Ministry of Education

Operational Review Report
Renfrew County Catholic District School Board

February 2011

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report details the findings and recommendations of the Operational Review of Renfrew County Catholic DSB (the school board or RCCDSB) 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 October 19, 2010.

Introduction

The Ministry plans to perform 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.

In 2009-10, the school board's results have shown improvement in most areas assessed through the EQAO process, and are above the provincial average. From an operations perspective, the review team found that the school board has adopted a number of the leading practices. Noted strengths include: a process for the establishment of a multi-year strategic plan and annual board operating plan; formal policies and procedures guiding the selection, recruitment and hiring of employees; a focus on timely maintenance and cleaning of school board 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:

- A process for the establishment of a multi-year strategic plan and annual operating plan.

- Adoption of formal governance policies that delineate the division of duties and responsibilities between the board of trustees and the director of education.

- A current organizational chart, posted on the school board website, and a directory of staff in each department.

- Formal mechanisms for communication and stakeholder engagement.

The review team notes that the school board would benefit from expanding its activities in the area of leadership development. Leadership, succession and talent development strategies and initiatives have been focal areas for the school board over the last several years. The school board has implemented several initiatives to support succession and talent development for academic staff, and reported progress in all areas of the Ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy. However, the school board has not developed a formal succession and talent development plan for key management positions in all academic and non-academic areas.

Recommendation:

- The school board should continue to align its leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry's leadership initiatives. It should finalize the development of a formal leadership development and succession plan for key management positions in all academic and non-academic areas.

Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocation

The HR department has implemented a number of the leading practices:

- The HR department establishes a rolling multi-year department operating plan which is aligned with the school board's strategic and annual operating plan.

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

- The school board has established positive working relationships with the unions, supported by open lines of communication.

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

The school board has established a number of policies related to recruitment and hiring of various staff groups. These include policies on redeployment, selection and recruitment of principals, vice- principals, and teachers. Currently, the HR department is directly involved in the hiring process for management staff, teachers (including occasional teachers) and education assistants. The trustees are involved in the hiring panel for vice-principals, principals, managers, and superintendents. The direct involvement of trustees in the hiring process for these staff groups is stipulated in the Board's governance policies.

During the collective bargaining process, the school board contracts its legal counsel as a chief negotiator. This is the case for all union groups, with the exception of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Depending on the bargaining unit, various management staff are directly involved in negotiations, with support from the entire senior administration team of the school board. Trustees are informed about all aspects of the bargaining process.

Trustees are also directly involved in the negotiations with the teachers' union. Trustees should not play a direct role in negotiations. It is recommended that trustees should only provide the school board with a policy and priority framework for bargaining.

The school board has established a formal performance appraisal process for teachers, occasional teachers, principals, and vice-principals. However, formal procedures and processes have not been established for the Director of Education, superintendents, management, and support staff.

Management has documented guidelines for disciplinary action. The guidelines have been approved by the Administrative Council, but have not yet been shared with principals and staff in supervisory roles. Management noted that disciplinary issues are addressed on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with provisions of collective agreements.

The school board has not implemented a formal attendance support program. The HR department does not have an information management system to support the HR department's operations. This creates many challenges for tracking of various types of HR-related data including attendance. Currently, the department uses a spreadsheet tool to track attendance data. Using the existing attendance data, the school board is working with an external consultant to identify options for a formal attendance support program.

The school board uses the services of the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) as an external benefit consultant. OTIP reviews claims administration, compares the benefits plans with those of other organizations, and advises the school board on the annual renewal of benefit plans. However, the school board has not conducted

independent audits of its benefits plan carrier to ensure compliance with the plan's terms and conditions.

The HR department has not conducted staff surveys to gauge staff satisfaction. The HR department does not conduct exit interviews.

Each year, the school board follows standard practices for staff planning and allocation. However, there are no formal polices and procedures guiding this process for all staff groups. The school board's existing policies on redeployment, selection and recruitment of teachers and principals provide general statements on these processes and have not been updated since 1996. There is a formal policy on staffing for school secretaries that has been updated in 2010.

