistent procurement process with respect to equipment, materials, services, prices, procedures and follow-ups, protecting the integrity of individuals and the school board, and ensuring efficient coordination between the different levels of the organization. The guideline does not, however, mention any specific criteria for favouring Canadian products, services by local Francophone companies, or green

products with similar prices, quality or efficiency. In practice, the school board ensures that purchasing decisions are made with a focus on the total cost of ownership throughout the life cycle of the product, rather than just the initial cost of acquisition.

The school board has approved guidelines or by-laws in accordance with the direction given by the Ministry in the spring of 2007. The following by-laws have been updated or adopted by the school board and published on its website in October 2007:

- Use of purchasing cards
- Advocacy
- Advertising expenses.

The procurement guideline and by-laws are posted on the school board's website. When these documents are reviewed, a memorandum or flyer is sent to employees to inform them of potential changes.

The procurement by-law specifies that all product or service purchases must be made through a purchasing order, except for instances when the use of petty cash, purchasing cards or a request for payment is more appropriate. As a next step, the finance department should set methods in place to ensure the procurement guideline is respected, especially with regard to the use of purchasing orders.

### **Participation in Buying Consortia**

The school board participates in several purchasing consortia, including consortia for the purchase natural gas or the delivery of services such as snow removal. It also participates in a consortium with the Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario (CEPEO) for bus transportation services. This year, the school board also launched a request for proposals in consortium with the Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est (CECLFCE) for school supplies.

The school board also used the purchasing consortium of the French-language school boards for the acquisition of a SAP licence and a teleconferencing system, for banking negotiation purposes and for acquiring labour relations services.

To increase the school board's purchasing power, the executive council has started looking at strategies for reducing the costs of services and products. One of the proposed strategies is the centralization of flight ticket reservations via the purchasing department to identify the volume of purchases within the school board in order to negotiate better prices.

## Purchasing Levels of Authority

The by-law governing procurement states that all departments of the school board must adhere to the following limits for securing supplier quotations:

- For amounts of \$1 to \$999, requestors can purchase goods and services of the suppliers or contractors of their choice, by using petty cash or purchasing cards according to the relevant regulations and guidelines.
- At least three verbal price offers are required to purchase or lease goods and services when the estimated total cost is between \$1,000 and \$4,999. The price offers must be recorded on a price request form (SA2E) and compiled on the request summary form (SA3E).
- At least three written quotations are required for any purchase or lease of goods and services when the total estimated cost is between \$5,000 and \$49,999. The price offers must be recorded on a price request form (SA2E) and compiled on a request summary form (SA3E).
- A tender/request for proposal (RFP) is required for any purchase or rental of goods and services estimated to be over \$50,000.

The responsibilities of the school board and its employees as well as the different steps of the invitation to tender process are described in the procurement by-law.

The purchasing guideline does not define precise levels of authority for procurement. In practice, purchases below \$1000 made with a purchase order require one level of approval. The Director of Education, school principals, department managers and superintendents are among the employees of the school board who can approve purchases below \$1,000. Purchases over \$1,000 made with a purchase order require two levels of approval, namely by one of the persons mentioned above and the Superintendent of Business or the Finance Manager. In practice, school principals have a monthly limit of \$1,000 for credit card purchases made without purchase orders. The Director of Education, department managers and superintendents have a \$10,000 monthly limit for credit card purchases.

It is important to note that the limit of the Director of Education's or the Superintendent of Business's procurement authority is not documented; however, the purchasing by-law states that any contract of \$50,000 or more must be authorized by the board of trustees. The school board should consider reviewing the purchasing guideline to include precise approval levels according to the requestor's position and field of activity.

## **Policies and Procedures for PCard/Corporate Card Use**

The school board currently has 57 VISA credit cards, called purchasing cards by the board. A by-law governing the use of purchasing cards specifies the purchase limits by type of function or department.

The purchasing limit for school principals is \$1,000. The purchasing limit for department managers and senior management is limited to \$10,000. A purchasing card with a \$25,000 limit is available to the purchasing department to acquire flight or train tickets.

According to the by-law, requests for purchasing cards must be approved by the supervisor or the Superintendent of Business. The P-card cannot be used for purchasing personal goods or cash advances. Credit card statements are received at the school board's headquarters and then sent to P-card holders, who must fill out a form listing the purchases they made during the month. Each P-card holder must send the completed form with a copy of the statement and supporting documents to the accounting supervisor, who identifies potential discrepancies with the by-law and contacts the card holders to remedy the situation, if needed.

## **Accounting for Completeness of Purchase/Payment Cycle**

The school board predominantly relies on the procurement module of its finance system to process its purchase-to-payment cycle.

Currently, approximately 60% of the school board's purchases are made using the financial system's purchase order. The school board uses three-way matching between purchase orders, receipts and invoices for 100% of these purchases.

For purchases for which no purchase order is required, the person responsible for the purchase must sign the invoice. The school board considers that this signature serves as both an approval of the expense (requisition) and a receipt voucher. As a next step, the school board could improve the direct purchasing process by using two separate documents in addition to the invoice: a requisition form and a receipt voucher. Adopting this method would reduce non-approved purchases and payment of goods and services not rendered, as well as ensure a better level of control wherein accounts payable could use three-way matching between the requisition, invoice and receipt voucher before making a payment.

The school board has a commitment accounting process in place to monitor budget utilization. Once a purchase order has been entered into the financial system, the system automatically encumbers those funds against the budget, and the general ledger is updated.

The school board has not implemented an electronic supplier's interface for ordering, processing and payment, including the use of supplier portals.



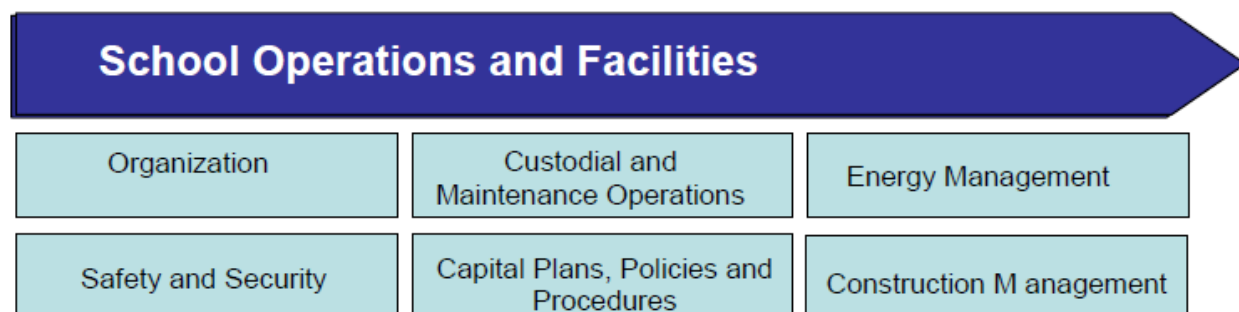
### **Use of Electronic Funds Transfer for Greater Efficiency**

The Board currently uses electronic funds transfer (EFT) for 70% of its payments. The remaining payments are made using cheques.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The school board should expand the guideline governing the procurement of goods and services so that the vendor selection criteria include elements over and above lowest cost, such as total cost of ownership, value and quality, competitive purchasing or the use of green products.
- The finance department should define purchasing levels of authority that are commensurate with job title/role in its purchasing guideline. Once the purchasing levels of authority are established, the department should ensure that they are communicated to staff and develop a monitoring process for this policy.
- The finance department should ensure that three-way matching (purchase order, receipt/invoice and inspection) is used for all of the school board's purchases, when appropriate.
- The finance department should continue to increase its use of electronic funds transfer (EFT) payments to all appropriate suppliers, to gain greater efficiency and minimize the risk of payments being altered prior to clearing the bank.

