Ministry of Education

Operational Review Report
Grand Erie District School Board

April 2011

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Executive Summary

This report details the findings and recommendations of the Operational Review of Grand Erie District School Board (the school board or GEDSB) conducted by the Operational Review Team composed of external consultants from PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and Ministry of Education staff. The Operational Review was conducted over three days beginning December 14, 2010.

Introduction

The Ministry is in the final stages of performing Operational Reviews of the 72 district school boards across the province. 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 school board's EQAO results have shown improvement since 2002-03, however, they remain below the provincial average in all areas assessed. From an operations perspective, the review team found that the school board has adopted a number of the operational leading practices. Some of the noted strengths include bylaws and practices to support the establishment and regular maintenance of bylaws, policies and administrative procedures; documented, transparent and clearly communicated budget development process; and documented and well-managed practices for the design and construction of new facilities.

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

Governance and School Board Administration

The school board has adopted a number of leading practices in governance and school board administration, including:

- Bylaws and practices to support the establishment and regular maintenance of bylaws, policies and administrative procedures.

- Leadership development programs to promote succession and talent development.

- Formal mechanisms for communication and stakeholder engagement.

The review team noted several areas where the school board would benefit from expanding its activities.

According to the bylaw on the Role of the Board, the accountabilities of the trustees include resolving issues in a manner which respects the management authority of the school board staff and assessing and making decisions on system goals, policies, bylaws, financial budget, staffing levels and performance of the Director. The Director's Performance Appraisal bylaw identifies the role of the Director as being accountable to the Board for the management and leadership of the school board.

The Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act, Bill 177, came into force on December 15, 2009, and clarifies in legislation the roles and responsibilities of school boards, directors of education, boards of trustees and Board chairs. In September, the Director and the school board's lawyer held a caucus session to review the requirements of the Bill 177,with trustees. The Board has begun to make minor changes including developing an approved a Trustee Code of Conduct bylaw. The school board should continue to review its governance model and update it to reflect the roles and responsibilities mandated by Bill 177.

The trustees and the Director have a clear understanding of the purview of each other's roles. However, the School Board does not formally delineate the role of the Board of Trustees and the Director of Education. The Board would benefit from having a governance bylaw and/or policy that would clearly distinguish these roles in terms of responsibility for school board policy versus operations. Ensuring clarity in roles will ensure the school board is in compliance with Bill 177.

The school board developed a vision, mission and strategic goals in 2004. The strategic goals were reviewed and updated in 2008. At the time of the operational review, the school board was developing a new strategic plan in consultation with key stakeholders. The school board has an annual system excellence plan, which covers four specific focus areas: special education, staff development and training, quality accommodations and communications and community relations. The school board is encouraged to expand its current system excellence plan into an annual board-wide operating plan, by fully incorporating all academic and non-academic areas of school board operations, including human resources, financial management, and facilities management. The annual operating plan/system excellence plan should align to the Board's new multi-

year strategic plan, once it is developed. In addition to the system excellence plan, the school board also develops an annual school board improvement plan, which outlines the student achievement priorities.

The Director publishes an annual report to the community which identifies achievements and progress made over the previous year. The report highlights success stories, covers key aspects of student achievement and includes some aspects of non-academic operations. Management should also begin conducting formal annual reporting to the Board of Trustees on the school board's progress against the strategic plan and annual operating plan, once a new strategic plan is in place and a comprehensive annual operating plan is developed,

Although the school board has a clearly defined and documented organizational structure, the organizational chart is not available on the school board's public website.

The school board has developed leadership development programs to promote succession and talent development. However, a formal succession and talent development plan, in line with the Ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, has not been developed.

Recommendations:

- The school board should continue to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees and the Director of Education. The roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and documented. The school board's governance model should reflect the roles and responsibilities mandated by the *Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act*, Bill 177.

- The school board should expand its current system excellence plan to incorporate all academic and non-academic areas of school board operations. The annual operating plan/system excellence plan should align to the Board's new multi-year strategic plan, once developed, and contain goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

- Once the school board develops a new strategic plan and an annual school board-wide operating plan, management should periodically report to the board of trustees on the status and outcome of the school board's strategic plan and annual operating plan.

- Management should post the organizational chart for the school board administration, in addition to the key contacts, on the school board website.

- The school board should develop a formal leadership development and succession plan for key senior management and manager positions in all academic and non-academic areas.

Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocation

The Human Resources (HR) Services department has implemented a number of leading practices:

- The school board has established effective labour/management committees.

- HR Services management has established policies and administrative procedures for employee performance evaluation for all staff groups.

- The HR Services department has established formal disciplinary procedures, which are communicated to staff.

- The HR Services department supports the professional development of HR staff and other staff groups, where appropriate.

- The school board has implemented an employee absenteeism (attendance support) program outlined in formal policies and administrative procedures.

The review team identified a number of areas that the school board would benefit from expanding and enhancing its activities.

The HR Services department has documented departmental goals, which are used for internal planning purposes. New priorities are established in consultation with department staff, and informally communicated to management and other departments within the school board. However, the HR Services department does not have a formal department plan that aligns to the school board annual operating plan and incorporates measurable targets, indicators of success and accountabilities for projects and initiatives.

HR Services follows standard processes for recruiting and hiring, and has established internal controls within the processes. However, the recruitment processes have not been formalized in policies and administrative procedures. Although the school board takes a methodical approach to recruiting and hiring, one trustee does participate in some hiring panels for supervisory officers, principals, and vice principals. The Director should review the composition of its interview panels, and develop formal hiring policies and administrative procedures to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff. In line with Bill 177, trustees should provide strategic policies to govern staffing and recruitment. They should not sit on hiring panels, with the exception of hiring the Director of Education.

The school board has policies and administrative procedures in place which outline the attendance support / employee absenteeism program. The program has been in place for a number of years. HR Services proactively trains and encourages supervisors to follow-up with staff who have high rates of absenteeism. The school board also has a formal return-to-work and workplace accommodation program. However, the school board does not provide reports to senior management and the Board on the effectiveness of these programs. The school board has approved pay equity plans for all employee groups, with the exception of the Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) employee group.

The school board uses external benefits consultants to assist with managing and renewing benefits plans. The consultants conduct analysis of claims reports to provide annual reports of trends in benefits usage. The benefits consultants also provide support during the negotiations of benefits plans and collective agreements. The school board does not conduct periodic compliance audits of its benefits plans.

The school board ensures that eligible employees are properly enrolled in benefits plans by providing a list of changes to the carriers each month. Employee data is electronically synchronized with the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTTP) at the end of each pay period. HR Services manually synchronized information with Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) every few years.

The HR Services department does not conduct periodic confidential staff satisfaction survey or formal exit interviews to collect input and feedback from staff.

The school board follows a standard process each year for staff planning and allocation. Staffing processes and timelines are communicated to principals. However, the school board does not have formally documented policies and administrative procedures for guiding the staff planning and allocation process.

Recommendations:

- The HR Services department should enhance its planning process by developing a formal annual departmental plan which is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan and communicated to key stakeholders. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.

- The school board should establish formal recruitment policies or administrative procedures. The school board should also review its existing recruitment and hiring processes, including the composition of hiring panels, to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff in the recruitment and hiring process. Trustees should provide strategic policies to govern staffing and recruitment, but should not sit on hiring panels with the exception of hiring the Director of Education.

- Management should regularly report on the effectiveness of the attendance support / employee absenteeism program and processes to the Board, in addition to senior administration.

- Management should continue the planned process to establish pay equity plans for all staff groups, including the PSSP employee group.

- Management should periodically conduct independent compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier to ensure adherence to the benefit plans' terms and conditions.

- Management should investigate mechanisms to electronically synchronize employee data periodically between the school board and all external carriers, including OMERS.

- HR Services should conduct periodic and confidential staff surveys covering a broad range of HR-related topics, to improve communication with staff and provide input to HR Services plans and procedures.

- Management should establish a formal process to conduct exit interviews with all staff to obtain input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement.

- Management should document policies and administrative procedures that govern the development of an annual staffing plan and allocation process.

Financial Management

The Business Services department has implemented a number of the leading practices:

- The annual budget development process is documented, transparent, and clearly communicated, and incorporates input from all key stakeholders including principals, management, board of trustees and the community.

- The school board has policies and administrative procedures for school fundraising activities.

- The school board has approved policies and administrative procedures that comply with the Supply Chain Guideline.

- The school board uses EFTs for most payments.

The review team noted that the school board would benefit from expanding and enhancing its activities in several areas.

The Business Services department has documented departmental priorities, which are used for internal planning purposes. However, the department does not have a formal department plan that is communicated to stakeholders, incorporates measurable targets, indicators of success and accountabilities for projects and initiatives, and that is aligned to the school board annual operating plan

Business Services has a documented and transparent process for budget development. It is clearly communicated and incorporates input from key stakeholders. Management budgets conservatively and accounts for known budget risks as part of the development of the budget. A contingency is included in the budget to cover unexpected expenses that may occur during the year. However, management does not formally document budget risks identified at the beginning and throughout the budget cycle.

Management provides quarterly interim financial reports to the Board. The existing format for interim financial reporting has been used for several years and is well understood by trustees. Management has not reviewed the format recommended by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) with the Board.

The school board does not have an internal audit function in place. However, it has been actively participating in the Ministry's regional audit initiative, and should continue to do so. This should include working with the regional group to ensure an audit team is in place, annual audit plans are clearly documented, and that audit report recommendations are acted upon by management. At the time of the review, the Board had not established an audit committee. However, they had drafted a terms of reference and were in the process of selecting external members.

Management follows the regulations in the *Education Act* to guide investment activities. The school board has not drafted a policy or formal statement on investment activity. Investments are reviewed with the Board as part of the budget process and financial reporting. However, management does not provide formal reports to the Board on investments.

The school board tendered its banking services approximately five years ago. All bank accounts are consolidated with a single banking institution. The school board's banker offers updated rates based on those issued to other organizations. However the school board does not conduct comparisons of its banking terms and conditions to those of other school boards.

The school board has established policies and administrative procedures to guide purchasing activities within the school board, in line with the Supply Chain Guidelines. Purchasing has established controls within the purchasing process to ensure the proper procedures are followed. Accounts payable conducts a three-way match among the purchase order (PO), receipt acknowledgement and invoice for all purchases greater

than $2,500. However, under the $2500 threshold, only a two-way match between the PO and invoice is conducted before issuing payment for purchases.

Recommendations:

- The Business Services department should enhance its planning process by developing a formal annual departmental plan that is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan and communicated to key stakeholders. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.

- Management should consider enhancing the process of reporting on the school board's budget risks using the format suggested in section 4.2 of this report. A formal risk management plan/report, which is reviewed and updated periodically, would include documented strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond budgeted levels.

- Management should take into account the recommendations made by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) on the format of interim financial reporting to the Board. Management should discuss with trustees how the existing format of interim financial reports can be enhanced to align with IFRC recommendations.

- Management should continue working with the regional audit team on the development of a risk assessment to determine priority areas for internal audit activities.

- Once the regional audit team is in place, management should work with the regional audit team to document annual audit plans. Audit report recommendations should be followed up and acted upon by management. Where management chooses not to implement an audit recommendation and accepts the risks associated with an audit finding, the reasons should be clearly documented and agreed to by the audit committee.

- Management and the Board should continue recruiting external advisors on the Board's audit committee in accordance with Ministry direction.

- The school board should establish a formal investment policy and administrative procedures. Management should periodically report to the Board on the performance of the investment activity in accordance with the investment policy.

- Management should periodically conduct comparisons with other school boards' banking terms and conditions to ensure the school board banking terms are competitive.

- The school board should expand its use of a central three-way matching process for all orders before invoices are paid. Management should consider options within the existing purchasing system to automate all or some elements of the process.

School Operations and Facilities Management

The Facilities Services department has implemented a number of the leading practices:

- The department has established a formal training manual which contains cleaning standards.

- The school board uses a custodial allocation model based on workloads to ensure an equitable distribution across the school board.

- Facilities Services has implemented a facilities database system that provides facilities management support tools as well as a work orders system.

- The school board has documented formal design standards for schools in construction policies and administrative procedures.

- The school board has established policies and administrative procedures for green school construction.

The review team has identified a few areas where the school board would benefit from expanding and enhancing its activities.

The Facilities Services department prepares an annual quality accommodation plan through the Quality Accommodation Committee of the Board. However, this plan does not incorporate other priorities for the Facilities Services department. It also does not identify timelines, indicators of success and accountabilities.

Facilities Services has proactively implemented green cleaning products within the school board over the past number of years. Although the school board has made significant progress in implementing green cleaning, there are several aspects of the initiative that have not been formalized as outlined in the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide.

The school board establishes an annual maintenance and renewal plan through consultation and input from a number of sources, including input from principals and Facilities Services staff, ReCAPP data, and analysis of information from work orders. Facilities Services does not prepare a formal multi-year (three to five year) maintenance plan.

The school board has implemented a number of initiatives on energy management and energy conservation over the past number of years. The school board has not yet established a formal comprehensive energy management plan with measurable goals and targets. The department recently created a dedicated environmental and energy management supervisor position. This supervisor will be responsible for establishing an energy management plan, working with purchasing on procuring energy commodities, and budgeting and monitoring consumption. The school board has not implemented an overarching environmental policy.

The school board has a number of initiatives in place to support compliance with statutory heath requirements and promote health and wellness among employees. However, there is no documented health strategy that would address the promotion of overall health and wellness of both students and all employee groups.

The school board regularly monitors and updates accommodation data through the quality accommodation committee. The committee is responsible for identifying capital needs and recommending accommodation and boundary reviews. However, the school board has not developed formal annual or multi-year capital plans.

The school board has drafted a Facility Partnership policy and administrative procedure. At the time of the operational review, the policy had not been approved by the Board.

Recommendations:

- The Facilities Services department should enhance its annual planning activities by developing a formal annual departmental plan which is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.

- The school board should formalize the green clean initiatives in a formal green clean program aligned with the components identified in the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The program should be developed as part of an overarching environmental policy.

- Using a consultative process, management should document and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The plan should address the school board's preventative and deferred maintenance priorities, and optimize the use of available funding. The plan should be approved by the Board, communicated to school administrators and made accessible to the public.

- Using the data from energy consumption and information from the external provider, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management

plan that incorporates quantifiable measures and the tools to monitor and manage the plan. In line with the *Green Energy Act, 2009*, energy management planning should include the development of policies, guidelines, goals (conservation targets), and priorities for energy management and resource conservation. The plan should include short-term and long-term opportunities, with milestones, roles, responsibilities and budgets with a process for ensuring community support.

- Once a formal energy management plan is established, the school board should ensure that its procurement policies and administrative procedures support the objectives and targets of the plan. Management should also consider documenting the energy efficiency requirements in procurement policies and administrative procedures and/or the environmental policy.

- Once a formal energy management plan is in place, management should provide formal annual reporting on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.

- As part of the energy management planning, the school board should establish a comprehensive system to budget expenditures, track and regulate consumption, and identify opportunities for further savings.

- The school board should establish an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices, including energy conservation.

- The school board should consider establishing an integrated health plan/strategy that would reflect the existing policies and administrative procedures regarding the health of both students and employee groups and aim to promote health and wellness across the school board. Management should also consider coordinating the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan centrally.

- The school board should establish formal annual and multi-year capital plans that are approved by the Board. The plans should identify the proposed funding sources.

- The school board should finalize the Facility Partnership Policy and the administrative procedure in line with the policy.

1. Background and Overview

1.1 School Board Profile and Structure

The Grand Erie District School Board provides educational services to students in the County of Brant, City of Brantford, Haldimand County and Norfolk County. In 2009-10, 25,627 students were enrolled in 81 elementary and secondary schools. The school board's enrolment decreased by 3,636 students or 13 per cent since 2002-03. This trend is expected to continue over the next several years.

At the time of the review, the school board's senior administration was as follows:
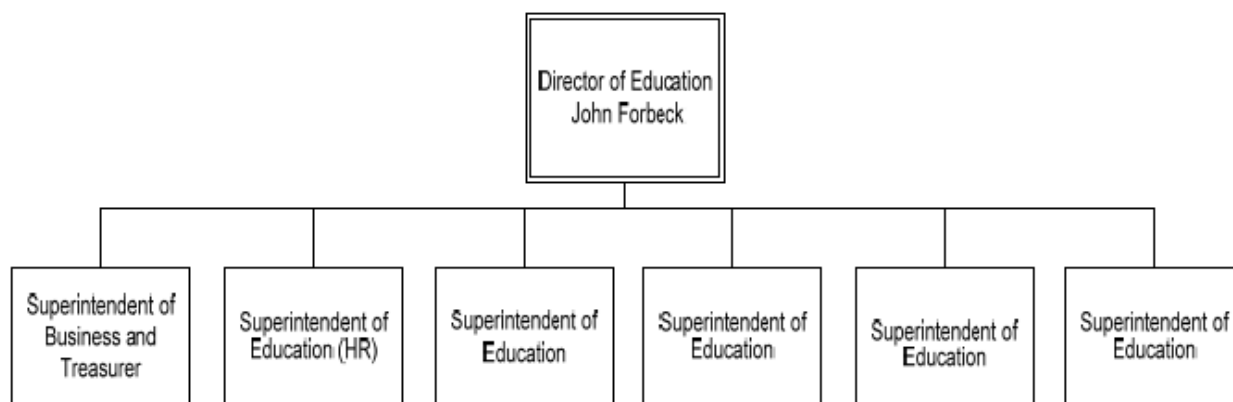
Figure 1 Grand Erie District School Board Senior Administration

1.2 Key Priorities of the School Board

The school board's current strategic goals outline the mission, vision and values for the school board as the following.