Recommendations:

- The school board should review its hiring policies and procedures, including the composition of hiring panels, to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff in the 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.

- The HR department should establish a formal employee performance appraisal process for the Director of Education, superintendents, management, and support staff. The formal process should be supported by documented policies and procedures.

- Trustees should provide the school board with a policy and priority framework for bargaining and not directly participate in negotiations.

- The HR department should finalize the process of adopting formal disciplinary guidelines and communicate the guidelines to principals and staff in supervisory roles.

- Management should implement a formal attendance support program which would use the available attendance data. Management should also continue to identify options for implementation of a human resources information management system which would enable the HR department to track and analyze staff attendance.

- Management should develop a way to assess and report on the effectiveness of the attendance support process/programs to senior administration and the Board.

- 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 conduct periodic and confidential staff surveys to improve communication with staff and provide input for professional development plans and HR policy.

- Management should also conduct exit interviews with all staff leaving the school board to obtain input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement. Management should consider developing formal policies and/or procedures for conducting exit interviews.

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

Financial Management

The Finance department has implemented a number of the leading practices:

- The Finance department establishes a rolling multi-year department operating plan, which is aligned with the school board's strategic and annual operating plan.

- Management has adopted an approach to enrolment forecasting that combines input at both the school board and school levels. The school board's enrolment projections are prepared centrally and reconciled with projections made by each school.

- The school board has an integrated financial system that provides adequate, timely, and accurate information to management, school staff, and the board of trustees.

- The school board takes part in a joint initiative with other local public sector organizations for banking services. All idle cash of the school board is pooled within the consortium and can be borrowed on a short-term basis by any participating organization.

- Board governance policies include a statement on investing.

- In 2010, the school board has established a supply chain/procurement policy aligned with the Ontario Broader Public Sector Supply Chain Guidelines (SCG). The school board has also adopted the Supply Chain Code of Ethics.

- The school board has established a formal policy for corporate cards. The school board has established a policy and procedures on the use of corporate cards.

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

Management does not establish documented budget guidelines or timelines to be shared with all relevant stakeholders prior to the beginning of the budget development process. Management incorporates all identified risks in the budget estimates, and has many mechanisms in place to control budget expenditures. However, management does not formally document the risks and proposed mitigation actions during the budget development process.

Management provides monthly financial reports to the Business and Corporate Service Committee of the Board. The format of the interim financial reports was established several years ago, and approved by trustees. The report includes a detailed list of expenditures relative to budget, also expressed as a percentage. The report also provides a historical comparison with the same period in the previous year. However, there are no explanations provided in the report for any significant variances. The SBO provides an oral explanation of such variances during the Business and Corporate Services Committee meetings.

Management has considered the format of interim financial reporting recommended by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC). However, management noted that the existing format of interim financial reports is preferred by the Board. The Finance department is considering enhancing the existing format of reports with staffing information.

All interim financial reports are reviewed by the SBO prior to presentation to the Board. However, interim financial reports are not formally approved or signed off by the Director and the SBO.

The school board does not have an independent internal audit function. The school board is actively participating in the Ministry's regional audit initiative, which provides funding for some dedicated internal audit staff for the eight regions in the province of Ontario.

At the time of the Operational Review, the Board did not have an audit committee in place. However, the Board governance policies refer to the establishment of an Audit Committee. Management was also aware of the new Audit Committee Regulation and was planning to set up a separate audit committee with external members.

The Board has established a policy on fundraising activities. However, there are no policies and procedures guiding management of school-based funds. Management has recently developed a proposed school council financial protocol.