## 5. School Operations and Facilities Management – Findings and Recommendations



Efficient and effective management of the board's facilities (particularly schools) is an important factor in student achievement. Along with providing a positive learning environment for students, this function sets and meets standards of cleanliness and maintenance, examines opportunities to increase energy efficiency, and addresses the health, safety, and security requirements of the board. Management uses cost efficient and effective processes in the design and construction of new facilities.

The following is a summary of the assessment of the school board's adoption of leading practices under the processes identified above. All findings are a result of the review of data provided by the school board and on-site field work, which included interviews with all key school operations and facilities management staff, as well as follow-up and confirmation of information.

### 5.1 Operations and Facilities Organization

The purpose of reviewing the organization of operations and facilities is to assess:

- Whether the board of trustees and management have established policies and procedures that support the key departmental functions and activities, strong internal controls and financial management;
- Whether the department supports the overall goals, priorities, and accountability established by the school board in support of student achievement targets and strategies;
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the departmental structure and whether roles and responsibilities support the key functions/activities and the required business practices;

- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for the operations and facilities organization, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Leading Practices – Operations and Facilities Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The operations and facilities department's goals and priorities are documented in an annual department plan that is aligned to the annual board improvement plan and is accessible by key stakeholders. The plan incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines, and identified accountability.	No

### Organizational Structure and Accountability

Leading Practices – Operations and Facilities Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The operations and facilities department has clearly defined organizational units and delineates respective roles and responsibilities. A current organizational chart is available.	No
Senior operations and facilities staff have appropriate designations (e.g. P.Eng.) and relevant field experience.	Yes

### Monitoring and Communication of Policy

Leading Practices – Operations and Facilities Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
Management has processes in place to monitor departmental policy compliance.	Yes
Processes exist to monitor new legislation and regulations and implement necessary changes.	Yes

Leading Practices – Operations and Facilities Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
Management provides scheduled policy and procedure awareness, and training to address ongoing skill development and emerging regulatory issues.	Yes

## Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

The facilities department is responsible for the operation, maintenance, renovation and construction projects of 63 buildings and grounds on the CSDCEO's territory. The mission, vision, beliefs and organizational values of the facilities department are presented on the school board's website. The department's mission is to ensure and maintain a healthy and safe environment for students, employees and the community, in collaboration with schools and other departments.

As part of the 2005-2008 strategic plan, the facilities department developed an annual operational plan that incorporated specific timelines, identified responsibilities and a list of activities and tasks to perform for each target. The facilities department does not have an operational action plan for 2009 that states departmental goals and that is based on the school board's annual action plan. At the time of the operational review, the Facilities Manager was planning to organize meetings with departmental staff and the superintendent in charge of strategic planning, in order to identify priorities for the current year. Once the priorities are identified, the Facilities Manager plans to develop an operational action plan in the upcoming weeks.

The Facilities Manager reports to the Superintendent of Business, who is a member of the executive council. The Facilities Manager meets with the Superintendent of Business when needed. Besides the frequent and informal exchanges between the Facilities Manager and the Superintendent of Business, there is currently no defined structure for submitting reports on facilities management to senior management.

## Organizational Structure and Accountability

The Facilities Manager is supported by a chief of facilities, four supervisors, a health and safety supervisor, three clerks, a project officer and an officer in charge of WSIB files. The chief of facilities is the Facilities Manager's right-hand person for construction files and the supervision of personnel. Three out of four supervisors monitor daily facilities operations for each of the school board's three regions. The fourth supervisor is mainly in charge of monitoring construction worksites. The clerks are in charge of tracking the budget of departmental projects and entering invoices in SAP. The project officer is responsible for updating the ReCAPP and SFIS and managing projects such as green schools. Three people, namely a supervisor, a clerk and a facilities department officer, manage occupational health and safety files.

To enhance the staff's versatility, the Facilities Manager distributes files between the staff so that staff members can help or replace their colleagues.

The duties and responsibilities of all facilities department staff are defined; however, they are not up-to-date for all positions. The department aims to update the clerks' task descriptions this year.

There is a detailed, up-to-date organizational chart of the facilities department; however, it not publicly accessible via the school board's website. As a next step, the school board could ensure that a departmental organization chart is posted on its website.

The Facilities Manager, chief of facilities, supervisors and department staff hold monthly meetings and speak on a daily and weekly basis to share information about the school board's facilities and maintenance priorities and initiatives.

Key maintenance and facilities staff have appropriate professional designations and/or related field experience, and are involved in various provincial committees to keep abreast of best practices and new directives.

### **Monitoring and Communication of Policy**

The school board maintains several guidelines on various aspects of operations and facilities management on its website, such as use of school facilities, play areas on school grounds, the accessibility plan, video surveillance systems and daycare services. The guidelines are not subject to a documented, systematic review cycle; however, a review of the material demonstrates that the department is focused on maintaining and updating them so that they remain up-to-date and applicable. As a next step, the school board should consider adding review dates to by-laws and guidelines that currently do not have one.

The school board adopted a health and safety guideline that is reviewed by a joint health and safety committee every year. To ensure compliance with the guideline, the facilities department developed a series of by-laws outlining the precautions to be taken with regard to occupational health and safety. To date, the school board has taken administrative measures for work injuries/accidents, flammable materials, painting schools and third party liability insurance. These administrative measures are communicated to departmental staff by email or in person during annual training sessions.

To ensure compliance with the guidelines, the facilities department also developed a log containing a list of daily inspections and tasks, such as flushing the school water system. Custodians must fill out the log on a daily basis and is verified and co-signed periodically by delegates of the joint occupational health and safety committee. As a next step, the facilities department could consider developing an information binder for

all departmental employees, which would include all facilities and maintenance guidelines and by-laws. The binder could also present different tools, such as the inspections logs, which the department uses to ensure compliance with departmental policies.