Mission: We are united in our purpose to inspire and support all our learners to reach their full potential.

Vision: We believe that our students should be considered first as the basis for decision-making.

Values: Integrity, Respect, Responsibilities and Relationships.

1.3 Student Achievement

In 2009-10, the school board's Grade 3 and Grade 6 EQAO results improved from the previous year in all subjects except math. The school board's Grade 3 and 6 results have increased since 2002-03; however, they have remained consistently below the provincial average in all areas over this period.

The results for Grade 9 academic students improved slightly relative to the previous year's results; however, there was a decline in the Grade 9 applied results. The Grade 9 academic and applied results were below the provincial average in 20092010. The results for Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test improved slightly over the previous year, but they have been consistently below the provincial average since 2002-2003.
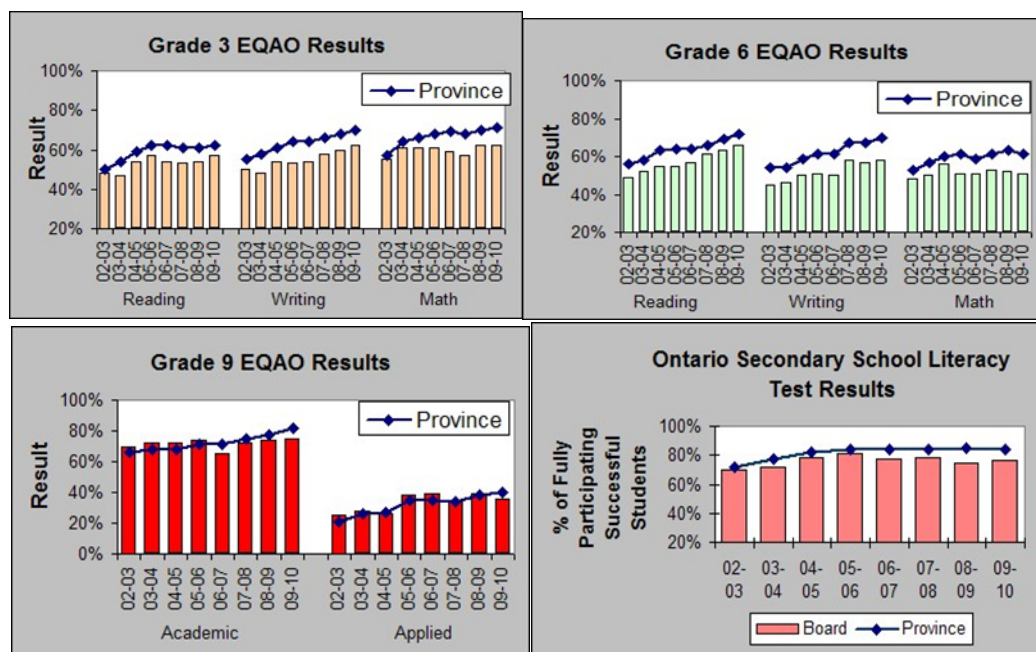
1.4 Fiscal Overview

The school board has achieved a balanced budget over the past several years. The school board's 2009-10 revised estimates indicate a balanced budget and show stable school board reserve funds.

Summary Financial Data (Revenues)

Revenues	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Financial Statements	2009-10 Revised Estimates
Legislative Grants	$170,919,516	$179,352,220	$182,384,757
Local taxation	$69,071,263	$68,600,394	$69,939,095
Board Revenues	$9,895,835	$9,575,618	$7,682,350
Other Operating & capital Grants	$3,429,200	$5,912,136	$1,686,402
Total Revenues (Schedule 9)	**$253,315,814**	**$263,440,368**	**$261,692,604**

Summary Financial Data (Expenditure)

Expenditures:	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Financial Statements	2009-10 Revised Estimates
Operating expenditures	$246,269,360	$250,601,095	$250,647,369
Capital expenditures - Before transfers from reserves	$6,731,977	$10,990,461	$8,044,856
Transfer to (from) Reserves	-$40,492	$30,945	$0
Total Expenditures	**$252,960,845**	**$261,622,501**	**$258,692,225**
In-year Surplus (Deficit)	**$354,969**	**$1,817,867**	**$3,000,379**

School Board Reserves and Deferred Revenues

School Board Reserve and Deferred Revenues:	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Financial Statements	2009-10 Revised Estimates
Reserve for Working Funds	$333,420	$333,420	$333,420
Miscellaneous	$1,153,420	$1,206,022	$1,212,881
GPL Reserve	$201,365	$194,865	$196,257
Total Reserve Funds (Schedule 5)	**$1,688,205**	**$1,734,307**	**$1,742,558**
Improved Access for Special Education Reserve	$235,856	$238,429	$239,763
Proceeds of Dispositions Reserve- School Buildings	$558,419	$1,616,674	$1,625,797
Proceeds of Dispositions Reserve- Other	$0	$179,056	$179,056
Energy Efficient School - Operating	$0	$383,213	$0
Energry Efficient School - Capital	$0	$560,002	$0
Total Deferred Revenues (Schedule5.1)	**$794,275**	**$2,977,374**	**$2,044,616**
Total Board Reserves and Deferred Revenues	**$2,482,480**	**$4,711,681**	**$3,787,174**

1.5   Key Statistics: Grand Erie District School Board

Day School Enrolment

Day School Enrolment	2002-03 Actual	2009-10 Revised Estimates
Elementary Day School ADE	18,719	16,173
Secondary Day School ADE	10,595	9,455
Total Day School Enrolment	**29,313**	**25,627**

Primary Class Size

Primary Class Size	2003-04	2009-10
% of Classes 20 or fewer	41%	92%
% of Classes 23 or fewer	70%	100%
Average Class Size - Jr/Inter	25.48	24.42
% of 3/4 Classes 23 & Under	35%	100%
% of Combined Classes	38%	45%

Staffing

Staffing	2003-04	2009-10
School Based Teachers	1683	1648
Teacher Assistants	300	322
Other Student Support	129	154
School Administration	92	100
School Clerical	138	130
School Operations	242	242
Other Non-Classroom	76	74
Total Staffing	**2,660**	**2,670**
Teacher - Pupil Ratio	**1:17**	**1:16**
FTE Staff per 1,000 Pupils (ADE)[1]	**90.7**	**104.2**
Total Salary & Benefits as % of Net Operating Expenditures	**78.9%**	**86.6%**

[1] Note: Impacted by Class Size and Special Education

Special Education

Special Education	2003-04	2009-10
Special Education Incremental Expenditures	$25,504,650	$31,388,248
Special Education Allocation	$25,604,552	$31,298,204
Spending above Allocation (Reserve)	**-$99,902**	**$90,044**

School Utilization

School Utilization	2003-04	2009-10
Number of schools	86	81
Total Enrolment (ADE)	29,313	25,627
School Capacity (Spaces)	31,150	32,924
School Utilization	**94.1%**	**77.8%**
Board Area (Km^2)	**4,108**	**4,067**
Number of Trustees	**11**	**11**

2. Governance and School Board Administration – Findings and Recommendations

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

Governance and school board administration processes are reviewed to:

- Understand how the governance model supports operational effectiveness and delineates the division of duties between the board of trustees and the administration;

- Assess the development of the multi-year and annual plans (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;

- Determine whether staffing levels and organization structures provide for clarity of roles and accountability sufficient to carry out the school board's objectives; and

- 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 school board's adoption of the leading practices relating to the governance and school board administration. Our findings are a result of our review of the data provided by the school board and our fieldwork, which included interviews with the Chair, the Director and senior staff of the school 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 and responsibilities between the board of trustees and the director of education to support an effective working relationship. The governance model reflects the roles and responsibilities mandated by the *Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act*, Bill 177.	No

Development of the Board's Strategic Direction and the Annual Operating Plan

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The board of trustees, using a consultative process, develops and communicates a multi-year strategic plan that includes both academic and operational priorities and provides a framework for annual planning.	Yes
The director of education develops an annual operating plan of the goals/priorities, incorporating both academic and nonacademic departments. The plan is aligned with the Board's multiyear strategic plan and has goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely. Staff are assigned goals for which they are accountable.	No
The director of education periodically/annually reports to the board of trustees on the status and outcomes of the board strategic plan and annual operating plan.	No

Decision-Making Processes

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
The board of trustees and the director of education have appropriate processes in place for decision making.	Yes
The board of trustees and the director of education have appropriate processes for the establishment and regular maintenance of policies and administrative procedures for the efficient and effective operation of the board.	Yes

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
A departmental organization chart (supplemented with a directory of key staff contact information) is publicly available on the board's website.	No

Succession and Talent Development

Leading Practices – Governance and School Board Administration	Evidence of Adoption?
As part of the Ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy, the director of education, with support from HR, has established a formal Succession and Talent Development Plan to build and sustain leadership capacity.	No

Stakeholder Engagement

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

Establishment of an Effective Governance Model

According to the bylaw on the Role of the Board, trustees are accountable to students, parents, the community, and the Ministry of Education for:

- resolving issues in a respectful manner which ensures fair treatment of staff and students and respects the management authority of the school board staff

- communicating and receiving input and feedback from stakeholders, encouraging appropriate community partnerships, and advocating for public education

- assessing and making decisions on system goals, policies, bylaws, financial budget, staffing levels and performance of the Director, in adherence with

regulatory requirements and ethical standards and in the best interest of students.

The Director's Performance Appraisal bylaw identifies the role of the Director as being accountable to the Board for the management and leadership of the school board. The trustees and the director have a clear understanding of the purview of each other's roles. However, the school board does not formally delineate the role of the Board of Trustees and the Director of Education. The Board would benefit from having a governance bylaw or policy to clearly distinguish these roles in terms of responsibility for school board policy versus operations. Ensuring clarity in roles will ensure the school board complies with the *Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act*, Bill 177. Bill 177 came into force on December 15, 2009, and clarifies in legislation the roles and responsibilities of school boards, directors of education, boards of trustees and Board chairs.

In September, the Director and the school board's lawyer held a trustee caucus session to review the requirements of Bill 177with trustees. The Board has begun making some minor changes to the governance model. The school board should continue to review its governance model and update it to reflect the roles and responsibilities mandated by Bill 177. The Board has an approved Trustee Code of Conduct bylaw.

The Board is currently composed of 10 publicly elected trustees, two student trustees and one appointed trustee, nominated by the Six Nations Council, to represent the interests of Native students. At the time of the review, many of the trustees had been on the Board for seven or more years.

New trustees are provided with an orientation to the Board, including information on the strategic planning process, organization of the school board, organization and operations of the Board and the bylaws, policies and administrative procedures. The Director also holds periodic trustee caucus session to discuss specific topics requested by trustees or related to student learning, as part of the Director's initiative to bring learning from the classroom to the boardroom.

The Director joined the school board four months ago. The Chair of the Board and the Director have already established a good relationship that is characterized by open lines of communication and respect for each other's role and associated responsibilities.

The Chair has several years of experience as a trustee for this school board. She has maintained positive relationships with the other trustees, and provides leadership by openly sharing and communicating with trustees. The Chair uses a collaborative approach to address Board items and issues by soliciting input and feedback from all Board members.

The Board has a bylaw that outlines the objectives and process for conducting annual performance appraisals for the director. The Board has conducted director performance evaluations for a number of years. This process was formalized to include documented director's performance plans with the arrival of the new Director. The review is led by a committee of the Board made up of the chair, vice-chair and two additional trustees. The Director provides his goals and annual learning plan prior to the new school year. An interim review is held in February and a final assessment is conducted in June based on input from all trustees. Trustees are provided with a rubric for the evaluation. Feedback on the Director's performance is also requested from principals and supervisory officers every other year. The Chair summarizes the feedback in a report that is reviewed by the trustees and issued to the Director.

The Board has not established mechanisms to formally monitor its own performance and take action to continually improve its governance process.

Development of the Board's Strategic Directions/Plan

The school board developed vision, mission and values statements and strategic priorities in 2004, which were revised in 2008. The current priority areas are:

- System Excellence

- Student Excellence

- Staff Excellence

The school board has established broadly defined objectives under each priority area. The existing strategic plan is focused on academic priorities and includes some operational priorities, such as quality accommodations (facility planning), staff leadership and development and community engagement and communications.

The school board recognizes that the current strategic plan does not provide a comprehensive framework to guide annual operational planning. Senior management and the Board have formed a committee and have established a process to develop a new strategic plan. The committee consists of the trustees, senior management, and selected principals, department managers, employee group leaders, and school council representatives. The committee has already met to review and refine the mission, vision and values. Meetings have been scheduled to identify three or four areas of emphasis or foundational pillars. Under each pillar, the committee will develop specific statements of goals for the next four years and associated measures to evaluate progress. Once a draft strategic plan has been developed, the committee plans to share it with system leaders, staff and stakeholders for input and feedback. The school board plans to have an approved strategic plan in place by April 2011 to guide annual planning activities for

the next academic year, including the development of the budget, annual operating plans, and school improvement plans.

The school board should ensure that the new strategic plan includes academic and operational priorities and provides a comprehensive framework for annual planning. The new strategic plan should identify for each priority, multi-year objectives, measurable outcomes, areas of responsibilities, and associated timelines.

Senior management prepares a system excellence operating plan each year that covers four areas of focus: special education; staff development and training; quality accommodations; and communications and community relations. The system excellence plan outlines goals under each focus area, and identifies the responsibilities, timelines and measures of progress. The system excellence plan is reviewed by senior management to ensure alignment between different areas. Senior management meets to review progress against the goals in the system excellence plan twice each year. However, the system excellence plan does not cover all academic and non-academic aspects of school board operations expected in a board-wide annual operating plan. The school board should expand its current system excellence plan to fully incorporate all academic and non-academic areas, including human resources, financial management, and facilities management. The annual operating plan/system excellence plan should align to the Board's new multiyear strategic plan, once it is developed. In addition to the system excellence plan, the school board also has a separate school board improvement plan that identifies the planned strategies to improve student achievement.

The Director publishes an annual report to the community which identifies achievements and progress made over the previous year. The report highlights success stories, covers key aspects of student achievement and includes some aspects of non-academic operations. The school board should report to the Board on the progress of the strategic plan and the annual operating plan, once a new strategic plan is in place and a comprehensive annual operating plan is developed,

Decision-Making Process

The Board's bylaws outline the decision-making processes of the Board. The bylaws cover the annual organizational meeting, agenda setting, minutes, committees of the Board and rules of procedure for Board and Committee of the Whole Board meetings. The Board meets monthly as the Board and twice monthly as Committee of the Whole Board. Each meeting includes both public and *in-camera* sessions. The Board follows Robert's Rules of Order where the existing bylaws do not cover specific issues.

The Chair's committee, consisting of the Board Chair, Board Vice-Chair, chairs for Committee of the Whole Board No.1and 2 and the Director, sets Board meeting

agendas and provides a mechanism for liaising between the Director and the Board. At the beginning of the school year, the committee develops a Board meeting schedule for the year with known items, such as bylaws and policies for review. At the Chair's committee meeting prior to each Board meeting, the Director brings forward an agenda based on items and reports from senior management for discussion with the Chair's committee. Agendas for *in-camera* sessions of the Board and Committee of the Whole Board meetings are developed by senior management the week prior to the meeting. Where required, the Chair's committee will discuss and collaboratively determine which items are being brought forward for information versus for Board approval in line with the governance model, and items that will be addressed during the *in-camera* portion of meetings.

The bylaws distinguish the terms of reference for the two monthly Committee of the Whole Board meetings. Committee of the Whole Board meeting No. 1 is focused on reviewing Board bylaws and policies and receive administrative procedures for information, whereas meeting No. 2 is used for all other Board matters requiring recommendation to the Board, including reviewing the budget, operational plans and reports from statutory, *ad hoc* and other committees. The Board elects separate chairs, different from the Board Chair, for the first and second Committee of the Whole Board monthly meetings.

The Board establishes both standing and *ad hoc* committees to provide advice. Some examples of standing committees include Parent Involvement Committee,mNative Advisory Committee, Quality Accommodations Committee and Communications/Marketing Committee. The Board also has a number of regulatory or statutory committees, such as Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (SALEP) Committee, Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), Student Discipline Committee, Accessibility Committee and Parent Involvement Committee. Each committee has documented terms of references.

The Board has a bylaw that provides the guidelines for the development of bylaws, policies and administrative procedures. The bylaw outlines the development process and the review and revision cycle for bylaws, policies and administrative procedures. The need for a new bylaw or policy is identified by the Board and written by the trustees and senior administration in consultation with stakeholders. Draft policies are posted on the school board website and emailed to principals and union leaders. The Board allows a 60-day consultation period for policies during which stakeholders and trustees can provide input and feedback. Bylaws and policies are approved by the Board and reviewed, and revised where required, on a three-year cycle. Management is responsible for developing and reviewing administrative procedures.

Administrative procedures are shared with the Board for information only. The Board Coordinator maintains a log of review dates to ensure that bylaws and policies are reviewed according to the review cycle. The next review date is also written on each bylaw and policy posted on the school board's website.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The school board's senior management is made up of a director, five superintendents of education and a superintendent of business/treasurer. This structure has been fairly stable for many years. However, the roles of the superintendents of education were changed a few months ago so that each superintendent has responsibility for a family of schools and an internal program/operations portfolio. Previously, superintendents of education were only responsible for either a larger family of schools or for an internal program/operations portfolio.

The school board's Executive Council is made up of the senior management and two principal representatives. When additional input is required, the four system principals and the service department managers may also be invited to attend meetings. The Executive Council is responsible for reviewing the Board agenda and all items going to the Board and for providing the overall leadership for the school board.