The school board's purchasing system does not currently support a central threeway matching process. Schools are encouraged to order supplies for the year through an annual consolidated bulk purchase. Orders are received and stored in the school board's warehouse. The warehouse staff provide a receiving report to the Purchasing Supervisor who enters the receipt information into the financial system for finance to match with the PO and invoice before issuing payment. Additional purchases can be made by schools throughout the year, which are delivered directly to schools. There is not a central three-way match process in place for these orders. Invoices are provided to school principals to notify finance when the invoice can be paid. The school board has not implemented electronic supplier catalogues.

The school board has started working with its banking institution to establish electronic funds transfers (EFTs) with vendors. The financial system has been updated to enable EFTs. It is planned to test the EFTs with some vendors before full implementation. This is included in the current operating plan of the Finance department.

Recommendations:

- 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 strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond budgeted levels.

- Management should consider providing a budget process presentation containing an outline of budget timelines and stages to the Board each year. This would help ensure that the budget development process is clearly communicated and understood by all trustees. Throughout the budget development process, management should provide information to trustees on key stages in the budget development process.

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

- The school board should establish approval procedures for interim financial statements, and implement a formal sign-off process of these statements by senior management.

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

- Management should work with the regional audit team to ensure annual audit plans are clearly documented. Audit report recommendations should be followed up and acted upon by management. Where management chooses not to implement an audit recommendation and to accept the risks associated with an audit finding, the justification should be clearly documented and agreed to by the Audit Committee.

- The Board should establish an Audit Committee and recruit external advisors to sit on the Audit Committee in accordance with the new Audit Committee regulation.

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

- Management should continue identifying opportunities for implementation of the electronic supplier interface and catalogues for ordering, processing and payment.

- The school board should continue working with its bank to establish EFTs for its vendors.

School Operations and Facilities Management

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

- The Plant Services department establishes a rolling multi-year department operating plan which is aligned with the school board's strategic and annual operating plan.

- The school board has established a Custodian Manual and Guidelines which contain formal cleaning standards. The Plant Services Officer is responsible for monitoring compliance with cleaning standards by conducting periodic inspections.

- There are standardized cleaning products across all schools.

- The school board obtains consolidated billing from utility providers where possible.

- The school board maintains accurate and up-to-date inventories of school capacity using SFIS.

- The school board has retained an independent cost consultant for the new school construction project to provide objective costing analysis and advice.

- For the new school construction project, the school board has started using a pre-qualification process for general contractors.

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

The school board has started implementing initiatives to promote green cleaning across all schools. The Plant Services department is comparing costs and usage of cleaning products to inform future decisions on procurement of green cleaning products. The school board has also started working to develop formal green procurement guidelines in line with the Ministry Green Clean Resource Guide.

However, the school board has not yet implemented a formal Green Clean program. The school board also does not have a formal environmental policy.

Management plans and undertakes major maintenance and renewal projects within the available annual capital expenditure and school operations and maintenance budget. However, the school board does not develop and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects, which would address the school board's preventative and deferred maintenance priorities.

There are a few pieces of major custodial equipment at schools. Management has started to develop the inventory list to track these pieces of equipment.

The Plant Services department has implemented a paper-based work order system and the department uses a spreadsheet to track all work orders.

Energy conservation has been the focus of the school board over the past several years. The school board has implemented a number of projects and initiatives in the area of energy management. Using the energy efficiency funding provided by the Ministry of Education, the school board has contracted energy management consultants to conduct energy audits of all schools. However, the school board has not yet established a formal energy management plan with measurable goals and targets.

Management noted that energy efficiency is taken into account in the purchase of equipment. Management should consider documenting energy efficiency requirements in the school board's purchasing policies. The school board should also establish an

overarching environmental policy which would include, among other principles, the procurement of energy efficient equipment.

The Plant Services department maintains a spreadsheet to track energy costs. The data for the spreadsheet is obtained from the school board's financial system. Management noted that it is considering options for tracking the consumption data through working with energy management consultants. The school board has implemented Building Automation Systems (BAS) in two high schools. However, there is no remote control capability for the existing BAS. Management is considering installation of BAS across more schools and implementing a remote energy regulation and control.