Facilities department staff is offered appropriate training regarding regulatory requirements. Training sessions deal with different subjects, such as the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), or workplace violence, harassment or well-being. Training sessions also allow the school board to comply with periodic initiatives: water flushing, lead testing in water, and all other regulations related to occupational health and safety legislation.

### **Recommendations:**

- The facilities department should continue its efforts to develop an annual department plan that is aligned with the school board's annual action plan, and that incorporates the department's goals and priorities as well as measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities. Once the plan is created, the school board should then consider submitting it to trustees at the same time as the periodic progress reports.
- The facilities department should go ahead with its project to update the task descriptions of its personnel.

## **5.2 Custodial and Maintenance Operations**

The purpose of reviewing all processes relating to custodial and maintenance operations is to assess:

- Whether custodial and maintenance services are responding effectively and efficiently to maintaining an optimized learning environment for students;
- Whether the department has the appropriate organizational structure to effectively manage service delivery;
- Whether appropriate internal controls exist to effectively manage custodial and maintenance operations and expenditures;
- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for custodial and maintenance operations, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was

not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### **The Board’s Staffing Model Supports the Board’s Cleaning Standards and Maintenance Requirements.**

<b>Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations</b>	<b>Evidence of Adoption?</b>
The board has adopted cleaning standards and has developed a standard set of processes and tools to monitor, manage, and report on results.	No
Management’s custodial/maintenance allocation model optimizes use of staff.	Yes

### **Development of Annual/Multi-Year Maintenance Plan**

<b>Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations</b>	<b>Evidence of Adoption?</b>
Using stakeholder input, management develops an annual and multi-year (three to five years) maintenance plan that addresses preventative and deferred maintenance priorities. Outcomes improve the learning environment for students. The plan optimizes the use of available funding (Annual Renewal Grant and Good Places to Learn funding) and is approved by the board.	Yes

### **Training to Support Skills Development and Safety**

<b>Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations</b>	<b>Evidence of Adoption?</b>
A monitored annual training plan for staff to address ongoing skill development and emerging regulatory issues.	Yes

### **Standardization of Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies**

<b>Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations</b>	<b>Evidence of Adoption?</b>
An inventory system tracks and controls major cleaning and maintenance equipment.	Yes
Common standards ensure efficient procurement of supplies to minimize costs and promote energy and operating efficiency.	No

## Project Management, Monitoring and Support Systems

Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Evidence of Adoption?
A work-order system and process that records, monitors, and evaluates projects ensuring the effective use of resources.	Yes
Management regularly evaluates the overall effectiveness and efficiency of its maintenance and custodial service practices.	Yes

### The Board's Staffing Model Supports the Board's Cleaning Standards and Maintenance Requirements

The facilities department developed a custodial allocation model that enables the optimal use of resources and that is shared with the union for custodial staff. The school board's custodial allocation model is based on several parameters, including surface area and the presence of portables, as well as occupancy parameters, such as student occupancy rate and nominal enrolment rate.

The school board employs about 100 custodians who report to the facilities supervisor of their respective region. The school board does not currently have formal written standards for cleanliness at the school level that could be used as a basis for appraising of custodial staff and handling potential complaints from custodians, principals or any other stakeholder.

### Development of Annual/Multi-Year Maintenance Plan

The Facilities Manager develops a multi-year maintenance plan. The school board's maintenance and renovation activities are assessed annually through individual school visits by different members of the department. Priorities are then incorporated into the multi-year annual plan. This helps ensure that schools are maintained in the best condition possible to support improved student learning and facilitate employee productivity.

The school board uses the ReCAPP database as one of its sources for developing the annual major maintenance and renewal priorities for the coming year. This has been supported by the Ministry's Good Places to Learn funding, enabling the Board to carry out critical renewal work in its schools. During the 2008/2009 school year, a three-year maintenance plan was developed using the ReCAPP database and presented to the Board as an information item.

### Training to Support Skills Development and Safety

The school board has established a training program to provide ongoing skills development to facilities staff and to address emerging regulatory issues. Training



needs are identified by a committee created four years ago, which includes the facilities department supervisors and representatives of custodian unions. A joint health and safety committee also allows the identification of training needs.

The Facilities Manager plans at least one day of ongoing skills development for departmental staff per year and a health and safety day for members of the joint occupational health and safety committee and health and safety delegates, which include a large proportion of custodians. Training sessions deal with different subjects such as the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), code red, recycling, harassment, workplace violence, ergonomic practices and green products. Facilities department supervisors are invited to follow three to four training sessions a year to remain up-to-date with leading practices and regulatory requirements governing school facilities management.

As part of the orientation process for new custodial staff, the school board developed a mentoring program. The program allows each new employee to be paired with an experienced custodian, called a mentor, for five days. Three days are spent at the mentor's school, and two days are spent at the new custodian's school with shadowing by the mentor. The program allows new employees to become familiarized with the school board's facilities and procedures before assuming their duties.

### **Standardization of Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies**

The facilities department has technological tools to track and monitor cleaning and maintenance material. The department has a list of each school's equipment that is kept up to date by the supervisors of each region and used for maintenance purposes.

The school board does not participate in a purchasing consortium for cleaning and maintenance products. It uses a bidding process every two years to identify and select three or four different suppliers who offer the school board a wide variety of products. The diversity of cleaning supplies allows the school board to meet its schools' various needs.

A budget for cleaning and maintenance supplies is calculated by the Finance Manager for each school using the surface area, number of students and subsidy rates. Budget management for cleaning and maintenance supplies is not centralized. Each school is responsible for submitting purchase orders and tracking its respective budget. At the end of the year, schools may keep the balance of non-expended funds for building renovations or student projects. Building renovation projects must be approved by the Facilities Manager. The facilities department communicated to each school the products catalogue of suppliers selected by the school board. Custodians can choose the products they need in the catalogue; however, their requests must be approved by school principals. Purchase orders are entered into SAP by school secretaries and approved by principals.

Decentralized budget management for cleaning and maintenance supplies and the surplus utilization system encourage schools to use cleaning and maintenance supplies efficiently. However, the use of four different suppliers and the lack of monitoring of supply orders by headquarters do not ensure standardized and harmonized practices in supplying the school board with cleaning and maintenance products.

### **Project Management, Monitoring and Supporting Systems**

The facilities department does not have an electronic work order recording system and has not yet assessed the relevance of such a system for the school board.

The facilities department does not have paper forms to standardize the process for work orders from principals or custodians. Facilities supervisors currently receive work orders by telephone or email. After visiting the school or speaking to the principal, the supervisors evaluate the priority level of the request and complete a BAT form containing the estimated work costs. The supervisors assign the work order to an external contractor depending on the nature of the work required. Once the work orders are validated by the supervisor through the BAT form, a facilities department clerk creates an entry into SAP including the costs evaluated by the supervisor. When the invoice for the work is received by the facilities department, a clerk reconciles the evaluated costs with the invoice amount. If the difference between the amounts is greater than 10%, the supervisor who sent the BAT form is notified so that he or she may obtain the necessary information for the invoice's approval. When the reconciliation process is completed, all invoices are approved by the Facilities Manager or chief of facilities.