The Director and superintendents of education communicate to school principals through the Director's principals meetings and superintendent's family of schools meetings. The managers of the service departments also meet regularly as the Grand Erie Management Support Team.

An up-to-date directory of key school board staff is available on the school board's website. However, an organizational chart for the school board is not publicly available.

Succession and Talent Development

The Superintendent of Education assigned to the HR Services portfolio is also responsible for many of the succession planning and talent development initiatives for the school board. The school board offers a number of professional development programs throughout the school year, focused on developing leadership skills and building system leaders. A few of these leadership programs are specifically for teachers, vice-principals and principals interested in advancement, such as training programs for new vice-principals and principals, and system administration leadership training. There are also some programs designed for non-teaching staff, such as operations leadership training, professional growth opportunities for Facilities Services staff, and professional training for non-union school board staff. A foundational leadership training program open to all staff explores general concepts of leadership and professional growth.

The school board provides support to staff pursuing principal or superintendent qualifications. The school board also has a strong mentoring program for new principals and vice-principals.

HR Services maintains a pool of qualified principals and vice-principals. HR Services monitors the number of qualified candidates in the pool and interviews and adds new candidates to the pool twice a year. The school board tracks the anticipated number of principals and vice-principals retiring based on information provided by superintendents to ensure that the pool is sufficient to replace the retiring school system leaders.

The school board used the Ministry's leadership framework as part of developing the plan for leadership programs and creating a rubric of the skills and competency sought for leadership positions. The school board has not yet developed a formal plan for succession and talent development.

Stakeholder Engagement

The school board uses a variety of mechanisms to regularly and proactively engage stakeholders. The Board engages with diverse stakeholders through a number of standing Board committees, such as the Parent Involvement Committee and Native Advisory Committee. The Board requests stakeholder input on bylaws and policies. The Chair of each student council is given an e-mail account on the school board's system to facilitate regular communication with school councils.

The Director also has a President's Council consisting of union presidents and the Chair. This council meets every six weeks to provide the unions with an opportunity to raise issues directly with the school board that are brought back to Executive Council for review.

The Communications/Marketing Committee is responsible for generating and prioritizing strategies and ideas for communicating with stakeholders, such as requesting feedback through the website and conducting surveys. This committee consists of the Manager of Communications and Community Relations, the Director, trustees, unions and representative school board staff. The school board has a formal communications plan that outlines the specific marketing and communications priorities for the school year.

The school board communicates with the community through media releases, newspaper advertisements, school board website and school newsletters to share information and publicize events, achievements and success stories.

The members of the Executive Council actively participate in sector committees, provincial associations and ministry workgroups. Examples include: Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), Ontario Principals Council (OPC), Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO), Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association

(OPSOA), South-west region OPSOA and the provincial labour relations network. In addition, Executive Council members are actively involved in volunteer activities and sit on boards for local community organizations and institutions.

Recommendations:

- The school board should continue to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees and the Director of Education. The roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and documented. The school board's governance model should reflect the roles and responsibilities mandated by the *Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act*, Bill 177.

- The school board should expand its current system excellence plan to incorporate all academic and non-academic areas of school board operations. The annual operating plan/system excellence plan should align to the Board's new multi-year strategic plan, once developed, and contain goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

- Once the school board develops a new strategic plan and an annual school board-wide operating plan, management should periodically report to the board of trustees on the status and outcome of the school board's strategic plan and annual operating plan.

- Management should post the organizational chart for the school board administration, in addition to the key contacts, on the school board website.

- The school board should develop a formal leadership development and succession plan for key senior management and manager positions in all academic and non-academic areas.

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

Human Resources Management and School Staffing / Allocation

Organization	Human Resource Management	School Staffing / Allocation
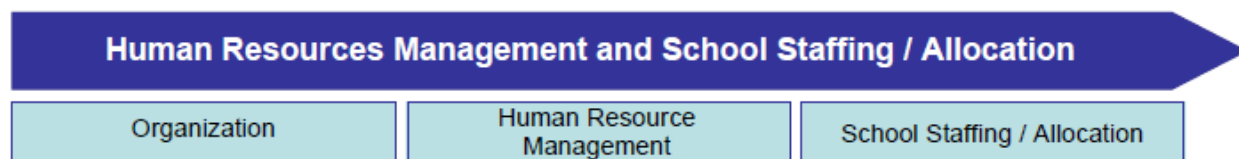
Effective management of human resources ensures an adequate number of qualified staff throughout the organization can perform their prescribed duties. Policies and procedures to develop staff are in place, through performance appraisals, professional development and support services. Staff allocations 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 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 fieldwork, which included interviews with all key HR Services 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 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 departmental 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 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 – Human Resource Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The HR department's goals and priorities are documented in an annual department plan. They are aligned to the annual board operating plan accessible by key stakeholders. The plan incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines and identified accountability.	No

Organizational Structure and Accountability

Leading Practices – Human Resource Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The HR department has clearly defined organizational units and delineates the respective roles and responsibilities. A current organization chart is available to the public.	Yes
Senior HR staff have appropriate designations (e.g., Certified Human Resource Professional) and/or experience.	Yes

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

Leading Practices – Human Resource Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
HR management has processes in place to monitor HR policy compliance by all staff and management.	Yes
HR management builds staff capacity in understanding of HR policies and administrative procedures.	Yes

Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

The HR Services department has documented annual department priorities and associated timelines. The current plan is used for internal departmental planning and includes three initiatives:

- Promote employee relations by proactively gathering feedback from staff.

- Hold workshops to maximize the value of the teacher and principal appraisal process.

- Conduct staffing pilot project to test a new approach to developing staffing model.

HR Services provides an annual report to the Board at the end of the school year. This report gives an update on the HR Services department and progress made on HR initiatives. As part of developing the report to the Board, the Superintendent of HR, in consultation with HR Services staff, develops priorities for the following year's plan. The Superintendent of HR coordinates with the other members of the Executive Council to communicate interdependencies and ensure alignment with the priorities of other services departments.

The HR Services staff have weekly department meetings to review current staff priorities. These meetings also provide an opportunity for professional development. The Superintendent of HR, Manager of HR and the three HR coordinators meet biweekly for more detailed planning sessions and to review upcoming issues and activities.

Every year, one of the HR Services departmental priorities is to proactively collect feedback from staff in a different employee group. This information is collected, summarized and reviewed by HR Services to determine how it can be addressed.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The HR Services department is led by the Superintendent of Education responsible for HR and supported by a manager. Three HR coordinators and the Health and Disability Officer report to the Manager of HR. The coordinators are organized to provide services to specific employee groups. This organizational structure was introduced a number of years ago to establish a single point of contact for employee groups for all HR matters.

The HR Services department has an up-to-date organizational chart. Contact information for key HR staff, including the Superintendent of HR, Manager of HR and coordinators, is available on the school board's website. The job duties and educational requirements for all staff positions are documented in job fact sheets. These have been evaluated using an externally purchased job evaluation tool.

The HR Services department is led by a superintendent of education (rather than a human resources professional) to bring an academic perspective and represent the HR function at Executive Council. The Manager of HR and HR coordinators hold certified human resources professional (CHRP) designations, as required by their job descriptions.

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

The HR Services department is responsible for ensuring compliance with a number of school board policies and administrative procedures, such as harassment, workplace violence, staff development, employee absenteeism, principal/viceprincipal selection process, hiring procedures, progressive discipline, and performance appraisals.

HR Services communicates new and revised policies to the system once they have been approved to increase staff awareness. This is accomplished primarily through presentations at the Director's principals meetings and family of schools meetings. Specific policies and administrative procedures are regularly reviewed at the principal's meeting held before the beginning of each school year. HR Services also periodically sends out reminders to principals about requirements for specific HR administrative procedures.

All policies and administrative procedures are posted on the school board's website. The school board is in the process of implementing a new web portal. Management noted that the new portal will provide a single source to access relevant information for school board administrators, staff, trustees, students and parents.

Recommendation:

- The HR Services department should enhance its planning process by developing a formal annual departmental plan which is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan and communicated to key stakeholders. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.

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 and hiring of the appropriate number of qualified staff to support the school board's goals;

- 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/Hiring

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Recruitment policies and administrative procedures are reviewed annually, and are aligned with staff planning to support student achievement. Trustees do not sit on hiring panels (exception: hiring the director of education) but provide policies to govern staffing and recruitment.	No
Processes are in place to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in staff recruitment, selection, hiring, mentoring, promotion and succession planning processes. The school board conducts employment system reviews and works towards broadening the diversity of recruitment pools.	Yes
The hiring policies and procedures for the respective staff groups are harmonized and shared with managers throughout the school board.	Yes

Labour Relations

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
The director of education and the board of trustees have established labour/management committees.	Yes
Trustees provide the school board's policy and priority framework within which bargaining takes place.	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.	Yes
HR management maintains and communicates formal disciplinary policies and procedures for all staff.	Yes
The HR department actively supports the professional development activities of the school board.	Yes

Attendance Support Processes/Programs

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board maintains appropriate processes and systems to monitor staff attendance on a timely basis.	Yes
The school board has an attendance support program that is documented and includes approved policies and procedures for minimizing the cost of absenteeism.	Yes
Management periodically reports on the effectiveness of attendance support processes/programs to senior management and the board.	No

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.	No

Management of School Board's Benefit Plans

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

Monitoring Staff Satisfaction

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Confidential staff satisfaction surveys are performed periodically.	No

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Confidential exit interviews are performed for all staff who resign, take early retirement or transfer.	No

Staff Recruitment/Hiring

The school board primarily recruits candidates through advertising job postings and attending job fairs at faculties of education at nearby universities. Student teachers completing practicum placements at the schools also produce a pool of potential applicants. HR Services uses *Apply to Education* to post and receive applications for teaching positions. The school board also advertises for non-teaching and non-union positions in newspapers and association journals. The school board generally receives a large number of qualified candidates for vacant positions, except in a few specialized areas.

HR Services has established controls to ensure fair and equitable hiring practices, such as ensuring that only relevant job-related criteria be used for screening, interviewing, and checking candidates' references. The Superintendent of HR noted that the school board was in the process of developing a policy and administrative procedure on equity and inclusive education in line with the Ministry's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. To support this initiative, one of the HR coordinators was conducting a review of the hiring procedures to identify opportunities to tighten guidelines and procedures to remove any possible discriminatory biases and barriers.

Principal or supervisors are responsible for leading the hiring process for most positions, including screening applicants, leading interview panels, and checking references. The school board recently developed a guide for administrators that outlines the required process for hiring school board staff. The document provides standard guidelines for applicant screening, interviewing, reference checking, and notifying candidates.

All job vacancies are advertised by HR Services at the request of the supervisor. Before posting a position, HR Services checks that there is an approved vacancy to ensure that additional staff are not hired beyond the approved staffing complement. To ensure that the hiring process is followed correctly, HR coordinators assist supervisors throughout the hiring process. The interview panel is chaired by the supervisor and may include an HR Services staff member, particularly for central school board staff. Where HR Services is not involved in the interview panel, supervisors are encouraged to consult with HR Services before making a conditional offer. In addition, once conditional offers are made, HR Services staff conduct the criminal background checks centrally prior to finalizing offers.

The hiring process for non-teaching school-based staff, such as custodians and educational assistants (EAs), is initially managed centrally by HR Services, since these positions are first offered internally to qualified staff based on seniority. If no qualified internal candidates apply, the position is posted externally and follows the same process as teaching staff positions.

The Board has a policy that details the process and criteria for hiring principals and vice-principals. HR Services maintains a pool of qualified principal and vice-principal candidates. HR Services monitors this pool and conducts an interview process once or twice each year depending upon the needs of the school board, to select new candidates to add to the pool. For the hiring of supervisory officer, principal and viceprincipal positions, one trustee sits on the interview panel. In line with the *Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act*, Bill 177, Trustees should provide strategic policies to govern staffing and recruitment but should not be directly involved in hiring panels, with the exception of the hiring of the Director of Education. As such, the Director should review the composition of its interview panels, and develop formal hiring policies and procedures to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff.

HR Services maintains a pool of qualified teachers to fill occasional teaching positions. HR continuously monitors the number of teachers in the occasional teachers (OT) pool, and receives new applications at any time. When new teachers are needed for the OT pool, applications that have been received are screened and contacted for interviews by HR Services staff. HR Services screens applicants and establishes interview teams made up of school administrators to conduct interviews and reference checks and make hiring recommendations. HR Services makes conditional offers to the successful candidates and arranges mandatory orientation sessions for new staff.

Labour Relations

The school board has established positive relationships with its union groups to effectively address labour issues. HR Services has six labour management committees in place with the respective unions for all employee groups. The labour/management committees meet approximately every 4-6 weeks to provide the unions with an opportunity to formally raise issues with HR Services. The

Superintendent of HR sits on all labour/management committees for teaching groups and clerical/technical staff. The Superintendent of Education responsible for special education leads the committees for educational assistants (EAs) and professional Student Services Personnel (PSSPs). Similarly, the Superintendent of Business and Manager of Facilities Services lead the committee for Facilities Services/Plant staff. These superintendents are part of the negotiation teams, and are responsible for managing grievances for their respective employee groups. The HR Coordinator

responsible for the specific employee group and other supervisors relevant to the employee group also sit on the labour management committees.

The Superintendent of HR maintains open lines of communication with union groups, and meets informally with the unions between labour management committee meetings to mitigate issues that arise.

In addition to the labour management committees, union leaders also sit on the President's Council, where they are provided with an opportunity to provide input and feedback to the school board.

The trustees are not directly involved in the negotiations of collective agreements. During negotiations, the Superintendent of HR provides regular progress reports to the Board, and seeks their input and overall direction to provide a framework for bargaining. The school board's lawyer serves as the chief negotiator, and is supported by negotiation teams made up of the staff who sit on the labour management committees. The Superintendent of HR provides regular reports to the Board on the status of grievances.

HR Services staff informally communicates with colleagues at other school boards to identify labour issues and prepare mitigation strategies if similar issues arise locally. The Manager of HR supports principals to manage and resolve grievances by providing guidance and scripts for holding discipline meetings with employees. HR Services uses principals' meetings to review common labour relations issues and provide guidance on how to avoid grievances.

Employee Performance Evaluation Processes

The school board has established formal performance appraisal procedures for all employee groups, except for the new early childhood educators group. The procedures identify the cycle and process for conducting performance evaluations.

The school board follows the experienced teacher performance appraisal (TPA) and New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) set by the Ministry. The school board has established a separate annual performance appraisal process for occasional teachers and teachers in long-term occasional assignments. Non-teaching employee groups are evaluated on a three-year cycle.

The school board recently implemented principal and vice-principal performance evaluations in line with Ministry guidelines. The superintendents of education are responsible for setting a five-year review cycle for conducting evaluations for principals in their family of schools. Each principal conducts the performance evaluation for the vice-principal at their school. HR Services provided training to superintendents and principals on expectations for conducting evaluations.

The Manager of HR uses a database to centrally manage the performance appraisal process, and maintains a master schedule for performance evaluations. The database is linked to a restricted staff portal on the website that provides access to the performance appraisals procedures and identifies which staff require evaluations. Management noted that the new portal will include a performance evaluation tracking module, which will replace the existing database and portal. The Manager of HR communicates the list of staff to be evaluated at the beginning of the year, collects copies of evaluations as they are completed, and follows up on uncompleted evaluations.

The Manager of HR also tracks and verifies the progress of teachers in NTIP and provides a list of completed teachers to Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) three times each year.

Supervisors are encouraged to notify HR Services when they expect a performance evaluation will result in a poor performance rating. HR Services provides support to supervisors to ensure that the evaluation and feedback process is followed correctly to minimize the risk of grievances.

The school board considers disciplinary issues as a result of behaviour distinct from performance appraisals. HR Services implemented a standard progressive discipline process approximately five years ago, in consultation with the unions. HR Services centrally tracks all cases that have required progressive discipline measures. The formal progressive discipline administrative procedure provides guidelines for the progressive discipline steps, and includes sample templates for discipline letters to employees. If the progressive discipline process is not successful in correcting behaviour and termination is being considered, the Director and the trustees are informed.

The Manager of HR has focused on educating and supporting supervisors, to ensure that behavioural issues are not ignored and that there is a consistent application of the progressive discipline steps. A module on progressive discipline is also included in the training program for new administrators. The Manager of HR has presented on this topic at principals courses, and has shared this administrative procedure as a sample for the Ontario Principals' Council.

The Superintendent of HR is also responsible for the staff and leadership development portfolio. The Superintendent is supported by a full-time staff training officer who coordinates the leadership development programs. The school board has established an annual plan that outlines the series of leadership development programs that are offered to different employee groups.

The professional development (PD) program for teachers is planned and delivered by program areas. Similarly, the Facilities Services department is responsible for providing a PD program for their staff.

One PD day is held each year for clerical/technical staff and for EAs. The required labour management PD sub-committee is responsible for organizing the content for these days. HR Services collects feedback surveys at the end of each PD day to provide input into the next training day. Most of the additional technical training is provided through on-the-job training. Management is investigating seconding an experienced school secretary for a one year period to provide one-on-one training to school secretaries across the school board.

Some training is delivered by external providers, particularly for specialized technical training, such as first aid courses. A local university also provides some of the leadership programs. The school board supports staff to attend external training courses, conferences and local association meetings relevant to their role.

Attendance Support Processes/Programs

The school board recently implemented an electronic absence reporting and automated dispatch system to track and report staff absences. The system uploads information directly into the HR system to track accumulated sick leave and vacation balances. The system has been set up with a sufficient number of absence reason codes, to distinguish different types of absences and provide useful information to HR Services. Employees or designated school staff can enter unplanned absences, such as illness, vacation, or personal days, directly into the system. Advanced notice absences, such as attending professional development, are entered by school office staff. HR Services has a separate electronic leave of absence application and approval process. The Superintendent of HR is required to electronically approve all leave requests entered by staff before they are released to the HR system.

An effective attendance support system combines policies, procedures, and information systems to record and analyze trends in absenteeism, and dedicates resources to develop a cohesive and consistent strategy. These elements, combined with employee wellness programs and return-to-work initiatives, form the basis of a comprehensive attendance support program.

The school board established an employee absenteeism (attendance support) program in 2001. The school board hired a Health and Disability Officer to develop the program structure, policy and administrative procedure. The program and documentation were developed over the course of the year, using a consultation committee which included union representatives. The program aims to reduce culpable absenteeism and provide support for non-culpable cases of absenteeism, such as illness or disability. The employee absenteeism administrative procedure identifies standard rates of expected

absenteeism based on frequency (number of absences) and severity (length of absences) and outlines the action to be taken by principals or immediate supervisors when certain absence thresholds are reached beyond the standard rate. When an employee reaches a threshold, an automated email is sent to an employee's supervisor to identify that follow-up is required. HR Services staff have been conducting training with supervisors on how to have conversations with staff around reducing absenteeism.

HR Services is piloting a new electronic absence tool for principals and supervisors that will be rolled out in 2011. The tool provides live absence data and graphs of each employee's absences related to medical appointments and illness to show any trends.

HR Services has a dedicated health and disability officer responsible for administering the return-to- work and workplace accommodation program. The Health and Disability Officer receives daily reports (generated from the employee absence tracking system) listing staff that have been absent for 10 consecutive days. The Officer, in coordination with each employee's principal or supervisor, collects the necessary information from the employee to develop an individual return-to-work plan, which outlines a return date and modified duties.

HR Services reported that they have seen some success in reducing the rate of absenteeism and in bringing staff back to work earlier from prolonged absences. HR Services annually reviews the average number of days absent for each employee group. HR Services provides the annual absence data to SBCI to conduct further analysis, compare absence rates with other SBCI clients, and identify strategies to continue to reduce absenteeism. HR Services periodically provides reports on absence rates to executive council. Management does not provide reports to the Board on the impact and effectiveness of the employee absenteeism program.

Management of HR and Payroll Data

The payroll function within the school board reports to the Superintendent of Business. HR Services is responsible for maintaining and making changes to personnel files in the HR system, including employee information, qualifications, and pay levels. The HR system runs a program nightly to capture changes to individual personnel files in separate change reports. Copies of individual reports are sent back to each employee for confirmation. Copies are also saved in personnel files and sent to payroll in paper copy to process. The HR Coordinator signs off on these reports to verify the accuracy of the changes. Payroll uses a separate electronic system. The school board had investigated implementing an electronic interface to share changes between the HR and payroll systems. However, this initiative has been put on hold while management considers a new payroll system. The school board uses an external provider to process payroll. Management noted that this arrangement is currently being reviewed by the school board. All employees are paid through direct deposit. At the beginning of each

semester and after new collective agreements are negotiated, HR provides payroll with electronic compensation reports from the HR system which are loaded into the payroll system to perform mass salary updates.

Teachers are responsible for submitting qualification ratings from the Qualification Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO) or the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) to HR Services, to request changes in category classifications and determine any retroactive pay required. New teachers' qualifications are confirmed with the Register of Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). HR Services synchronizes employee qualifications with OCT approximately twice each year.

The school board has approved pay equity plans for all union employee groups, except for the PSSP group. The school board has been working with the PSSP union group for many years to establish a plan. HR Services and the union have established a terms of reference for the structure of a steering committee, and have agreed to implement an evaluation tool for PSSP jobs later this year. Non-union staff positions are also evaluated through a separate process.

Management of the School Board's Benefit Plans

The school board uses external benefits consultants to assist with managing and renewing benefits plans. The benefits consultants analyze the claims reports from the benefit carrier and review specific types of claims to provide an annual report of trends in the usage of the school board's benefits plans. The benefits consultants also provide support negotiating benefit plan renewals and collective agreements and communicating changes in benefits coverage to employee groups. The school board does not conduct compliance audits of the benefits plans. Management should consider periodically engaging a third party to conduct compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier, to ensure adherence to the benefit plans terms and conditions. This will ensure the accuracy and validity of claims paid.

The school board ensures that eligible employees are properly enrolled by providing a list of changes to the carriers monthly, based on information submitted by new employees. Employee data is electronically synchronized with the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTTP) at the end of each pay period through a direct download from the payroll system. HR Services manually synchronizes information with Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) every few years. HR Services should investigate opportunities to electronically synchronize employee data with OMERS to allow for synchronization to occur more frequently.

The school board has processes in place to appropriately manage benefits plans. The benefits plans for dental and life insurance are managed under an administrative services only (ASO) arrangement. The benefits consultants provide a comparison of the benefits plans costs relative to other school boards as part of their annual report. The

benefits consultants also review the amount in the school board's benefits reserve funds to ensure it is sufficient to cover forecasted future benefits costs. The school board re-tendered the life insurance carrier in the last five years. Management noted that for other benefits plans, the school board has long-standing relationships with the carriers and is receiving competitive rates.

The school board has established programs to mitigate benefits costs, including a formal return-to-work and workplace accommodation program. HR Services has a dedicated Health and Disability Officer to manage WSIB claim procedures, and supports staff to return to work from extended absences. Information about WSIB claims is tracked and analyzed using a separate electronic system. The school board has a formal return-to-work and workplace accommodation administrative procedure. This procedure outlines the processes of the return–to-work program, including the responsibilities of the Health and Disability Officer and the development of individualized return-to-work plans.

HR Services consults with employee groups through a benefits committee that consists of union representatives for each employee group. This committee meets with the benefits consultants prior to the renewal of benefits plans.

Monitoring Staff Satisfaction

Last year, the communications department conducted a staff survey covering a broad range of questions about the school board. HR Services has not conducted confidential staff surveys.

The school board has periodically conducted exit interviews. However, there is no formal process in place to conduct exit interviews for all staff. Management indicated that HR Services plans to include an electronic feedback form to collect input from staff as part of the school board's new portal project.

Recommendations:

- The school board should establish formal recruitment policies or administrative procedures. The school board should also review its existing recruitment and hiring processes, including the composition of hiring panels, to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff in the recruitment and hiring process. Trustees should provide strategic policies to govern staffing and recruitment, but should not sit on hiring panels with the exception of hiring the Director of Education.

- Management should regularly report on the effectiveness of the attendance support / employee absenteeism program and processes to the Board, in addition to senior administration.

- Management should continue the planned process to establish pay equity plans for all staff groups, including the PSSP employee group.

- Management should periodically conduct independent compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier to ensure adherence to the benefit plans' terms and conditions.

- Management should investigate mechanisms to electronically synchronize employee data periodically between the school board and all external carriers, including OMERS.

- HR Services should conduct periodic and confidential staff surveys covering a broad range of HR-related topics, to improve communication with staff and provide input to HR Services plans and procedures.

- Management should establish a formal process to conduct exit interviews with all staff to obtain input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement.

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 support 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.

Processes for Annual Staff Planning and Allocation

Leading Practices – School Staffing/Allocation	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board's policies and procedures govern the development of an annual staffing plan and allocation process that reflects the priorities of the Board and Ministry initiatives.	No
The staff allocation process monitors adherence to key Ministry and board policy parameters, such as: class size, prep time, collective agreement requirements and other board directions.	Yes

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
Management periodically reports on the actual allocation of staff, compared to the original approved allocation plan and budget (FTEs 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
Management's plan for providing student support services and staffing is based on student-needs analysis.	Yes

Processes for Annual Staff Planning and Allocation

The school board follows a set process each year for staff planning and allocation. This process starts in March to meet the deadlines in the collective agreement. Staffing and allocation timelines for the elementary and secondary panels are communicated in Director's principals meeting. The school board does not have formal documented staffing procedures or processes.

HR Services works closely with school principals, the Planning Officer and Business Services department to develop the enrolment projections for the staff allocation model. Using the enrolment projections, Business Services estimates the total number of funded elementary and secondary teachers available.

The elementary staff allocation model is developed using a staffing application system. The application develops proposed allocation models by school, based on the number of teachers, enrolment projections, Ministry class size parameters, and other parameters set by the priorities of the school board, such as limitations on split grade

classes. The system-generated models are shared with school principals, who have an opportunity to review and make requested changes in the system.

The secondary staff allocation model is developed manually by HR Services, using a series of electronic spreadsheets. The allocation formula for each school is driven based on enrolment projections, the kind of credits offered (academic, applied or workplace), and a factor based on the accuracy of the principal's previous enrolment projections. This formula is also used to allocate guidance and teacher librarians. The staff allocation models and the formulas driving the allocations are communicated to principals.

Staffing committees for elementary and secondary teaching groups consist of the Superintendent of HR, a HR coordinator and union representatives. The staffing committees review the allocation models and consider the requested changes from principals. The committee puts forward the recommended staffing models to Executive Council for final approval and inclusion in the budget.

Other school-based staff, such as principals and secretaries, are allocated using formulas driven by a set rate per school and other school factors. School-based staff funded through other sources, such as tuition agreements with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, are tracked separately, but added to the allocation models.

Monitoring and Reporting on Staff Allocation

Once the teacher allocation models for each school are approved, principals assign teachers to specific positions, and identify surplus staff based on seniority. Elementary principals can assign staff directly in the staffing system. Principals identify list of vacant positions or surplus teachers. HR Services reviews the staffing plans for each school, to ensure that staff have been assigned according to the approved allocation model, and that staff seniority and all known retirements or other leaves have been included. In June, HR Services holds a job fair for surplus staff to select vacant positions according to seniority. This process is also used to assign staff to EA positions.

HR Services maintains a small number of funded teaching positions separate from the school staffing allocations. This holdback is used in September once actual student enrolment is determined. This process minimizes the extent of staff changes required in September, and helps ensure that the school board does not hire more teachers than are funded. Any additional staff beyond the approved allocation and holdback would require a recommendation from the staffing committee and approval by Executive Council and the Board.

The Board approves the staff allocation model as part of the budget review process. Management reports to the Board on the staffing allocation three times a year. The

report identifies the approved and current staff levels and provides clear explanation for any variances.

The special education team is responsible for allocating the special education resources. Executive Council sets the number of special education EA's to be allocated. The special education team consults with school principals to identify needs at each school based on specific criteria. Schools are allotted a specific number of EAs according to highest needs. EAs can be reallocated during the year to support students with greater needs.

Recommendation:

- Management should document policies and administrative procedures that govern the development of an annual staffing plan and allocation process.

4.   Financial Management – Findings and Recommendations

The financial management of the school board ensures the efficient and effective use of fiscal resources. Financial management ensures that the annual budget is developed within the Ministry's allocation and aligned with student achievement targets. It also ensures that appropriate financial policies and procedures are in place to manage resources. Financial and related business processes contribute to an appropriate level of transparency in the allocation and use of the budget to 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 and priorities for 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;

- Finance department support of the overall goals, priorities and accountability measures established by the school board;

- The efficiency and effectiveness of the departmental structure and its support of the roles and responsibilities for 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 operating plan accessible by key stakeholders. The plan incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines and identified accountability.	No

Organization 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/or experience.	Yes

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

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

Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

The Business Services department establishes an annual list of department priorities and assigned responsibilities for internal departmental planning purposes. The Manager of Business Services meets with the budget officers and the Supervisor of Business Services to establish the annual priorities for the plan. The priorities include activities that result from changes in government programs and regulations, such as the

introduction of HST, and specific projects and initiatives to streamline and improve the efficiency of the departmental activities.

Examples of departmental initiatives in the annual plan include improving the purchasing procedures, improving financial reports for schools, providing Excel training to staff, and upgrading payroll software. Over the past two years, the department has been making changes to the roles and responsibilities of different positions within the department. The annual plan has provided a useful mechanism to help drive this transition. However, the department does not have a formal plan that is aligned to an annual school board operating plan.

The Manager and two supervisors within Business Services are part of the Grand Erie Management Support Team made up of all managers and supervisors within the support services departments. This committee meets monthly following Board meetings to review items arising from the Board meeting and review progress on department goals and current priorities. This committee provides an important mechanism to ensure goals and priorities are aligned with other departments.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The Business Services department reports to the Superintendent of Business, and is led by a manager. The Manager of Business Services is supported by two supervisors, who are responsible for the accounting and purchasing functions respectively and for the support staff in these areas. The payroll staff and two budget officers also report to the Manager of Business Services. The department has an upto-date organization chart for the department that provides the lines of reporting, in addition to the key Business Services staff contacts. Over the past two years, the Manager of Business Services has made a number of changes to the roles and responsibilities of specific Business Services positions, to streamline responsibilities and establish a single point of contact for business services to schools. To support this initiative, the school board engaged external consultants to conduct a review of the department, and provide recommendations to streamline activities. The job duties and educational requirements for all management and union positions within the department are documented in job fact sheets, which have been evaluated using an external job evaluation tool.

The Superintendent of Business, the Manager and the supervisors within Business Services hold accounting designations, as required for their positions.

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

The Business Services department is responsible for ensuring compliance with Board policies and administrative procedures around budget development process, hospitality, travel, purchasing, advertising and capital fundraising, and community donations. The

policies and administrative procedures are posted on the school board's website and internal web portal.

Business Services centrally monitors compliance with certain administrative procedures, such as purchasing and PCard processes. In the event of an infraction, Business Services issues a formal letter to staff outlining the expected procedures. Depending on the degree and nature of the infraction, Business Services may also notify the superintendent of education responsible for the school.

The school board builds staff awareness of policies and administrative procedures through various mechanisms. New or revised policies are communicated by the Manager or Superintendent of Business through presentations at principals meetings. The school secretaries are provided with specific training and awareness sessions on finance-related policies and administrative procedures during PD days and through one-on-one training in the school setting. This year, Business Services also held a focused training day on financial processes and systems for new secretaries. Business Services has started conducting cross-training between department staff as part of the reorganization of roles and responsibilities within the department.

Recommendation:

- The Business Services department should enhance its planning process by developing a formal annual departmental plan that is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan and communicated to key stakeholders. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.

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 documented, transparent, clearly communicated and incorporates input from all key stakeholders including management (with principals), board of trustees and the community, and supports the school board's strategic and operational plans.	Yes
Management has adopted an integrated (at school board and school levels) approach to enrolment forecasting that drives the budget process.	Yes
Budget development processes account for all required cost and revenue changes.	Yes
Staffing costs are compared with similar school boards and the funding model to ensure efficient use of resources.	Yes

Risk Mitigation and Board Approval

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

Annual Budget Development Process

The Board has established a budget development policy, which outlines the key procedures and inputs to the budget process. In February, senior management holds two meetings with trustees to share the budget development timelines, review the previous year's budget workbook, and identify key priorities for the upcoming budget. Management also presents preliminary information and budget drivers, such as enrolment projections. The policy stipulates that the budget should align to the strategic plan, the school board improvement plan, and school board operating plans.

Preliminary enrolment projections for elementary and secondary schools are prepared in January by the Planning Officer, using the enrolment and staffing software. These projections are revised in March based on feedback from school principals. The

projections from principals are compared with historical and projected data for each school and grade to arrive at a final enrolment projection. This is used to forecast staffing costs, projected revenues, and other parts of the budget. The school board also prepares a five-year enrolment forecast. Both the current year and five-year enrolment forecast are presented to the Board with the draft budget.

Business Services staff are responsible for managing the budget development process. The budget is developed manually using electronic spreadsheets. Business Services provides each budget holder with the previous year's budget and year-to- date expenses to identify a proposed budget for the upcoming year, based on changes to the current year's budget and new initiatives. Business Services forecasts expected revenues and staffing costs.

The Executive Council conducts a detailed review of the proposed budget. This provides an opportunity to review the budget as a team and prioritize "wish list" initiatives, which are put aside until revenues are known.

Once the Grant for Student Needs (GSN) is announced by the Ministry, senior management presents the projected revenues to the board and identifies at a highlevel the changes in revenues and a proposed plan to accommodate these changes. Once revenues are known, the budget is reviewed by Executive Council to balance the forecasted expenses with the revenues by removing lower priority initiatives or performing blanket reductions across certain areas of the budget. Senior administration is responsible for presenting a preliminary balanced budget to the board based on the priorities established by the trustees.

Management compares staffing costs with the Ministry funding allocation to establish the staff allocation model. The school board will also informally compare other aspects of the budget, such as utility costs, with other school boards.

Risk Mitigation and Board Approval

The Board schedules four meeting dates for Committee of the Whole Board to review the proposed budget in detail starting in May. These meetings are open to the public. In the past, the Board conducted separate public meetings to solicit input from the community, but these are no longer held due to low attendance. The trustees usually use at least two of these four sessions to review the full budget and provide feedback. Once the committee is satisfied with the budget, it is brought forward to a Board meeting in June for approval.

Management accounts for known budget risks as part of the budget development process. Business Services takes a conservative approach to budget development. Certain parts of the budget are difficult to forecast since they may fluctuate from year to year, such as occasional teacher expenses. Management adds a contingency to cover

these types of unexpected expenses as part of the budget. The Board approves any use of reserve funds to balance the budget as part of the budget approval process.