### **Assessment of the Board's Service Delivery Model**

Custodial services are provided by school board employees. The school board uses skilled workers and external contractors depending on the maintenance service required. As a next step, the school board should consider regularly comparing the organization of its maintenance and custodial activities with that of similar or contiguous school boards.

**Recommendations:**

- The facilities department should develop and communicate to all relevant stakeholders the official standards for cleanliness in schools, which could be used as a basis for appraising custodial staff or handling potential complaints.
- The facilities department should ensure a greater standardization of the procedure for the procurement of supplies in order to minimize costs and promote operating efficiency.

**5.3 Energy Management**

The purpose of reviewing all related energy management processes is to assess:

- Whether adequate planning and communication exist to support the reduction of energy consumption;
- Whether school board structure and processes are in place to ensure that energy is procured for the lowest cost;
- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for energy management, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

**Energy Management Plan**

Leading Practices Energy Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management has established a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates measures to be implemented and the tools to monitor and manage the plan.	No
Purchasing practices support energy conservation objectives (e.g. Energy Star products, leveraging consortia membership).	Yes
Successful conservation initiatives are shared across all schools and with other school boards.	No

## Tracking and Reporting Energy Conservation

Leading Practices Energy Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management provides formal annual reporting on the conservation savings achieved against the plan.	No
A comprehensive system exists to budget expenditures, track consumption and identify opportunities for further savings.	Yes
Billing for all board facilities is consolidated from each utility.	Yes
Centralized technology that automates energy regulation and conservation (e.g., light control, desktop power) is used wherever practical.	No

## Energy Management Plan

The school board does not have a multi-year energy management plan. However, during maintenance or renewal projects, there is an emphasis on using high efficiency heaters, more efficient lights and motion detectors to optimize energy savings.

Since the Ministry announced its subsidies for energy efficient schools, the school board delegated the selection of projects aimed at reducing energy consumption to the facilities committee composed of the Facilities Manager, the Finance Manager, the chief of facilities, the chief of finance, the project officer of the facilities department, the Superintendent of Business and his administrative assistant.

In the spring of 2009, the facilities committee used a part of the subsidies for energy efficient schools to hire an external consulting firm to implement a database to track electricity consumption in the school board's facilities and to identify improvement and energy-saving opportunities by reducing the school board's carbon footprint.

In the past years, the school board has led several innovative energy management activities. Two years ago, to ensure that certain daily energy management initiatives reach classroom levels, the school board created a systemic environment committee comprised of student representatives, teachers, principals and members of the facilities department. The committee launched a recycling program in the schools as well as an awareness campaign by placing stickers close to taps or switches.

As a next step, the school board should develop a multi-year energy management plan that is based on the work done by the external firm mentioned above and includes measures to be implemented as well as tools to monitor and manage the plan. As a next step, the school board should also present a formal annual report to the trustees on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.

The school board's purchasing guideline does not currently require that new equipment be energy efficient (e.g., Energy Star products). In practice, the school board still considers energy efficiency when purchasing supplies such as lights, urinals and boilers. As a next step, the school board should review its guideline to ensure that energy efficient goods and services are purchased system-wide, either directly or through subcontractors.

The school board participates in a purchasing consortium for natural gas since its inception. The Facilities Manager participates in meetings of the Comité d'Immobilisations et d'Entretien (CIEP) on energy management. However, successful conservation initiatives are not systematically shared with schools.

### **Tracking and Reporting Energy Conservation**

The school board developed an internal Excel tool that monitors and records the schools' energy consumption data every month. This database provides comparative analyses of electricity and gas consumption in all the schools (in kW and cubic metres) and the associated costs.

The data are not currently presented in periodic reports on energy conservation intended for the Board. Energy consumption data for each school are also not shared with school principals. As a next step, the school board should communicate effective conservation initiatives and its progress with regard to energy management to schools on a regular basis.

Utility billing is not consolidated for all school board facilities; however, natural gas and electricity bills are paid automatically through electronic funds transfers (EFTs), and invoice data are consolidated in the Excel tool described above.

Centralized technology that automates energy regulation and conservation (e.g., lighting controls, energy efficient computers) is not used in the school board's establishments, mainly because of their age, averaged at 49 years. The school board has not yet adopted a centralized technology because of its relatively small territory.

### **Recommendations:**

- The facilities committee should develop a multi-year energy management plan that would incorporate measures to be implemented and the tools to monitor and manage the plan. The facilities committee should also present a formal annual report to the trustees on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.
- The school board should share successful energy conservation initiatives with schools.

## 5.4 Health, Safety and Security

The purpose of reviewing all the Health, Safety and Security processes is to assess:

- Whether adequate planning and communication exist to support the provision of a safe teaching and learning environment;
- Whether school board structure and processes are in place to implement safety precautions;
- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for health, safety and security, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### Development, Monitoring, and Tracking of Policies and Plans for Health, Safety and Security

Leading Practices – Health, Safety and Security	Evidence of Adoption?
The maintenance of health, safety and security policies and the development of appropriate plans ensure compliance with statutory health, safety and security requirements.	Yes
The security code guideline includes alert codes that reflect the situation and threat level, and identify departmental responsibilities.	Yes
Security incidents are tracked by type of incident (e.g. property damage, intrusion, etc.).	Yes
Operations management follow Ministry guidelines, policy and legislation on healthy schools.	Yes
Safe school teams responsible for school safety (e.g. PPM 144) are implemented in every school.	Yes
Water and air quality standards are monitored and issues are reported for corrective action.	Yes

### Development, Monitoring, and Tracking of Policies and Plans for Health, Safety and Security

The health and safety function is managed by the facilities department. The school board implemented a joint occupational health and safety committee composed of representatives of unionized and non-unionized employees and administrators, such as

the Facilities Manager and the Superintendent of Business (ex-officio). The committee convenes eight times a year, mainly to determine situations that pose a risk or danger or to recommend the creation, maintenance or monitoring of health and safety measures or programs for employees.

The occupational health and safety guideline is subject to a systemic annual review cycle by the joint committee. Monthly inspections, as prescribed by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, are conducted in each school by a delegated member, who could be a custodian, a teacher or an educational assistant. The facilities supervisor of the region follows up during his weekly visits, if needed. Each member of the joint committee has followed the training to be designated an “associated member”. Each member of the joint committee conducts an annual inspection of a school with a few health and safety delegates. Once a year, delegates, joint committee members and facilities department staff share best health and safety practices during a health and safety day organized by the Facilities Manager.

The school board has an accessibility plan for the 2008-2009 academic year, which is posted on its website. The special education advisory committee carries out review and monitoring processes for the implementation of strategies for eliminating and preventing the obstacles noted in the accessibility plan. During the year, the special education department manager and the Facilities Manager identify needs during their visits to the schools. Approximately \$150,000 is dedicated annually to the implementation of strategies for eliminating and preventing obstacles. Recently, the school board created specified classes (sensory rooms) to meet the needs of visually impaired students and adapted its website to display different font sizes.

The school board has a code red management protocol since 2008. Before holding simulation exercises, the school board informed parents of code reds for which two drills are performed each year. In addition, a support document for students was developed to explain their responsibilities in a learning-oriented perspective. In June 2008, the school board implemented an ad hoc committee, composed of principals, department managers and psychologists, to review its emergency plan. In June 2009, an emergency measures guide describing the procedures to follow in various emergency situations was developed and will be distributed to each classroom in the upcoming weeks.

Vandalism is not a major issue at the school board, but it is tracked and documented on an incident basis. In case of incidents, schools must complete a form containing a section describing instructions to follow. School principals are invited to describe the circumstances and consequences of the incident, e.g. damaged material, and to note the contact information of the police officer conducting the investigation. Incident forms must be submitted to the Superintendent of Business within four days of the incident. This procedure enables a quick and appropriate follow-up of incidents.

The school board has policies on physical exercise and a guideline and by-law governing food in schools. The school board promotes good health for all students by ensuring that every student from Kindergarten to Grade 8 has at least 20 minutes of exercise a day. The food guideline invites all stakeholders of the school board to promote good eating habits based on various public food guides. The food by-law defines, among other things, the maximum content of trans fat in foods and drinks sold and the content of vending machines.

In compliance with Sabrina's Law, which was enacted in 2005, the school board developed a guideline and a by-law on anaphylaxis and administering medicine. At least two employees in each school have first aid training.

In compliance with the Ministry of Education's Policy/Program Memorandum No. 144, the school board developed a by-law that defines bullying, and which outlines each school's obligation to create their own bullying prevention and intervention program. The Superintendent of Education ensures the implementation of this by-law by requesting schools to send the list of committee members as well as a bullying prevention and intervention plan for their school. The schools are supported by a social worker for procedures requiring accompaniment, such as the dismissal of students.

In accordance with the Ministry of the Environment's Regulation 170, water samples are taken by custodians trained for this task in every school. The samples are analyzed at an external laboratory, and non-standard results are communicated to the Ministries of Education and of the Environment. According to Regulation 243/07, all schools undergo an annual lead contamination test that is conducted by a post-secondary student hired by the school board during the summer. The samples are submitted to an external laboratory for analysis.

To address air quality problems, the facilities department is equipped with an air quality tester, which also measures humidity and relative humidity levels and temperature. Using this tester allows the school board to save costs by reducing the amount of visits that external specialists or consultants make to measure air quality in schools.

In the context of the H1N1 virus, the school board has also taken other health and safety initiatives in its schools. The school board set in place a floating crew of five experienced custodians whose mandate is to visit schools where cases of the flu or infection are detected, to sanitize or disinfect the school if needed. The school board also developed an information bulletin on the A H1N1 flu virus for parents and schools, which is accessible on its website.

### **Recommendation:**

There are no recommendations for this section.



## 5.5 Capital Plans, Policies and Procedures

The purpose of reviewing capital plans, policies and procedures is to:

- Assess whether school capital assets are being utilized effectively and efficiently;
- Assess how well management is planning for future capital requirements, based on enrolment forecasts and the capacity/maintenance issues of the existing asset base, relative to the funding available from the Ministry (i.e. NPP funding);
- Assess whether management is appropriately prioritizing the maintenance and renewal expenditures in light of the available Ministry funding and multi-year capital programs;
- Identify appropriate controls and transparency within the current planning process;
- Identify opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for capital plans, policies and procedures, and identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

### Development of Annual and Multi-Year Capital Plans

Leading Practices – Capital Plans, Policies and Procedures	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board has an approved annual and multi-year capital program that includes the related funding plan.	Yes
The school board has an approved pupil accommodation review guideline.	Yes

### On-going Monitoring and Maintenance of Data to Support Capital Planning

Leading Practices – Capital Plans, Policies and Procedures	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board maintains accurate and up-to-date inventories of school capacity and utilization.	Yes

Leading Practices – Capital Plans, Policies and Procedures	Evidence of Adoption?
Capital forecasts and related funding plans are assessed annually and adjusted to meet current needs and changes to original assumptions such as enrolment projections and capital grants.	Yes
The accuracy of capital forecasts and related funding plans is assessed annually to reflect current needs and changes to original assumptions, such as enrolment projections.	Yes
An accurate and up-to-date assessment of facility conditions is maintained, based on departmental standards (using RECAP methodology).	Yes

### Development of Annual and Multi-Year Capital Plans

The school board developed its five-year capital plan in 2006 using the Student Facilities Inventory System (SFIS), and submitted it to the Ministry. The school board based its five-year capital plan on enrolment forecasts for the next fifteen years produced by an external firm and on a community survey conducted in 2003. The survey was completed when the Superintendent of Business and several school trustees presented school community improvement plans to the communities of the school board's seven geographic zones. In compliance with Ministry requirements, the school board has completed its capital liquidity template, which was approved by the Ministry in 2008.

The five-year capital plan is revised annually according to the schools' needs and funding from the Ministry, which is presented by the Superintendent of Business and the Facilities Manager during a facilities committee meeting.

The school board has an approved pupil accommodation review guideline.

### On-going Monitoring and Maintenance of Data to Support Capital Planning

The monitoring and planning of school capacity is reported within the framework of the Student Facilities Inventory System (SFIS). The school board maintains accurate and up-to-date inventories of school capacity and utilization.

Data in SIIS and ReCAPP is subject to a weekly review by the facilities department's project officers. Any changes to SIIS or ReCAPP data must be approved by the facilities committee, which represents the members of the facilities and finance department staff.

Enrolment at the school board is decreasing. The school board has closed six schools in the past several years. When the school board has had capital planning decisions to make, it has taken into account decreasing enrolment and involved the community in accordance with its guideline for closing schools.

**Recommendation:**

There are no recommendations for this section.

**5.6 Construction Management**

The purpose of reviewing all related construction management processes is to assess and identify:

- Whether processes are in place to ensure that school boards complete construction projects on-time, on-budget and with due regard to economy;
- Opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of all processes.