Business Services has control mechanisms in place to control overspending. For example, staff run quarterly reports on staffing costs and purchases, and reviews purchase requests to ensure they are within allocated budgets. Management identifies variances and budget pressures in quarterly financial reports to the Board, and presents proposed balancing plans, where required. Any use of reserves during the year requires Board approval. Most reserve funds are earmarked for specific purposes.

The process of reporting on risk mitigation strategies varies significantly among school boards. Managers should consider implementing an enhanced process that would include formal documentation of the following elements.

At the beginning of the budget cycle:

- Identification of significant expenditures not explicitly included in the budget, but that may arise due to unforeseen circumstances.

- Assessment of the probability of occurrence for each budget risk, as well as quantification of the impact to the budget should the risk materialize.

- Proposed mitigation strategies to minimize the probability of occurrence for each risk, as well as contingency measures that management will undertake should the risk materialize.

Throughout the budget cycle:

- Periodic reporting of material budget variances that may negatively impact the financial outcome of the school board - this may be communicated through the interim financial reports.

- An update on the probability of occurrence, quantification and impact of each of budget risk identified formally at the beginning of the budget cycle.

- Any new budget risks not previously identified.

The level of detail of the budget risk mitigation plan will depend on the preferences of management and the trustees. At a minimum, it should include a summary outlining the above elements in table format. The documentation of such information on a periodic and ongoing basis would give reviewers a better understanding of the school board's budget risks.

Recommendation:

- Management should consider enhancing the process of reporting on the school board's budget risks using the format suggested in section 4.2 of this report. A formal risk management plan/report, which is reviewed and updated periodically, would include documented strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond budgeted levels.

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 receive timely, accurate and complete financial information of all school board activities;

- Identify opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiencies 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 and Annual Financial Reporting

Leading Practices – Financial Reporting and Analysis	Evidence of Adoption?
Interim financial reports provide sufficient detail (including a comparison of actual to budget and year-to-date comparisons from previous years) 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

Leading Practices – Financial Reporting and Analysis	Evidence of Adoption?
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.	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 for general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, and asset management. The system provides adequate, up-to-date and accurate information for management, the Board and staff. One of the budget officers within Business Services is responsible for setting up new account codes in the general ledger and assigning them to specific budget holders. Separate cost centres are set up for schools, departments and specific initiatives, such as grants through Education Programs Other (EPO). All budget holders have access to the system to view current information for their budget accounts.

Interim and Annual Financial Reporting

The current format for quarterly financial reporting to the Board has been in place for approximately five years and is well-understood by trustees. The financial reports provide a consistent summary of budgeted and actual revenues and expenditures and identify variances. Senior management explains the drivers behind specific variances, along with cost reduction strategies when the interim financial reports are presented to the Board. Senior management also provides two additional reports to the Board three times a year. One report provides actual enrolment figures and the other is a comparison of approved and actual staffing costs. Management has not reviewed the interim financial reporting format developed by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee with trustees.

The IFRC has developed recommended guidelines for the timing, format, and content of school board interim financial reporting. These guidelines are intended to serve as a consistent reporting format, to provide meaningful financial updates and forecasts in a concise, understandable document for trustees. Management should review and consider the development of the interim reporting format recommended by IFRC.

In particular, management should consider the following recommendations related to the content and presentation aspects of interim financial reports:

- IFRC Recommendations for the Summary Dashboard.

- A table summarizing enrolment that compares budget to forecast.

- A table summarizing staffing that compares budget to actual.

- Graphic presentations of changes in enrolment and staffing

- Notes summarizing key highlights of changes in financial results, enrolment and staffing and any risk matters that will affect the school board's forecast results.

- An assessment of the budget risk, which is a comparison of budget (estimates) versus forecast with explanation of significant changes or variances (dollar/percentage) that have occurred since the original budget was prepared.

- While IFRC recognized that the lines or category breakdown of the schedules should be those which best meet the needs of the audience, it recommended following Schedule 10/Data Form D for expenditures and Section 1/Data Form B/D for revenues.

- To minimize the workload demands on school board staff, the Committee recommended that the reporting dates of the interim financial reports align with the reporting dates of existing Ministry reports.

All financial reports that are received by the Board, including interim financial reports, are first provided to Executive Council to review, with a formal submission cover letter from the Superintendent of Business.

Budget holders are held accountable for spending within their budget allocations. Budget holders have access to up-to-date financial reports for their budget area through the financial system. School principals are responsible for their school budget allocations. Any surpluses (to a maximum of 10%) or deficits in school budgets are carried forward to the following year. Since facilities costs are a significant component of non-staffing expenditures, the Business Services Supervisor meets with Facilities

Services on a regular basis to review the budget and discuss areas of potential budget pressure.

Management noted that the school board is successful in meeting Ministry timelines for financial reporting.

Audit

The school board is taking part in the regional internal audit model. At the time of the operational review, the regional group led by Thames Valley District School Board was still in the process of hiring the regional audit team. However, the group was planning to begin the process by engaging external consultants to conduct risk assessments and establish priority areas for internal audit activities.

The Board has not yet established an independent audit committee. It plans to implement an audit committee that will meet three times a year and consist of three trustees and two external members. The duties of the audit committee will include oversight of the financial reporting process, internal control framework, risk management practices, and performance and function of the school board's internal and external auditors. At the time of the operational review, the Board was in the process of selecting external members and formalizing a terms of reference for the committee. Once committee members are in place, the Board plans to provide formal training to clarify roles and responsibilities.

The Audit Committee Regulation came into effect in September 2010 and requires the establishment of audit committees in school boards by January 31, 2011, following the fall trustee elections. The regulation sets out the following major aspects:

- Appointment process for members

- Requirement for external member participation

- Term of appointment

- Duties and powers of the committee

- Reporting requirements

- Deadline for the first audit committee meeting (March 31, 2011).

The school board's external auditors provide annual audit plans to school board management at the beginning of the audit process, and present annual reports to the Board following annual audits. The Board has an opportunity to meet *in-camera* with the auditor to address specific concerns. However, management noted that the Board has

not requested these meetings. The school board has a long-standing relationship with the external auditors. The external auditors provide management letters, which senior management shares with the Board.

Recommendations:

- Management should take into account the recommendations made by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) on the format of interim financial reporting to the Board. Management should discuss with trustees how the existing format of interim financial reports can be enhanced to align with IFRC recommendations.

- Management should continue working with the regional audit team on the development of a risk assessment to determine priority areas for internal audit activities.

- Once the regional audit team is in place, management should work with the regional audit team to document annual audit plans. Audit report recommendations should be followed up and acted upon by management. Where management chooses not to implement an audit recommendation and accepts the risks associated with an audit finding, the reasons should be clearly documented and agreed to by the audit committee.

- Management and the Board should continue recruiting external advisors on the Board's audit committee in accordance with Ministry direction.

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 board;

- 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?
Existence of an efficient cash management process to maximize interest income, using short-term investments where appropriate and to ensure that the board's debt service costs can be met to maturity.	Yes
Cash management activities are consolidated with a single financial institution where feasible.	Yes
Management periodically reports to the board on the performance of the investment activity and any board-approved investment policy.	No
Management periodically compares the school board's banking terms and conditions to those of similar school boards.	No
Management monitors financial risk related to cash/investment management and has a plan to mitigate associated risks.	Yes

Cash and Investment Management

The school board only has a small amount of idle cash which is kept in the main bank account. The Manager of Business Services maintains an electronic spreadsheet to track cash flow projections. This spreadsheet is prepared at the beginning of the year and updated and adjusted throughout the year once actual amounts are known.

Bank reconciliations are performed by a budget officer who is not involved with accounts payable or cheque deposits, to ensure proper segregation of duties. The Manager of Business Services is responsible for approving bank reconciliations. Business Services has worked with vendors to implement electronic funds transfer (EFT) where possible, to reduce the number of cheques issued. Cheques are created electronically by the accounts payable system. The designated printer and program used to print cheques is password protected. Blank cheque forms are stored in the vault until needed for a cheque run. When printed, the cheques include electronic signatures of the Superintendent of Business and Board Chair. The Superintendent of Business approves all cheques over $25,000 and is provided with an accompanying report that lists all cheques and EFT payments over $25,000 for review. The Board reviews monthly reports of all transactions.

The Manager of Business Services periodically checks the bank accounts balances online to monitor for fraudulent activity. Wire transfers require authorizations from one of two signatories for the school board. Signed copies of contracts are kept in paper and electronic copies in the school board office. The office has a safe to keep documents safe from physical damage and theft.

The school board has all bank accounts consolidated with a single banking institution. These accounts include a general operating account, line of credit account, U.S. dollars account, various trust fund accounts, and an account used for pre-payment of utilities. Schools establish their own banking relationships, as it is not always feasible to use the school board's banker. The school board tendered its banking services approximately five years ago. The school board does not conduct comparisons of its banking terms and conditions to those of other school boards. However, the school board's banker offers updated rates based on those issued to other organizations.

The school board only has a small amount of investment activity. The school board follows the regulations in the Education Act regarding investment activity. However, there is no policy or formal statement on investing. Investments are reported to the Board as part of the budget and audited financial statements.

Recommendations:

- The school board should establish a formal investment policy and administrative procedures. Management should periodically report to the Board on the performance of the investment activity in accordance with the investment policy.

- Management should periodically conduct comparisons with other school boards' banking terms and conditions to ensure the school board banking terms are competitive.

4.5   School-Based Funds and Non-Grant Revenue Management

The purpose of reviewing school-based funds and 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 school-based funds and 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.

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 school-based funds and 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.

Management of School-Based Funds

Leading Practices – School-Based Funds and Non-Grant Revenue Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management ensures adequate controls are in place to safeguard school-based funds and coordinate the annual reporting of revenues and expenditures from schools and school councils.	Yes

Management of Non-Grant Revenuez

Leading Practices – School-Based Funds and Non-Grant Revenue Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management ensures adequate controls are in place to safeguard non-grant revenue and coordinate the annual reporting of revenues and expenditures from all sources.	Yes
Board budget identifies revenue for each EPO program. Management monitors expenditures to ensure compliance with terms and conditions.	Yes

Management of School-Based Funds

The Board has policies and administrative procedures related to school fundraising activities. The policy requires that all fundraising is approved by the school principal and managed through the web-based school banking software. The school accounts follow a set structure and are segregated by different activities and initiatives. Business Services has been working with school councils to encourage them to consolidate to a single bank account.

Fundraising activities can include fundraising for capital equipment, such as playground equipment or information technology. All purchases made through fundraising initiatives are required to comply with the school board's purchasing policies and administrative procedures and require approval from the facilities or IT department, as appropriate. Capital purchases over $25,000 require Board approval.

Funds are generally collected by classroom teachers or office secretaries. Business Services requires that two individuals count and sign off on collected funds. Schools are required to store collected funds in a locked space and are expected to deposits funds in a timely manner. Business Services staff provide training to new principals and support to schools to help plan and manage fundraising initiatives. Schools are

encouraged to prepare written documentation of fundraising initiatives to ensure that funds are used for their intended purpose. Principals are required to provide reports to school councils outlining the revenues and expenditures for fundraising activities.

Business Services staff monitor the timeliness of cash deposits and review compliance to policies and administrative procedures through school audit reviews. The budget officers conduct reviews of schools on a four year cycle, to assess the accuracy of enrolment numbers and check compliance to policies and administrative procedures for school banking and school based funds. Business Services prepares a report at the end of each review and conducts a follow-up review if significant issues are identified.

Management of Non-Grant Revenue

The key sources of non-grant revenue for the school board include tuition fees, revenue from long-term leases, recovery of costs from shared use building, fees for community use of schools, continuing education fees, and government funding for language programs.

Business Services forecasts these revenues as part of the budget development process. The school board runs a continuing education program offering both credit and general interest courses to students and the community. The rental agreements for long-term leases are established on a cost-recovery basis, using the Ministry benchmark costs per square foot.

The Facilities Department has two part-time program coordinators that share responsibility for managing the community use of schools program, rental agreements, and community outreach. The school board has a Use of School Facilities policy, which outlines the fee structure and terms of use. The community use of schools program is managed through an electronic system, which ties into the facilities database system, and tracks available space in schools. The development and costs for the web-based system were shared with the coterminous school board. This web-based system receives applications and payments from users. The system provides notifications to Facilities Services of the requirements for custodial services to support after-hours use of facilities. The school board has also set up access cards for users to access buildings after hours to reduce the need for staff to be on site.

The school board has established a centralized process for administering EPO grants. All EPO funding announcements and contracts are funnelled to the director's administrative assistant, and then provided to the Budget Officer to track in an electronic spreadsheet. Each EPO grant is assigned to a specific individual to plan and manage how the funding is used. Once EPO contract are signed, the Budget Officer sets up a new account code to track costs associated with the initiative. Business Services works with each grant owner to ensure that costs are appropriately tracked and Ministry reporting deadlines are met. Business Services cross-references the professional

development activities and the attendance tracking system to ensure that all occasional teaching costs to release teachers to attend sessions are charged to the relevant EPO grant account code. Management includes updates on EPO grants as part of quarterly reporting to the Board.

4.6 Supply Chain/Procurement

The purpose of reviewing supply chain/procurement processes is to assess:

- Whether supply chain/procurement policies and practices comply with the Supply Chain Guideline v.1.0 to ensure that the school board acquires goods and services through an open, fair and transparent process;

- Whether appropriate internal controls support the procurement and related payment process;

- Whether school board processes ensure 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 supply chain/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.

Policies and Procedures

Leading Practices – Supply Chain/Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Approved procurement policies and procedures are clearly communicated to staff with purchasing authority and are periodically reviewed and updated.	Yes
In line with the SCG, approved procurement policies clearly outline circumstances under which the school board will use competitive versus non-competitive procurement methods.	Yes
Contract award criteria include elements other than the lowest cost, such as total cost of ownership, value, quality, vendor performance, etc.	Yes
Purchasing managers monitor purchasing activities for compliance with the Board's procurement policies and procedures, and the SCG.	Yes

Participation in Group Purchasing Initiatives

Leading Practices – Supply Chain/Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Management evaluate and develop strategies to increase purchasing power and minimize the cost of goods and services procured.	Yes
The school board actively participates in purchasing consortia/cooperatives and/or group buying initiatives.	Yes

Purchasing Levels of Authority

Leading Practices – Supply Chain/Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
In line with the SCG, purchasing authorization levels are commensurate to job roles and responsibilities, and are monitored for compliance by a supervisor or department head.	Yes

Policies and Procedures for PCard/Corporate Card Use

Leading Practices – Supply Chain/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 – Supply Chain/Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board's finance department performs three-way matching (purchase order, receipt/invoice and inspection) before invoices are paid.	No
Commitment accounting is in place to monitor budget utilization.	Yes
Management has implemented electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing and payment.	Yes

Use of Electronic Funds Transfer

Leading Practices – Supply Chain/Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Management maximizes its use of electronic funds transfer (EFT) for vendor payments.	Yes

Policies and Procedures

The purchasing department reports to the Manager of Business Services and consists of a supervisor of purchasing, supported by one buyer and the equivalent of 2.5 full-time purchasing clerks.

The school board updated the purchasing policies and administrative procedures in March 2010 to comply with the requirements of the BPS Supply Chain Secretariat's Supply Chain Guideline (SCG) 1.0. A code of ethics was included in the purchasing policy in line with the SCG. The school board has posted the updated purchasing policies and administrative procedures on its website. To ensure that staff with purchasing authority are familiar with the new policies and administrative procedures, Business Services sent the updated policies and administrative procedures to school and central office administrators and encouraged them to review the revised process with their staff. Business Services also met with principals, facilities and IT to review the changes to the purchasing process, since these budget holders conduct a large volume of procurements.

The school board has separate administrative procedures for travel and expense reimbursement and the procurement card program. The trustees have a separate bylaw for trustee expense reimbursements that documents the expenses that can be claims and the reimbursement process.

The current purchasing administrative procedures outline the process for purchases valued within certain thresholds:

- Purchases less than $2,500 do not require multiple quotes

- Purchases between $2,501 and $10,000 require a minimum of 3 verbal or informal quotes

- Purchases between $10,001 and $25,000 require a minimum of three formal written quotes

- Purchases between $25,001 and $100,000 require an invitation to tender posted on the school board website

- Purchases over $100,000 require an open competitive tender process.

Purchasing noted that they are in the process of developing standard templates for tender documents and contracts. The purchasing administrative procedures provide a detailed list of the information that must be included in the tender notices. The school board posts tender notices on *Biddingo*. The tender documents identify the evaluation factors and weighting that will be used to assess proposals. The purchasing administrative procedure outlines certain exceptional circumstances where sole sourcing or single sourcing is acceptable, including instances where it is not possible or practical to receive multiple quotes or in the event of an emergency.

All purchasing is centralized through the purchasing department, except purchases made on PCards or with petty cash. Requisitions and supporting documentation are submitted to purchasing to review before a purchase order is released to a vendor. This provides a control mechanism for purchasing to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures. Approved PCard and expense reimbursements are also reviewed and processed centrally by Business Services to ensure that they are compliant with policies and administrative procedures.

Participation in Group Purchasing Initiatives

The school board is a member of the Grand River Purchasing Cooperative, a buying group consisting of public sector organizations in Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk Counties. The cooperative group jointly purchases a number of goods and services, including office and paper supplies, art supplies, courier services, toner cartridges and lamps and bulbs. The group meets quarterly to review new opportunities. The school board has reviewed the contracts available through Ontario Education Collaborative Marketplace (OECM) and has signed on to participate in the contracts for office suppliers and paper.

The Purchasing Supervisor shares information and actively engages with other school board purchasing specialists across the province, through the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO). The school board also looks for informal opportunities to collaborate with other school boards on specific purchases.