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for construction management, and also identifies where evidence was found to indicate that the practice was adopted in full. Where the evidence was not present or the practice was not completely adopted at the time of the review, a “No” indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

**Cost Effective Practices in the Design and Construction of Facilities**

Leading Practices – Construction Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management uses cost-effective designs, standard footprints, energy conservation, and economical construction practices to minimize construction and future maintenance and operation costs .	Yes
Management maintains standard policy and procedures to rationalize construction projects, including benchmarking against other school board construction costs and design standards (including coterminous boards).	Yes

**Monitoring and Reporting on Progress of Construction Projects**

Leading Practices – Construction Management	Evidence of Adoption?
An effective management process monitors and controls construction projects and their costs. This includes periodic project status updates and post-construction project evaluation.	Yes

## Maintaining Current Approved Professional Service Providers

Leading Practices – Construction Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management evaluates and updates the approved list of contractors, architects and related professionals periodically, ideally in five-year cycles.	Yes

## Cost Effective Practices in the Design and Construction of Facilities

Since 2001, the school board has not undertaken any construction projects. Besides renovation and construction projects for new pavilions, sports or entertainment halls in existing schools, the school board does not plan any major construction projects in the immediate future. In this context, the school board has not established guidelines specifying construction standards such as standard footprints or preference for certain materials. In practice, for recent project, the school board has relied on the Ministry of Education's directives regarding parameters and templates, as described in the "Capital Grant Plan" document published in 1979. According to the Facilities Manager, following these directives ensures cost control and maximum safety.

The Facilities Manager compares costs per square foot with those of other school boards, as part of meetings with the Comité d'Immobilisations et d'Entretien (CIEP).

If the school board identifies construction needs in the upcoming years, we would encourage the school board to implement policies and procedures to govern construction projects.

## Monitoring and Reporting on Progress of Construction Projects

Construction projects are tracked regularly in terms of their budget, quality and schedule. To assist with managing ongoing construction projects and sites, the Facilities Manager relies on one of the four department supervisors to monitor worksites on a daily basis. The supervisor is present at the worksite every day. He takes photos daily to document the progress of the work. The chief of facilities or Facilities Manager participates at weekly worksite meetings. The general contractor is responsible for taking minutes during the meetings. On the basis of the meetings, the Facilities Manager informs the Superintendent of Business of any changes or potential delays. The contractor's monthly invoices are sent to the school board's architect who creates a "payment certificate" document, which states the initial project costs, potential contract amendments or credits, and the total monthly payment. The payment certificate is verified by the engineer in charge of the project and sent to the worksite supervisor, who submits it to the Facilities Manager for approval. Approved payment certificates are entered in SAP by a facilities department clerk. .

For its construction projects, the school board uses standardized contract forms (Canadian Construction Documentation or CCDC) that set out the procedures to be followed by the board and the contractor in case of change orders, which must be systematically approved by the facilities department manager.

A progress report for capital projects is developed by the Superintendent of Business is based on meetings with the Facilities Manager and presented to school trustees in an annual meeting. A construction committee composed of representatives of the finance and facilities departments, school council and architect office is created for each major construction project. This practice allows different stakeholders to be informed of the progress of construction projects.

### **Maintaining Current Approved Professional Service Providers**

The school board posts newspaper ads every six months to invite suppliers and contractors to inform the board of their interest in receiving calls for tenders, requests for proposals or requests for quotations for various goods and services. Once the responses are received, a list of suppliers and contractors is prepared for the current year. Suppliers or contractors can have their name added to the list at any time during the year. Suppliers and contractors who do not respond to three consecutive calls for tenders and/or requests for proposals or quotations are removed from the list.

This process allows the school board to gain time in preselecting suppliers and contractors.

### **Recommendation:**

There are no recommendations for this section.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Overview of the Operational Review

#### Operational Review Objectives

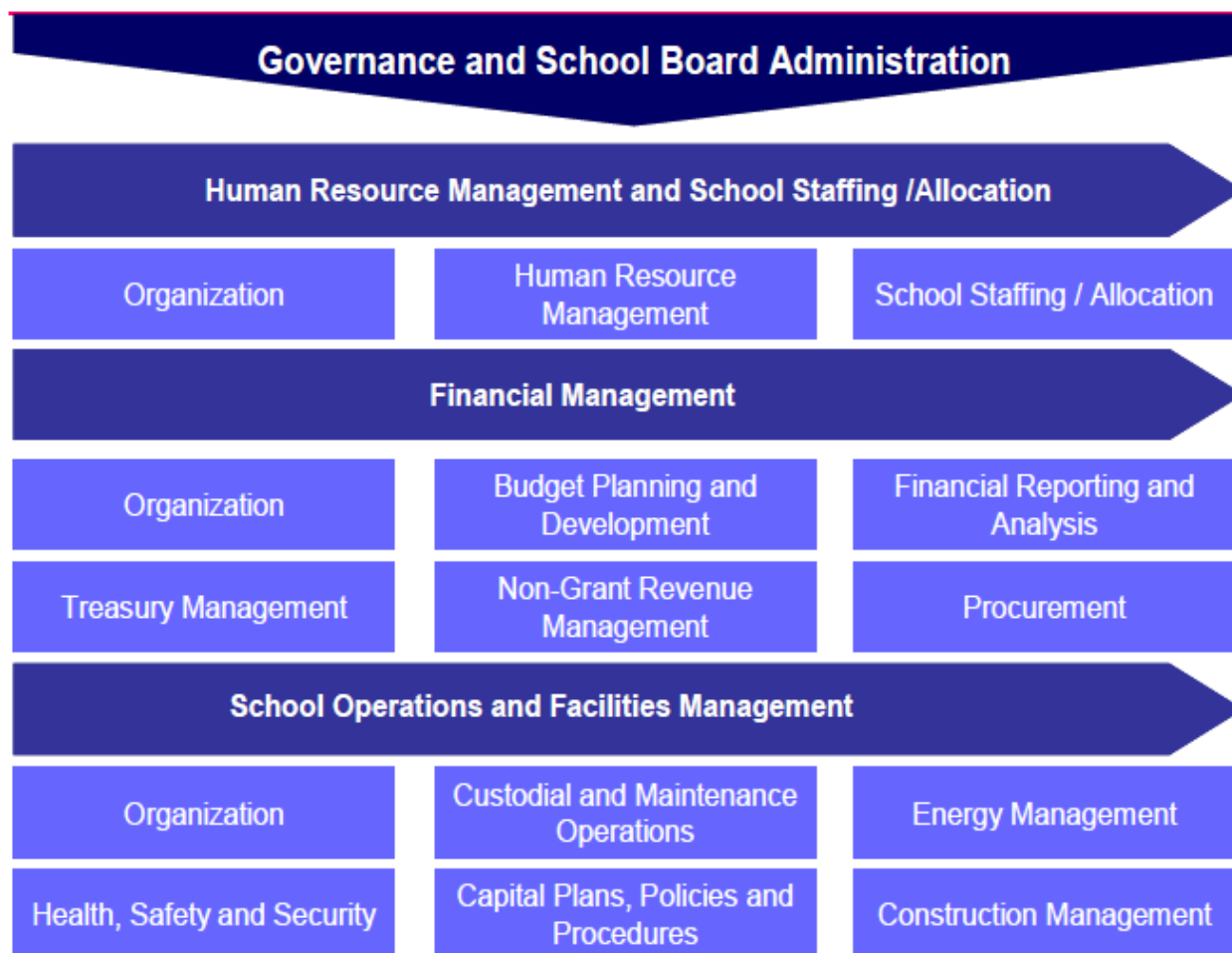
In order to perform an effective and consistent operational review the Ministry has worked with independent consultants to develop a Sector Guide that defines consistent standards and leading practices against which the operational reviews and analysis will be based.