Purchasing Levels of Authority

The school board's purchasing administrative procedure outlines the segregation of purchasing duties and purchasing levels of authorization for the school board. Purchasing has been segregated such that:

- The person requiring the goods or services completes the requisition and receives the goods or services

- The budget holder authorizes that funds can be used

- Purchasing commits the organization under the terms of the contract with the vendor

- Accounts payable authorizes the release of payment to the vendor.

The Board has delegated purchasing authorities to school board staff as follows:

- Up to $15,000: Principals, administrative leaders and Purchasing Buyer

- Up to $50,000: Managers and Supervisor of Purchasing

- Up to $100,000: Manager of Facilities Services

- Up to $250,000 for goods and services and $500,000 for facility-related contracts: Director and Superintendent of Business

- Over 250,000 or $500,000 for facility-related contracts: Requires Board approval.

The Board has established higher purchasing level of authority for Facilities Services due to the large volume of purchases. The school board's purchasing module does not include electronic functionality for approval workflow. Purchasing is responsible for reviewing requisitions and ensuring that the appropriate level of authorization has been received to approve the value of the procurement. Immediate supervisors are responsible for approving expense reimbursements for their staff.

Policies and Procedures for PCard/Corporate Card Use

The school board has a purchasing card program administrative procedure and user manual that outline the process and expectations for using purchasing cards (PCards). The school board has approximately 400 cards issued to staff across the system. Cardholders include superintendents, managers, principals, maintenance and custodial staff, IT, curriculum staff, school secretaries, and secondary school department heads. Most cards have a set monthly limit of $1500 and a $450 limit for a single transaction.

Cards are set up to block purchases for certain type of commodities including hotels, transportation, cash advances, or purchases from the LCBO or The Beer Store. The administrative procedure outlines other restrictions that are not explicitly blocked, such as purchases of capital equipment, furniture, cell phones or gift certificates. PCard expense claims follow a similar process to other expense reimbursements, where the immediate supervisor is responsible for reviewing and approving expenses.

Business Services monitors PCard expenses and conducts spot audits. Business Services staff follow-up on instances of non-compliance and will revoke PCards for

cardholders that do not comply with the procedures or do not submit expense claims on time. The process for reconciling PCard purchases and recording purchases to the general ledger is currently fully manual. However, Business Services plans to implement an online system later this year.

Accounting for Completeness of Purchase/Payment Cycle

Requisitions are submitted by staff in the purchasing module of the financial system. Purchasing reviews each requisition and the supporting documentation to ensure that the appropriate procurement method was followed and the necessary authorization was received, based on the value of the purchase. In an effort to reduce the number of low dollar value purchases, purchasing will only process requests for purchase orders over $50 and encourages staff to use PCards for purchases within the PCard transaction limit. Electronic purchase orders (POs) are created in the purchasing system. The Purchasing department issues three copies of the PO. One copy is electronically faxed to the vendor, one is emailed to the school or department for their records and one copy is printed and sent to accounts payable.

Goods are delivered to the school or department and invoices are sent directly to accounts payable. Accounts payable matches the invoices to the PO received from purchasing. For purchases over $2,500, accounts payable also requires an acknowledgement of receipt to match against the PO and invoice before releasing payment to the vendor. The school or department that receives the goods is responsible for sending either a signed packing slip or an email acknowledging receipt for the full amount of the PO. The school board should conduct analysis to consider reducing the $2,500 threshold for three-way matching to cover more purchase orders. The school board should investigate options to automate aspects of the three-way match process to support reducing the threshold.

The school board uses the commitment accounting functionality in the financial system to help monitor budget utilization. A purchase is encumbered on the system when the PO is released to provide budget holders with accurate information on the amount that has been spent or committed. The system will provide a warning to the budget holder and to purchasing if there are insufficient funds in the budget line to cover the cost of the requisition. Purchasing will review requisitions that have been flagged to ensure that the budget holder has funds available in other budget lines within the group of accounts to cover the costs.

The school board uses an online supplier catalogue for office supplies, where staff can purchase directly in the online system. Accounts payable electronically uploads the expenses from the supplier's system directly into the school board's financial system.

Use of Electronic Funds Transfer for Greater Efficiency

The school board has worked with its vendors to implement EFT where possible. Purchasing includes as an expectation in all procurement documents that vendors will be paid through EFT.

Recommendation:

- The school board should expand its use of a central three-way matching process for all orders before invoices are paid. Management should consider options within the existing purchasing system to automate all or some elements of the process.

5. School Operations and Facilities Management – Findings and Recommendations

School Operations and Facilities Management

Organization	Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Energy Management
Health, Safety and Security	Capital Plans, Policies and Procedures	Capital Project Delivery
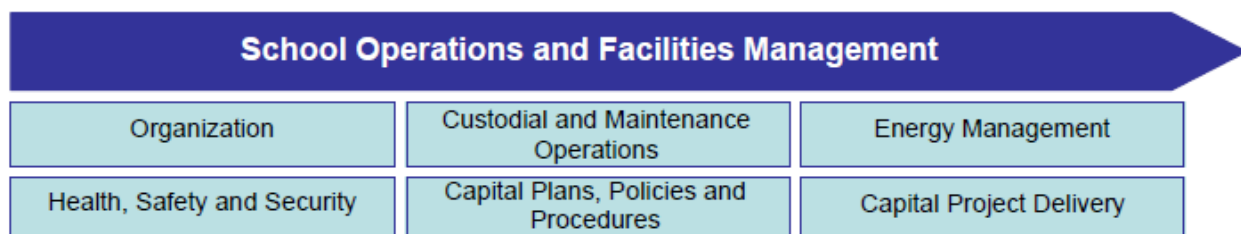
Efficient and effective management of the school board's facilities (particularly schools) is an important factor in student achievement. Along with providing a positive learning environment for students, this function sets and meets standards of cleanliness and maintenance, examines opportunities to increase energy efficiency, and addresses the health, safety and security requirements of the school board. Management use 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 fieldwork, 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 reviewingthe 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 School Operations and Facilities Management department's goals and priorities are documented in an annual department plan. They are aligned to the annual board operating plan 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 School Operations and Facilities department has clearly defined organizational units and delineates the respective roles and responsibilities. A current organization chart is available.	Yes
Senior operations and facilities staff have appropriate designations (e.g. P.Eng.) and qualifications and/or experience.	Yes

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

Leading Practices – Operations and Facilities Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
Management has processes in place to monitor school operations and facilities management policy compliance by all staff and management.	Yes
Management builds staff capacity in understanding of school operations and facilities policies and administrative procedures.	Yes
Processes exist to monitor new legislation and regulations and implement necessary changes.	Yes

Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Quality accommodations is the focus of one of the operating plans within the school board's annual system excellence plan. The annual plan is established by the Quality Accommodations Committee of the Board. This committee consists of two trustees, the

Director, the Superintendent of Business, key Facilities Services staff and representative academic staff. The terms of reference for the committee are outlined in the Committees of the Board bylaw. The committee meets twice a year at a minimum to review enrolment and demographic projections, identify capital needs and develop accommodation strategies. The committee puts forward recommendations to the Board to conduct accommodation and boundary reviews. The committee meeting minutes, accommodation data and plans are also shared with the Board. The annual quality accommodation plan is used as an input to develop specific capital renewal projects. Since the plan is focused on accommodations, it does not provide annual priorities for all aspects of the Facilities Services department.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

At the time of the review, the Facilities Services department was updating the department's organizational structure. Management conducted a review of the Facilities Services structure and has formally established a new structure, which has been shared with the union and staff. The department is currently in the process of updating the formal job descriptions to align to the new organizational structure.

The department is led by a manager who reports to the Superintendent of Business. The Manager of Facilities Services is supported by three divisional managers, who are respectively responsible for custodial operations; maintenance and energy; and construction and renewal functions. Departmental supervisors and staff are organized under each of the divisional managers. A few new positions were created in the new organization structure, including a preventative maintenance position, an energy and environmental conservation supervisor and a shared evening operations team leader position. The other key change to the structure is that existing custodial and maintenance staff are reorganized according to the services provided rather than by geographic regions.

The Manager of Facilities Services holds a professional engineering designation as required by his position. The department also requires that divisional managers hold at a minimum a three-year technology certificate in a relevant field.

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

The Facilities Services department is responsible for ensuring compliance with school board policies and administrative procedures, including those related to construction projects, use of school facilities, pupil accommodation reviews, facility partnerships, health and safety, and building security.

Facilities Services uses a number of mechanisms to build staff and management awareness of policies and administrative procedures. Copies of new or revised policies are sent to all school board sites and presented in monthly principals meetings.

Facilities Services sends memos to be posted in each facility, which provide guidance to Facilities Services staff on specific processes. Facilities Services provides awareness training to department staff on specific procedures, such as water management protocols. The department maintains logs and checklists to track compliance with mandatory testing and inspections.

The Manager of Facilities Services is responsible for monitoring and addressing changes in various regulations that impact Facilities Services, such as building code regulations and water testing. The department informally is kept aware of changes from colleagues at other school boards through participation in provincial committees.

Recommendation:

- The Facilities Services department should enhance its annual planning activities by developing a formal annual departmental plan which is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.

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 maintain an optimized learning environment;

- Whether the department has the appropriate organizational structure to effectively manage service delivery;

- Whether internal controls 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 Cleaning Standards and Maintenance Requirements

Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board has adopted cleaning standards for schools and has developed a standard set of processes and tools to monitor, manage, and report on results. The school board has developed a guideline/manual for custodial and maintenance services to support these cleaning standards.	Yes
The school board has implemented a formal green clean program as part of its overarching Education Environmental Policy. The green clean program incorporates principles from the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide.	No
Management's custodial/maintenance allocation model optimizes the use of staff and considers various factors (e.g. square footage, portables, gyms, etc).	Yes

Development of Annual/Multi-Year Maintenance Plan

Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Evidence of Adoption?
Using a consultative process, senior administration develops and communicates a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The Plan addresses the board's preventative and deferred maintenance priorities, optimizes the use of available funding (Annual Renewal Grant and Good Places to Learn funding). The plan is approved by the Board and accessible by the public.	No

Training to Support Skills Development and Safety

Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Evidence of Adoption?
A monitored annual training plan for facilities staff addresses ongoing skill development and emerging regulatory issues.	Yes

Standardization of Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies

Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Evidence of Adoption?
Management uses an inventory system to track and control major cleaning and maintenance equipment.	Yes

Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Evidence of Adoption?
Management has defined common standards to ensure efficient procurement of supplies in order to minimize costs, promote energy and operating efficiency, and environmental sustainability.	Yes

Project Management, Monitoring and Support Systems

Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Evidence of Adoption?
An automated (computerized) work-order system and process records, monitors, and evaluates projects ensuring the effective use of resources.	Yes
Senior administration regularly evaluates the overall effectiveness and efficiency of its maintenance and custodial service delivery model.	Yes

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

Facilities Services has a documented training manual for custodial operations staff, which outlines responsibilities, expectations, and formal cleaning standards. The cleaning standards include cleaning methods and techniques for different areas of the school, and expected cleaning frequencies. The operations supervisors conduct site inspections with the supervising custodian for the school every couple of months. Any issues that arise from inspections are followed up with staff. Site inspections are conducted using a standard paper form. Management is working with the developer of the existing facilities database system to develop an application for tracking and conducting site inspections electronically. The principal is the first point of contact for any complaints from staff or the school community about the cleanliness of the school. A log book is kept in each school office and is used to communicate issues to custodians.

The custodial allocation model is based on evenly distributing workloads across schools. This approach is supported by the unions and has been in place for a number of years. Management established standard times to complete different cleaning tasks, by adjusting ISSA industry standards to fit the school board context using time studies. Facilities Services uses electronic spreadsheets to allocate custodial staff across schools and provides detailed cleaning schedules and maps for each custodial position at each school. The allocation and workload distribution is monitored and adjusted to maintain an equitable distribution of work effort across the school board.

The school board has successfully implemented green cleaning products, equipment, and cleaning practices across the school board over the past number of years.

However, a formal green clean program has not been developed and documented. Almost all cleaning products and equipment are now green, with the exception of a few products where Facilities Services has not been able to find a suitable green alternative. The school board has an accident prevention, products and methods committee made up of interested staff to review new products and establish the standard products and equipment that will be used across the system. New green products and equipment are first piloted in a small number of schools to assess their effectiveness before they are rolled out to all schools.

Although the school board has made significant progress in implementing green cleaning, there are several aspects of the initiative that are yet to be formalized in line with the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The Guide recommends a 10-step Green Clean Implementation Plan. In particular, management should consider the following:

- Development of tools to support implementation – a Green Clean Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual should set out the school board's expectations for green clean operational procedures in schools.

- Communications strategy – a communication strategy will help educate stakeholders (building occupants, custodians, vendors) on the benefits of the program and their role in supporting the program.

- Measuring and monitoring progress – over the first year of implementation, a review of the initiative should be conducted every three to six months. After the first year, a review should be conducted on an annual basis.

Development of Annual and Multi-Year Maintenance Plan

Facilities Services uses a number of sources to develop the annual facility renewal plan for the school board. The facility renewal plan is developed to align to and support the goals outlined in the quality accommodation plan, such as the "Pride of Place" program. Facilities Services reviews urgent and priority needs identified in ReCAPP and cross-references these with issues identified through the work order system. Maintenance supervisors are primarily responsible for identifying maintenance needs in consultation with facilities staff. Principals and school staff informally provide input through maintenance supervisors.

This year, the Facilities Services department conducted a Principals' Assessment of Schools Survey to gather data about the educational adequacy of facility condition and the quality of the teaching and learning environment. The department assembled a team of Facilities Services staff and external technical expertise to conduct field audits on those schools with the poorest results from the survey. The results of these audits provided another input for identifying and prioritizing renewal projects. The department

also plans to conduct the survey again in approximately three years. The results of the two surveys will be compared to provide an indication of the impact of renewal projects on the learning environment.

Facilities Services management reviews and prioritizes the list of identified maintenance and renewal needs and matches them with available funding from renewal grants, Good Places to Learn (GPL) funding, and energy efficiency funding to establish the annual priorities. The maintenance supervisors allocate a small amount of funding for addressing cosmetic issues in schools through the Pride of Place program. Schools are also given a small budget for buildings and grounds, which is at the discretion of each school principal to assign to projects.

Facilities Services conducts some multi-year planning for some components of the annual renewal plan, such as preventative maintenance. The department uses ReCAPP data to project future year maintenance priorities and costs. The Facilities Services department has also earmarked funds over multiple years for specific largescale initiatives, such as upgrading science labs across the system. However, the school board does not develop a formal multi-year maintenance plan.

The annual facility renewal plan is submitted to the Accommodation Review Committee and to the Board for approval. Facilities Services provides an update to the Board at the end of the year to identify the projects that were completed. The proposed plan is publicly available through the Board's meeting minutes and Facilities Services also communicates the planned renewal projects to principals to ensure they are aware of the approved list of projects for their schools.

A new dedicated preventative maintenance position was created through the recent changes to the organizational structure. Facilities Services also has implemented a preventive maintenance module within the facilities database system. The department has conducted reviews of HVAC components using a standard template to start gather information to populate the preventative maintenance system. Facilities Services currently conducts annual inspections and performs fine-tuning to equipment. The new dedicated position is intended to bring a more rigorous, focused approach to preventative maintenance using the electronic system.

Training to Support Skills Development and Safety

The Facilities Services department provides staff with a variety of skills development and training throughout the year. New custodial staff are provided with basic caretaking training, which includes fire safety and cleaning standards. Evening caretakers interested in advancing to day-time custodian positions can apply for relief or acting custodian positions, and receive on the job custodian training.

The Facilities Services department holds one full-day professional development (PD) session each year for staff, as well as additional training opportunities throughout the year. The PD committee, consisting of union groups and management, is responsible for identifying training needs to be covered during PD days and providing feedback on PD activities. Training topics include both mandatory skills training and training related to emerging issues. Examples of the training provided to staff include training on accessibility, fall arrest, ladder safety, tele-ladders, equipment safety, renewable energy/green schools, and confined spaces. Management will also invite vendor representatives to attend PD workshops to provide demonstrations and training for specific products and equipment.

Regulatory training for all staff, such as anaphylaxis or Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training, is provided through an online training system. The Health and Safety Officer monitors completion of these online courses.

The school board has sponsored a number of staff to complete the facility maintenance technician program through the local community college. The program provides basic training in many aspects of building maintenance through combined apprenticeship and classroom learning.

The Facilities Services department also offers staff optional sessions on leadership and personal growth topics, such as wellness and retirement preparation.

Standardization of Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies

Facilities Services tracks all assets costing greater than $300. All equipment is equipped with a barcode to allow tracking of information, such as the service / maintenance received or the age of the equipment. The Operations supervisors conduct annual inspections of cleaning equipment at each school using a standard equipment inspection form to assign a rating to each piece of equipment based on its condition. Supervisors are responsible for identifying where new or replacement equipment is needed. The department does not conduct preventative maintenance on cleaning equipment.

The school board maintains a fleet of approximately 40 vehicles. Facilities Services keeps a log of information about each vehicle including its age, conditions of lease agreements or purchase dates, mileage and personnel assigned to each vehicle. Global positioning system (GPS) devices have been installed in each vehicle, which increases staff accountability and allows efficient dispatching of nearby maintenance staff to attend to emergencies. Maintenance staff are responsible for the safekeeping of supplies and equipment. Maintenance tools and equipment are tracked in electronic spreadsheets and reviewed with maintenance supervisors annually. Maintenance staff are provided with PCards to purchase small hand tools, minor equipment, and supplies. All purchases are reviewed by maintenance supervisors to ensure appropriate

purchases are made. The department maintains a small warehouse to stock specific items where the school board received a better price by purchasing larger quantities.