Recognizing the unique characteristics of each DSB, the specific purpose of the Operational Reviews is to:

- Strengthen management capacity in school boards by developing recommendations that support improvement in non-academic operations;
- Highlight existing successful business practices used by school boards, to the sector and to school board communities;
- Leverage “Best Practices” across the education sector;
- Provide support and assistance to ensure that school boards are financially healthy, well managed, and positioned to direct optimum levels of resources to support student achievement;
- Provide the Ministry with important input on DSB capacity/capabilities for consideration in the ongoing development of policy and funding mechanisms.

#### Operational Review Summary Scope

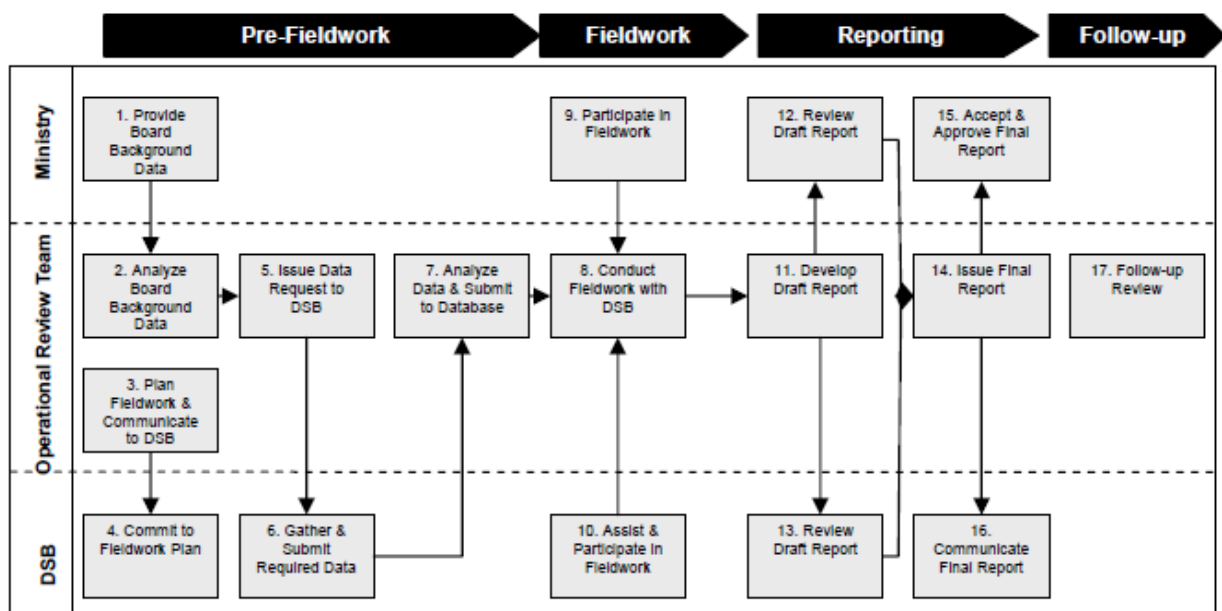
The scope of the Operational Review consists of the following functional areas which have been divided into key processes as shown below. The processes represent the end-to-end lifecycle of activities performed by school boards under each functional area. Each of the processes was examined based on its activities and its adoption of sector agreed leading practices, including alignment and support of student achievement strategies.



### Operational Review Summary Approach

The high level Operational Review approach is shown below. The timing for the end-to-end process will vary depending on school board size and complexity.

Observations and assessments are made by the Operational Review Team based on a set of agreed upon leading practices designed for each functional area. The onsite reviews allow the team to validate ministry and board data; provide a better understanding of the environmental conditions and allow the team to review materials that support the existence leading practices.



The table below defines the key phases and activities which comprise the operational review methodology.

### Phase: Pre-Fieldwork

Key Activity	Description
Provide School Board Background Data	The Ministry collects and maintains significant quantities of board data. The Operational Review team has developed a standardized data request from the Ministry to provide background data for each board.
Analyze School Board Background Data	Before the start of the fieldwork, the Operational Review team reviews board background data to understand the financial and operating characteristics. This review identifies specific issues and focus areas.
Plan Fieldwork and Communicate to Board	The Ministry and the Operational Review team develop a review schedule that is communicated to school boards before the start of the next review cycle.
Commit to Fieldwork Plan	Boards are required to commit to the Operational Review schedule. The Ministry and the review team will attempt to accommodate scheduling conflicts.
Issue Documentation Request to School Board	Before the start of fieldwork, a request for supporting documentation is generated to gather operating and other information for each focus area. The review team uses this information to enhance its understanding of the board before the start of field work.



Key Activity	Description
Gather and Submit Required Documentation	Upon receipt of the request for supporting documentation, each school board compiles the requested data. School boards have at least three weeks to complete this process prior to the start of the fieldwork.
Analyze Data and Submit to Database	The review team analyzes the data provided by each school board and adds the results to a sector-wide database to compare the results for each school board.

## Phase: Fieldwork

Key Activity	Description
Conduct Fieldwork with School Board	The fieldwork is conducted for each school board according to the previously agreed upon review cycle. The time required for fieldwork ranges between five and 10 days, based on the size of the school board.
Participate in Fieldwork	Ministry staff support the review team in the performance of fieldwork, to ensure continuity and knowledge transfer of school board operations.
Assist and Participate in Fieldwork	School board staff participate in the fieldwork. The number of participants involved will vary depending on the size of the board.

## Phase: Reporting

Key Activity	Description
Develop Draft Report	Based on the results of the fieldwork and data analysis, the operational review team writes a draft report. The draft report contains a synopsis of findings and, where
Review Draft Report (Ministry)	The Ministry reviews the draft report and provides feedback to the review team.
Review Draft Report (School Board)	The review team meets with board senior staff to review and obtain feedback.
Prepare Final Report	The review team incorporates the feedback from the both the Ministry and the board and prepares a final report.
Accept and Approve Final Report	The final report is issued to the Ministry for approval and release.
Communicate Final Report	The Ministry issues a final report to the board.

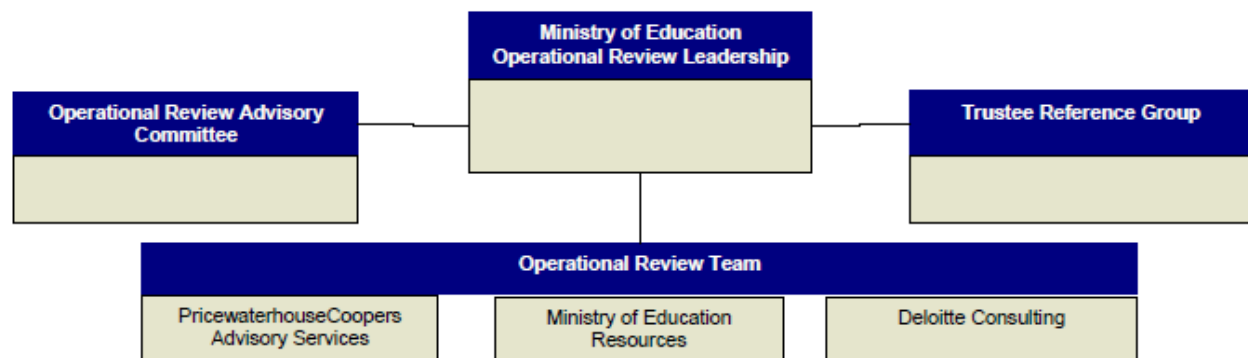
## Phase: Follow-up

Key Activity	Description
Follow-up Review	Eight to 12 months after the release of the final report, the review team conducts a follow-up review to determine the extent the school board's adoption and implementation of the recommendations.

## The Operational Review Team

The Ministry has assembled an Operational Review Team to ensure that these reviews are conducted in an objective manner. The Operational Review Team is designed to leverage the expertise of industry professionals and consulting firms to review specific aspects of each school board.

Management consultants from PricewaterhouseCoopers and Deloitte were hired to complete the Operational Reviews. The Ministry assigned an internal consultant with school board experience to provide the Review Team with valuable insight into school board operations in Ontario. The team has also received guidance and feedback from an Advisory Committee and a Trustee Reference Group convened by the Ministry of Education.



## Limitations of this Review

The purpose of this Report is to document the results of the Operational Review of the Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien. The review has been conducted using the methodology as previously described. The review is not of the nature or scope that constitutes an audit made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

## Appendix B: Summary of Recommendations

### Governance and School Board Administration

No.	Recommendation:
1.	The school board should implement a periodic review cycle for guidelines to ensure they remain effective.
2.	The school board should implement a formal succession plan to manage the retirements and resignations of key managers/administrators.
3.	The school board should consider expanding its website by including a departmental organization chart, supplemented with a directory of key staff contact information.

### Human Resources Management and School Staffing/Allocation

No.	Recommendation:
4.	The HR department should complete its guideline on employee performance evaluation with by-laws on the appraisal of substitute teacher staff, school principals and vice-principals, OSSTF support staff and CUPE staff in order to ensure consistency and transparency in the performance evaluation process for all school board employees.
5.	The school board should continue its efforts to develop a formal attendance management program that includes the implementation of guidelines and by-laws to reduce absences, methods for monitoring the rate of absences in different employee groups of the school board, and the production of periodic attendance reports to inform the administration, schools and trustees of the efficiency of attendance management programs and methods.
6.	The school board should conduct periodic reviews of the insurance carrier (Administrative Services only) that manages medical and dental claims, in order to ensure that the school board's claims are processed according to the plan's terms and conditions.
7.	The HR department should proceed with its project of introducing exit interviews for employees who are leaving their positions.
8.	The school board should formally document the annual staff allocation process for all employee groups to clarify the duties and responsibilities of all staff while increasing the transparency of the process for the trustees.
9.	The HR department should consider comparing its staff allocation costs with those of other school boards with a similar funding model in order to ensure an efficient use of resources.

## Financial Management

No.	Recommendation:
10.	The finance department should continue its efforts to develop an annual departmental plan that is aligned with the school board's annual action plan, and that includes measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities. Once the plan is created, the school board should then consider submitting it to the trustees at the same time as the periodic progress reports.
11.	The finance department should document the annual budget development process in a guideline in order to clarify staff roles and responsibilities, while making the process more transparent for trustees.
12.	The school board should consider modifying the format of interim reports, according to the format suggested in section 4.3 of this report.
13.	The school board should consider formalizing an internal audit function. This would include a broader audit of financial and management controls.
14.	Once the independent internal audit function is created, the school board should ensure that internal audit plans are clearly documented and recommendations are followed up and acted upon by management.
15.	Trustees should establish an audit committee and invite external advisors to contribute to the effectiveness of the committee.
16.	The Board should develop an investment guideline to reduce idle cash, in accordance with the <i>Education Act</i> .
17.	The finance department should develop periodic reports on the school board's cash position and the results of future investment activities, and share them with the board of trustees.
18.	The finance department should consider using electronic registration and payment systems for its non-grant revenues exceeding a minimum amount to be determined.
19.	The school board should expand the guideline governing the procurement of goods and services so that the vendor selection criteria include elements over and above lowest cost, such as total cost of ownership, value and quality, competitive purchasing or the use of green products.
20.	The finance department should define purchasing levels of authority that are commensurate with job title/role in its purchasing guideline. Once the purchasing levels of authority are established, the department should ensure that they are communicated to staff and develop a monitoring process for this policy.
21.	The finance department should ensure that three-way matching (purchase order, receipt/invoice and inspection) is used for all of the school board's purchases, when appropriate.

No.	Recommendation:
22.	The finance department should continue to increase its use of electronic funds transfer (EFT) payments to all appropriate suppliers, to gain greater efficiency and minimize the risk of payments being altered prior to clearing the bank.

## School Operations and Facilities Management

No.	Recommendation:
23.	The facilities department should continue its efforts to develop an annual department plan that is aligned with the school board's annual action plan, and that incorporates the department's goals and priorities as well as measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibilities. Once the plan is created, the school board should then consider submitting it to trustees at the same time as the periodic progress reports.
24.	The facilities department should go ahead with its project to update the task descriptions of its personnel.
25.	The facilities department should develop and communicate to all relevant stakeholders the official standards for cleanliness in schools, which could be used as a basis for appraising custodial staff or handling potential complaints.
26.	The facilities department should ensure a greater standardization of the procedure for the procurement of supplies in order to minimize costs and promote operating efficiency.
27.	The facilities committee should develop a multi-year energy management plan that would incorporate measures to be implemented and the tools to monitor and manage the plan. The facilities committee should also present a formal annual report to the trustees on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.
28.	The school board should share successful conservation initiatives with schools.