Cleaning supplies are requisitioned through an online requisition module in the facilities database system. School custodians create requisitions by selecting quantities from a catalogue of pre-approved products. Management reviews requisitions to ensure accuracy before issuing orders. Requisitions from each school are consolidated into quarterly bulk orders which are delivered directly to each school. School custodians can make additional smaller purchases on a monthly basis, as necessary. Management tracks consumption costs by square footage to benchmark across schools, and by student population to compare total costs over time. Custodians are allocated an annual budget for the school and are expected to forecast and manage within that budget. The online requisition system allows the operations supervisors to centrally set and monitor annual custodial budgets for each school.

Project Management, Monitoring and Supporting Systems

The facilities database system was developed through a partnership with a software development company. The system includes a number of modules to support management of Facilities Services, including a work order system, an online requisitioning system, preventative maintenance and community use of schools. The system also includes an electronic database of school facilities information, including drawings and assigned unique identifiers for all locations within school facilities, water testing logs, assets inventory, and databases for tracking other types of information, such as contractor liability insurance and WSIB coverage. A new module is currently being implemented for tracking and completing electronic site inspection forms.

The school board's work order system is a module within the facilities database system. Most work orders are created by custodians, who are responsible for entering details about the type of work required and the unique location identifier linked to the building drawings. Principals have the ability to create new work orders and view work orders for their school. Principals provide feedback and concerns about work orders directly to Facilities Services supervisors.

Work orders are submitted electronically to a general mailbox in the work order system and verified by the maintenance supervisors. Work orders are either printed and assign to an appropriate internal staff member or faxed to an external vendor. Once a work order is complete, staff provide a paper copy with information about the work order, including a description of the work completed, the number of hours worked and materials used, to a department administrative assistant to rekey into the system. The department plans to implement a fully electronic work order management process this year by providing staff with smart phones to receive and complete work orders electronically.

The school board uses a combination of internal staff and external vendors to provide maintenance services. The department typically uses external vendors of record for larger projects or jobs that require specialized equipment. Management noted that they continually assess the competitiveness of providing specific activities by internal staff versus external vendors, and periodically conduct pilot studies to consider changes to the service delivery model.

Facilities Services also recently underwent a review of the operating model for the department. The department is in the process of implementing changes to the existing structure which currently divides staff into geographic regions. The maintenance function is being reorganized around grouping competencies following the industry standard, 16 Divisions of Construction, established by the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI). Management of custodians and caretakers has also been reorganized to add separate team leaders to directly oversee evening caretakers in addition to day-time operations supervisors. The department maintains a pool of casual staff to replace absent caretakers. Over the past year, Facilities Services has changed the custodial shifts so that every school has at least one dedicated day-time custodian, rather than sharing a single day-time custodian across multiple schools. As part of this transition, Facilities Services seconded a custodian for one year to provide hands-on training for the new day-time custodians.

Recommendations:

- The school board should formalize the green clean initiatives in a formal green clean program aligned with the components identified in the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The program should be developed as part of an overarching environmental policy.

- Using a consultative process, management should document and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The plan should address the school board's preventative and deferred maintenance priorities, and optimize the use of available funding. The plan should be approved by the Board, communicated to school administrators and made accessible to the public.

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;

- Identify 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?
In reference to the Ontario Green Energy Act, 2009, senior administration has established a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates measures to be implemented and the tools to monitor and manage the plan.	No
Procurement practices support the objectives and targets of the energy management plan.	No
Successful conservation initiatives are communicated across all schools and with other school boards.	Yes

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 and regulate consumption and identify opportunities for further savings.	No
Billing for all board facilities is consolidated from each utility.	Yes
The Board has established an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices.	No

Energy Management Plan

The school board has conducted a number of initiatives related to energy management and energy conservation. Over the past number of years, the school board engaged a third-party provider to conduct evaluations of building equipment and systems to identify opportunities for energy efficiency upgrades and greater system flexibility to increase

conservation. Based on the priorities identified in the reports, Facilities Services undertook a first phase of projects between 2001 and 2004, focused on replacing most building equipment, such as boilers and heat pumps, with higher efficiency equipment to reduce future energy costs.

The annual cost avoidance savings from phase one was tracked and allocated in a second phase which started in 2005 to conduct priority retrofits and upgrades to lighting and building automation systems. Motion sensor lighting and heating has been installed in some schools. All schools have building automation systems installed, which can be monitored and adjusted remotely. The Facilities Services department has started implementing real-time energy meters at schools to provide current utilization data. The school board has also combined green energy projects with existing construction projects. For example, geo-thermal heating was installed as part of one school renovation project. The school board has entered into an arrangement to have solar panels installed on 15 school roofs through a leasing agreement. Electronic monitoring systems will be connected to the solar panels once they are installed to provide data to teachers and students to use in classroom learning.

Energy efficiency requirements are a component in the major construction project standard requirements. The school board will also identify energy efficiency as a requirement in competitive procurement. The school board participates in the Catholic School Boards Services Association joint purchasing group for procuring electricity and natural gas.

The department develops an annual plan of priority energy efficiency projects funded through energy efficiency funding and cost avoidance savings from previous energy efficiency projects. The planned priority projects minimize upgrades in buildings that might be closed in the near future. This plan is shared with senior management and the Board.

The Facilities Services department has informally set a target to reduce energy consumption by one per cent. The school board has not developed a documented energy plan with formal energy conservation measures and targets. The Facilities Services department established a dedicated supervisor of energy and environmental conservation position as part of the recent department restructuring. The supervisor is responsible for developing and monitoring an energy management program and formal plan. They will also be responsible for building awareness and commitment to the goals in the program with staff across the school board.

Environmental initiatives for the school board are championed by a Facilities Services Supervisor, who is also qualified as a teacher. Schools have been engaged to conduct waste assessments and participate in recycling and waste diversion programs. The Facilities Services department has tried to build links with students and classroom

learning through the EcoSchools program. The school board has actively publicized the EcoSchools program and environment initiatives through the local media. One school within the school board has been certified as an EcoSchool, and three others are in the process of becoming certified. The school board is hosting a one-day Eco Summit in February for grade 12 students, which will consist of workshops and exhibits on environmental and energy management topics. The summit has been organized through partnerships with local colleges and the local university and private sponsorships.

Tracking and Reporting Energy Conservation

Management reports to the Board on the contract with the third-party energy management provider. However, management does not share reports on energy conservation savings.

The third-party provider maintains a database to track energy consumption and energy savings at each school. The school board provided information for the Ministry's Utilities Consumption Database (UCD) and have recently received access to start using the database.

Bills from utility vendors are sent to the third-party provider's processing centre to be uploaded into the consumption spreadsheets. The school board pre-pays utility bills through direct bank withdrawals. The third-party provider consolidates utility bills from each vendor and reconciles them to the pre-payment amounts.

The Supervisor of Energy and Environmental Conservation will be responsible going forward for utility monitoring and bill analysis and working with the purchasing function in utility commodity procurements.

The school board has not established an overarching environmental policy.

Recommendations:

- Using the data from energy consumption and information from the external provider, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates quantifiable measures and the tools to monitor and manage the plan. In line with the *Green Energy Act, 2009*, energy management planning should include the development of policies, guidelines, goals (conservation targets), and priorities for energy management and resource conservation. The plan should include short-term and long-term opportunities, with milestones, roles, responsibilities and budgets with a process for ensuring community support.

- Once a formal energy management plan is established, the school board should ensure that its procurement policies and administrative procedures support the objectives and targets of the plan. Management should also consider documenting the energy efficiency requirements in procurement policies and administrative procedures and/or the environmental policy.

- Once a formal energy management plan is in place, management should provide formal annual reporting on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.

- As part of the energy management planning, the school board should establish a comprehensive system to budget expenditures, track and regulate consumption, and identify opportunities for further savings.

- The school board should establish an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices, including energy conservation.

5.4 Health, Safety and Security

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

- Whether planning and communication exist to support the provision of a safe and healthy 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.

Health, Safety and Security Management

Leading Practices – Health, Safety and Security	Evidence of Adoption?
Develop, implement and monitor an occupational health and safety strategy/plan that reflects the board's occupational health and safety policies and administrative	Yes

Leading Practices – Health, Safety and Security	Evidence of Adoption?
procedures and ensures the school board is in compliance with associated occupational health and safety statutory requirements.	
Develop, implement and monitor a security strategy/plan that reflects the board's security and student safety policies and administrative procedures and ensures the board is in compliance with statutory/policy security requirements.	Yes
Develop, implement and monitor a health strategy/plan that reflects the board's health policies, procedures and programs and ensures the school board is in compliance with statutory health requirements.	No

Health, Safety and Security Management

The Board has established an occupational health and safety (OH&S) policy. The school board has also established formal guidelines, approved by the unions, for the structure and function of the joint occupational health and safety committee. The policy and guidelines provide the terms of reference for the OH&S committee. There is a single committee for the school board with representatives from management of each school board department and union staff representing each employee group.

The OH&S committee meets monthly during the school year to review accident and workplace inspection reports and make recommendations to the Board. OH&S committee members are responsible for conducting site inspections annually for elementary schools and twice a year at secondary schools. Each site is required to establish a workplace health and safety team made up of the principal and one representative staff from each bargaining group. The team is expected to conduct monthly site inspections and provide information and recommendations to the OH&S committee. The OH&S committee also receives input from the accident prevention, products and methods committee in Facilities Services and from an EA focus group. The Board receives the schedule of site inspections and minutes from monthly OH&S committee meeting.

The Health and Safety Officer collaborates with the OH&S committee around issues related to staff safety and accidents. The H&S Officer and the Health and Disability Officer develop weekly joint health and wellness memos that are sent to all school board staff.

The Board has a school/site security and lockdown policy for the school board. The policy requires that each school has security protocols in place for lockdown, hold and secure and shelter in place, following standard guidelines set out in the policy. Lockdowns procedures are used for major emergencies or threats of school violence. The school principal is responsible for annually reviewing the documented lockdown procedures, and conducting practice tests in the school twice each year. A flipchart with

emergency procedures for responding to different types of situations is posted in every school board building. The school board participates in the community emergency response plan for each municipality. The school board has also developed a pandemic plan, which includes plans for staff to ensure continuity of school board activities and services. Emergency and pandemic plans are coordinated through the school board's Manager of Communications and Community Relations.

Facilities Services has established designated emergency contacts to respond to different types of building emergencies. The school board uses an external monitoring and alarm company to monitor schools after-hours. A contact tree is in place to notify the school board in the event of an emergency or break-in.

The school board has established policies and administrative procedures on bullying prevention and code of conduct. The school board has implemented safe schools initiatives and safe school teams at each school. Most student related health and wellness initiatives are organized by the program areas or individual schools.

Facilities Services is responsible for monitoring air and water quality. Any requests for air quality reviews are addressed by the OH&S committee.

The school board does not have comprehensive documented health strategy in place to address promotion of overall health and wellness of both students and all employee groups. A health strategy document could contain the following elements:

- Scope - The scope of the document should include wellness and health enhancing strategies that focus on living a healthy life-style and maintaining a work-life balance.

- Vision, Mission and Values - A description of what the school board intends to achieve in the long-term and how it intends to achieve that long-term vision through a clearly worded mission statement.

- Goals and Objectives - A time-based series of activities that contain clear goals and objectives, assigned to appropriate individuals, and have the ability to be tracked for performance and results.

- Annual Implementation Roadmap - A detailed inventory of all events, tasks and activities that will help achieve the health strategy vision in the coming year.

Recommendation:

- The school board should consider establishing an integrated health plan/strategy that would reflect the existing policies and administrative procedures regarding the health of both students and employee groups and aim to promote health and

wellness across the school board. Management should also consider coordinating the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan centrally.

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;

- Assess whether management is appropriately prioritizing the maintenance and renewal expenditures in light of the available Ministry funding and multiyear 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 plan that includes the related funding plan as reflected in the school board's Capital Wrap-Up Template.	No
The school board has an approved pupil accommodation review policy.	Yes
The school board has an approved facility partnership policy.	No

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 inventories using SFIS.	Yes
An accurate and current assessment of facility conditions is maintained, based on industry standards (using RECAPP methodology).	Yes
Capital forecasts and related funding plans are assessed annually and adjusted to meet current needs and changes to original assumptions such as enrolment projections including the impact of the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program and capital grants.	Yes

Development of Annual and Multi-Year Capital Plans

The Planning Officer maintains an accommodation projection spreadsheet, which is shared with the Quality Accommodations Committee. The spreadsheet shows the current utilization and five and 10-year projected utilization for each school, based on enrolment projections relative to school capacity. Facilities Services includes information in the spreadsheet about the building conditions including the current and projected facility condition index (FCI) and the projected costs for maintenance and renewal needs. The committee reviews this information at least annually to identify capital needs and make recommendations to the Board to conduct any accommodation or boundary reviews in specific areas. Capital projects are captured in the annual renewal plan. Facilities Services provides periodic updates to the Board on the progress of major construction projects. At the time of the review, the school board had not yet submitted a multi-year capital plan and was in the process of finalizing the capital wrap-up template with the Ministry.

The enrolment projections for the school board have generally been accurate. Most areas of the school board are facing declining enrolment. Annual and multi-year enrolment projections are generated in the enrolment system by grade for each school. Actual enrolment information is updated in the system twice each year. The Planning Officer establishes parameters in the system for enrolment projections, such as progression factors between grades and between panels, based on historical trends and estimated yields for new developments. Student yields from new residential development are also calculated within the enrolment projection system. The Planning Officer generates five and 10-year enrolment projections in the system. Yield rates are determined based on census demographics data, residential development information from municipalities, and knowledge of yields from different growth areas.

The Board has a pupil accommodation review policy in place, which identifies criteria and procedures for conducting accommodation reviews. The policy also provides the

terms of reference for the accommodation review committee. The school board has successfully conducted six accommodation and boundary reviews involving 31 elementary schools over the past couple of years to reduce excess capacity across the system. Seven schools will be closed and consolidated with others as a result of these reviews. Management noted that there are still a few regions where accommodation reviews will be required to address projected under-utilization within groups of schools. Facilities Services coordinates the annual renewal plan with planned or anticipated accommodation reviews to minimize the maintenance projects in schools that are under review for closure.

The school board is finalizing a draft Facility Partnership policy and corresponding administrative procedure. At the time of the review, the policy had not been approved by the Board.

Ongoing Monitoring and Maintenance of Data to Support Capital Planning

The Divisional Manager of Construction is responsible for updating information in the school facilities information system (SFIS) at the completion of major projects.

The capacity data from SFIS is used in the projected utilization spreadsheet reviewed by the Quality Accommodation Committee each year. The utilization spreadsheet is updated to reflect the projected impact of school closures and new schools, as well as changes in enrolment assumptions, such as the impact of full-day kindergarten.

The Divisional Manager of Construction is also responsible for updating information in ReCAPP. All completed projects have been entered in ReCAPP. The Division Manager uses a module which has been developed in the facility database system to directly update information into ReCAPP.

The main sources of funding for capital projects include full-day kindergarten and Good Places to Learn funding through Prohibitive to Repair, Primary Class Size and New Pupil Places funding. The school board also has funds from disposition of land. Management has submitted capital requests to the Ministry for year three of the implementation of full-day kindergarten. The school board is currently identifying capital requirements for years four and five in consultation with the coterminous school board.

The Planning department and Facilities Services department regularly updates plans to mitigate capacity pressures in the short-term. Principals are required to submit requests for portables each year to the Planning Officer. These requests are validated by comparing with enrolment projections and the facility capacity reported in SFIS.

The school board uses an internal geographic information system that provides a single source of information about the locations of students across the school board. This

system is used to identify opportunities for boundary adjustments to alleviate capacity pressures.

Recommendations:

- The school board should establish formal annual and multi-year capital plans that are approved by the Board. The plans should identify the proposed funding sources.

- The school board should finalize the Facility Partnership Policy and the administrative procedure in line with the policy.

5.6   Capital Project Delivery

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 – Capital Project Delivery	Evidence of Adoption?
Management gives full consideration to the use of all available school space in their local communities before proceeding to build, purchase or lease other spaces.	Yes
Management uses cost-effective designs, standard footprints, energy conservation and economical construction practices to minimize construction and future maintenance and operation costs. The school board is guided by the principles outlined in the manual prepared by the Expert Panel on Capital Construction: From Concept to Classroom – Leading Practices Manual for School Construction in Ontario.	Yes
In constructing, acquiring, operating and managing school facilities, the school board is guided by the principles outlined in the Ontario Green Energy Act, 2009.	Yes

Leading Practices – Capital Project Delivery	Evidence of Adoption?
Senior administration maintains standard policy and/or 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 – Capital Project Delivery	Evidence of Adoption?
A Project Manager is appointed to oversee all aspects of the project including monitoring the budget and project timelines and ensuring management processes are in place for issues such as change orders and other internal approvals. This includes periodic project status updates and post-construction project evaluation.	Yes
An independent Cost Consultant is retained by the school board to review the design, provide objective costing analysis and advice, and report to the school board on options to ensure that the proposed capital expenditure is within the approved budget, prior to tendering a project.	Yes

Maintaining Current Approved Professional Service Providers

Leading Practices – Capital Project Delivery	Evidence of Adoption?
Senior administration periodically evaluates and updates the approved list of contractors, architects and related professionals no less than once every five years.	Yes

Cost-Effective Practices in the Design and Construction of Facilities

The school board has proactively identified opportunities to make use of available space and establish partnerships. The school board consolidated the administrative offices in a single site following amalgamation, and is in the process of moving satellite Facilities Services workshops into unused portions of high schools. The school board leases available space in schools to external groups, such as daycares and Job Connect career resource centres. The school board tries to identify partners that are connected to school programming.

The school board has joint partnership agreements in place with all of the municipalities in its jurisdiction to share spaces such as fields and arenas. Initiatives, such as ball hockey rinks, tennis courts, and skateboard parks have been jointly funded with local community organizations or municipalities. Another example of a unique partnership arrangement is the shared use of one school's fitness centre, where the school uses the space during the day and the local county operates it as a community gym outside

school hours. The school board is currently building a joint school with a coterminous school board in one growth area, and already has one joint-use school in place.

The school board has formal policies that guide the construction and renovation of facilities. The major construction projects and new school construction policies identify the procedure for conducting school construction projects. The policies include standard design guidelines for elementary schools, which outlines specific features and standard finishes that should be used. The design for each school is developed by the architect according to the specific requirements for that school. Management noted that the school board already follows many of the principles outlined in the Ministry's *From Concept to Classroom: Leading Practices Manual for School Construction in Ontario.*

The school board has a formal policy and administrative procedure for green school construction. The administrative procedure outlines specific expectations for construction projects around six key areas:

- Land use development

- Water efficiency

- Energy performance

- Management of resources

- Air quality

- Innovation in school design.

The school board has incorporated concepts from Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) into these requirements. Facilities Services prepares a check list to identify and report to the Board the energy and environment efficiency criteria that has been included in the design for major construction projects.

Many of the recent major construction projects have been for additions to existing schools as a result of school closures. However, a few new schools were built in growth areas of the school board. The school board compares costs per square foot against North American industry standards and Ministry benchmarks. Architects are required to develop cost-effective designs that meet the Ministry's cost benchmarks.

Monitoring and Reporting of Progress on Construction Projects

The school board has used a construction management firm to provide project management for recent major construction projects. The construction management firm is selected through an open competitive tender process for each project. The firm is

responsible for delivering projects on-time and on-budget. Management indicated that the department has had mixed results using construction management firms. The school board plans to reassess this delivery model to determine whether the school board should provide project management internally on future construction projects.

The Manager of Facilities Services, the Division Manager of Construction and the Supervisor of Construction are kept informed of progress and provide some additional oversight for construction projects. At least one of these three staff members attends each site meetings. The school principal also attends some site meetings.

The school board requires that the architect hire a cost consultant to provide an external review of costs during the design phase of the project. The architect is responsible for reviewing progress reports from contractors and signing a certificate of payment. Progress reports are also reviewed by the Facilities Services staff before being approved by the appropriate staff in line with the school board's levels of authority. This process is also used to review and approve any change order requests. Board approval is required to make any changes to the overall project budget.

Management provides reports to the Board every second month with progress updates on major construction projects.

Maintaining Current Approved Professional Service Providers

The school board does not maintain pre-approved architects and contractors. A separate competitive tender process is conducted to hire an architect for each major construction project. The tender responses are reviewed by Facilities Services staff. The Superintendent of Business, one superintendent of education and the Manager of Facilities Services are responsible for interviewing a short-list of architects and selecting a successful bid.

The school board also conducts competitive tender processes for contractors. The architect predetermines the list of contractors that are invited to bid.

Appendices

Appendix A: Overview of the Operational Review

Operational Review Objectives

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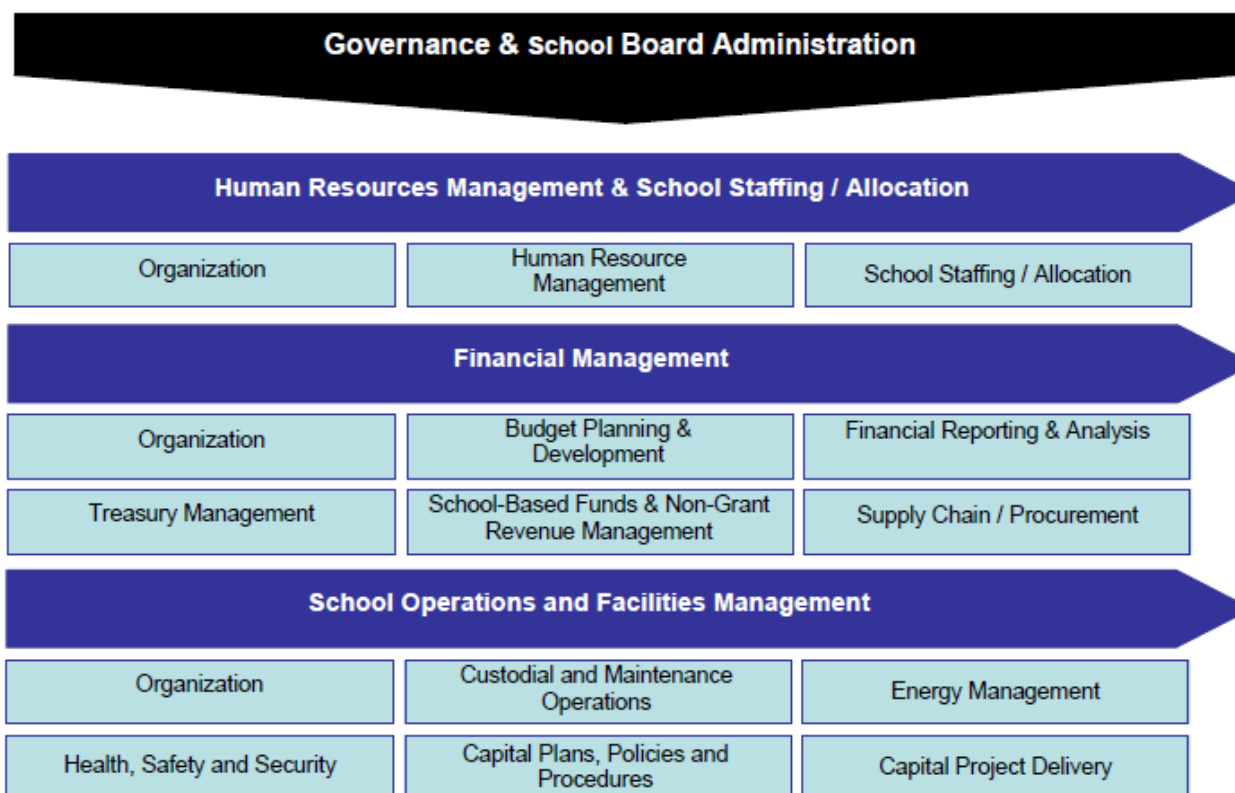
Recognizing the unique characteristics of each DSB, the specific purpose of the Operational Reviews is to:

- Strengthen management capacity in school boards, with 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 success;

- Provide the Ministry with important input on school board capacity and capabilities for 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.

Governance & School Board Administration

Human Resources Management & School Staffing / Allocation

Organization	Human Resource Management	School Staffing / Allocation

Financial Management

Organization	Budget Planning & Development	Financial Reporting & Analysis
Treasury Management	School-Based Funds & Non-Grant Revenue Management	Supply Chain / Procurement

School Operations and Facilities Management

Organization	Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Energy Management
Health, Safety and Security	Capital Plans, Policies and Procedures	Capital Project Delivery

Operational Review Summary Approach

The high level Operational Review approach is shown below. The timing for the endto-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 school board data, provide a better understanding of the environmental conditions and allow the team to review materials that support the existence of leading practices.
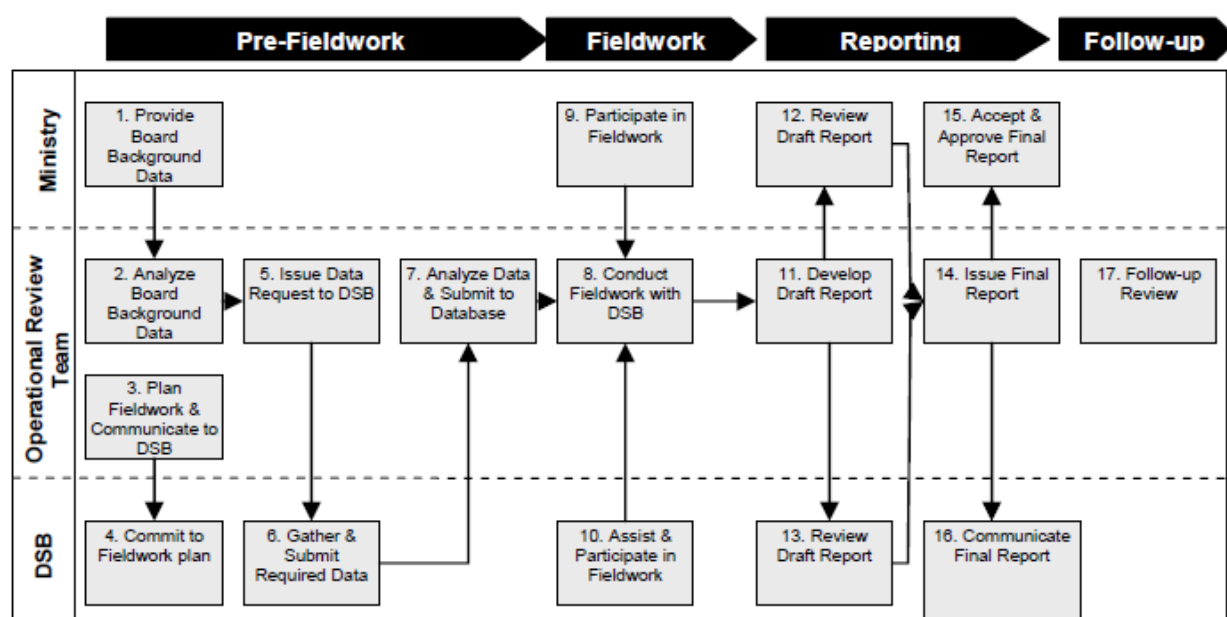
The Table below defines the key phases and activities which comprise the Operational review Methodology.

Phase: Pre-Fieldwork

Key Activity	Description
Provide Board Background Data	The Ministry collects and maintains significant quantities of school board data. The Operational Review team has developed a standardized data request for all school boards to provide background data prior to the review.
Analyze Board Background Data	Before the start of the fieldwork, the Operational Review team reviews school 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	School 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 school 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 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	Board staff participate in the fieldwork. The number of participants involved will vary depending on the size of the school 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 appropriate, recommendations for improvement.
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 school board senior staff to review and obtain feedback.
Prepare Final Report	The review team incorporates the feedback from the both the Ministry and the school 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 school 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.
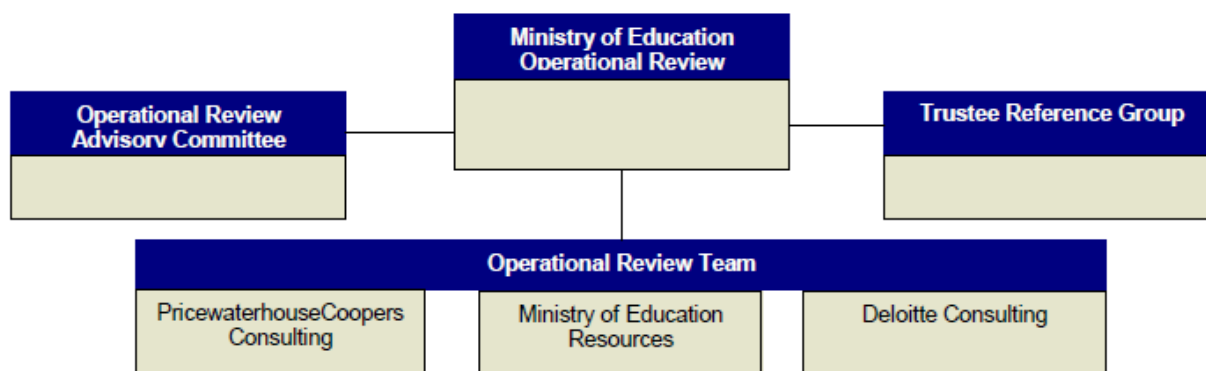
Limitations of this Review

The purpose of this report is to document the results of the Operational Review of the Grand Erie District School Board. 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 continue to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees and the Director of Education. The roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and documented. The school board's governance model should reflect the roles and responsibilities mandated by the Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act, Bill 177.
2.	The school board should expand its current system excellence plan to incorporate all academic and non-academic areas of school board operations. The annual operating plan/system excellence plan should align to the Board's new multi-year strategic plan, once developed, and contain goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.
3.	Once the school board develops a new strategic plan and an annual school board-wide operating plan, management should periodically report to the board of trustees on the status and outcome of the school board's strategic plan and annual operating plan.
4.	Management should post the organizational chart for the school board administration, in addition to the key contacts, on the school board website.
5.	The school board should develop a formal leadership development and succession plan for key senior management and manager positions in all academic and non-academic areas.

Human Resources Management and School Staffing/Allocation

No.	Recommendation
6.	The HR Services department should enhance its planning process by developing a formal annual departmental plan which is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan and communicated to key stakeholders. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.
7.	The school board should establish formal recruitment policies or administrative procedures. The school board should also review its existing recruitment and hiring processes, including the composition of hiring panels, to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff in the recruitment and hiring process. Trustees should provide strategic policies to govern staffing and recruitment, but should not sit on hiring panels with the exception of hiring the Director of Education.
8.	Management should regularly report on the effectiveness of the attendance support / employee absenteeism program and processes to the Board, in addition to senior administration.
9.	Management should continue the planned process to establish pay equity plans for all staff groups, including the PSSP employee group.
10.	Management should periodically conduct independent compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier to ensure adherence to the benefit plans' terms and conditions.

No.	Recommendation
11.	Management should investigate mechanisms to electronically synchronize employee data periodically between the school board and all external carriers, including OMERS.
12.	HR Services should conduct periodic and confidential staff surveys covering a broad range of HR-related topics, to improve communication with staff and provide input to HR Services plans and procedures.
13.	Management should establish a formal process to conduct exit interviews with all staff to obtain input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement.
14.	Management should document policies and administrative procedures that govern the development of an annual staffing plan and allocation process.

Financial Management

No.	Recommendation
15.	The Business Services department should enhance its planning process by developing a formal annual departmental plan that is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan and communicated to key stakeholders. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.
16.	Management should consider enhancing the process of reporting on the school board's budget risks using the format suggested in section 4.2 of this report. A formal risk management plan/report, which is reviewed and updated periodically, would include documented strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond budgeted levels.
17.	Management should take into account the recommendations made by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) on the format of interim financial reporting to the Board. Management should discuss with trustees how the existing format of interim financial reports can be enhanced to align with IFRC recommendations.
18.	Management should continue working with the regional audit team on the development of a risk assessment to determine priority areas for internal audit activities.
19.	Once the regional audit team is in place, management should work with the regional audit team to document annual audit plans. Audit report recommendations should be followed up and acted upon by management. Where management chooses not to implement an audit recommendation and accepts the risks associated with an audit finding, the reasons should be clearly documented and agreed to by the audit committee.
20.	Management and the Board should continue recruiting external advisors on the Board's audit committee in accordance with Ministry direction.
21.	The school board should establish a formal investment policy and administrative procedures. Management should periodically report to the Board on the performance of the investment activity in accordance with the investment policy.
22.	Management should periodically conduct comparisons with other school boards' banking terms and conditions to ensure the school board banking terms are competitive.
23.	The school board should expand its use of a central three-way matching process for all orders before invoices are paid. Management should consider options within the existing purchasing system to automate all or some elements of the process.

School Operations and Facilities Management

No.	Recommendation
24.	The Facilities Services department should enhance its annual planning activities by developing a formal annual departmental plan which is aligned with the school board's annual operating plan. The departmental plan should reflect specific and measurable targets and indicators, and assign responsibilities and timelines for key activities.
25.	The school board should formalize the green clean initiatives in a formal green clean program aligned with the components identified in the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The program should be developed as part of an overarching environmental policy.
26.	Using a consultative process, management should document and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The plan should address the school board's preventative and deferred maintenance priorities, and optimize the use of available funding. The plan should be approved by the Board, communicated to school administrators and made accessible to the public.
27.	Using the data from energy consumption and information from the external provider, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates quantifiable measures and the tools to monitor and manage the plan. In line with the Green Energy Act, 2009, energy management planning should include the development of policies, guidelines, goals (conservation targets), and priorities for energy management and resource conservation. The plan should include short-term and long-term opportunities, with milestones, roles, responsibilities and budgets with a process for ensuring community support.
28.	Once a formal energy management plan is established, the school board should ensure that its procurement policies and administrative procedures support the objectives and targets of the plan. Management should also consider documenting the energy efficiency requirements in procurement policies and administrative procedures and/or the environmental policy.
29.	Once a formal energy management plan is in place, management should provide formal annual reporting on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.
30.	As part of the energy management planning, the school board should establish a comprehensive system to budget expenditures, track and regulate consumption, and identify opportunities for further savings.
31.	The school board should establish an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices, including energy conservation.
32.	The school board should consider establishing an integrated health plan/strategy that would reflect the existing policies and administrative procedures regarding the health of both students and employee groups and aim to promote health and wellness across the school board. Management should also consider coordinating the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan centrally.
33.	The school board should establish formal annual and multi-year capital plans that are approved by the Board. The plans should identify the proposed funding sources.
34.	The school board should finalize the Facility Partnership Policy and the administrative procedure in line with the policy.