The school board ensures compliance with statutory requirements for occupational and student health and safety. Although the school board has a number of initiatives in place to support compliance with statutory heath requirements, there is no documented health strategy to address the promotion of overall health and wellness of students and all employee groups.

The school board has established a draft Facilities Partnership policy. At the time of the operational review, the draft policy was being finalized for submission to the Board for approval.

Recommendations:

- The school board should finalize the development of formal green procurement guidelines aligned with the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The development of formal green procurement guidelines along with the overarching Education Environmental Policy should be the first step in implementing a formal green clean program.

- Using a consultative process, management should develop and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The Plan should address the 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 accessible to the public.

- Management should examine options for implementing an automated work order system.

- Management should finalize the development of inventory of major custodial and maintenance equipment.

- Using the data available through the energy management system, 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 the formal energy management plan is established, the school board should ensure that its procurement policies and practices support the objectives and targets of the plan. Management should also consider documenting the energy efficiency requirements in procurement policies and procedures and/or the environmental policy.

- 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 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 finalize the Facility Partnership Policy.

1. Background and Overview

1.1 School Board Profile and Structure

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board provides educational services to approximately 4,389 students in 25 elementary and secondary schools.

The school board's enrolment decreased by 624 students, or about 12 per cent since 2002-03. This trend is expected to continue over the next several years.

The school board's Senior Administration is as follows:
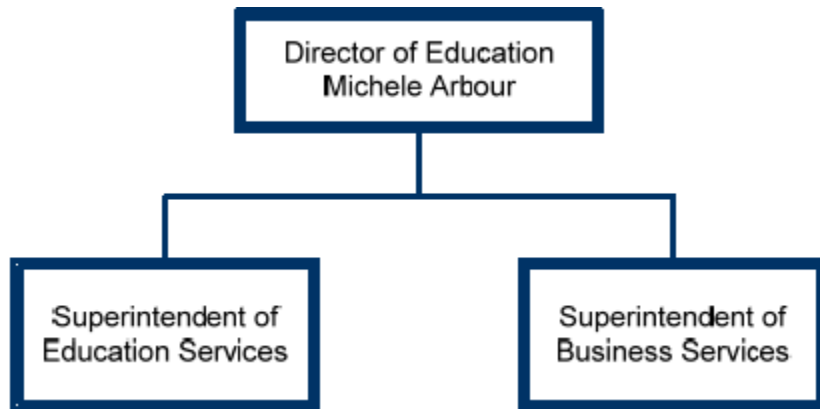
Figure 1 Renfrew County Catholic District School Board Senior Administration

1.2 Key Priorities of the School Board

The school board's strategic plan 2009-12 established the following vision:

"Inspired by our rich heritage and challenged by the struggles of our past, we are an inclusive Catholic educational community called to express our mission as church to pass on the good news of Jesus Christ, to make it relevant in the world today and to be the hope for the future. Open to mystery and endless discovery in the Lord, we are called…to claim our role as global stewards cherishing the environment and all life in it."

The strategic plan establishes three priorities for the school board:

- Raise the profile of Catholic education across Renfrew County.

- Support the faith formation of students, staff and the larger Catholic school community.

- Support and advocate for the needs of the poor, both locally and globally.

1.3   Student Achievement

In 2009-10, the school board's results have shown improvement in most areas assessed through the EQAO process, and are above the provincial average. Since 2007-08, the school board's results in Grade 3 reading and math have been steadily improving, and have been above the provincial average. Grade 3 results in writing have been steadily improving since 2002-03 and have been above the provincial average since 2006-07. Grade 6 results in reading and writing have been steadily improving since 2006-07, and are above the provincial average. After significantly exceeding the provincial average in 2008-09, Grade 6 results in math have declined in 2009-10, but remain above the provincial average.

After a decline since 2007-08, Grade 9 academic results have improved significantly in 2009-10, and are at the provincial average. Grade 9 applied results have also improved in 2009-10 and are significantly above the provincial average.
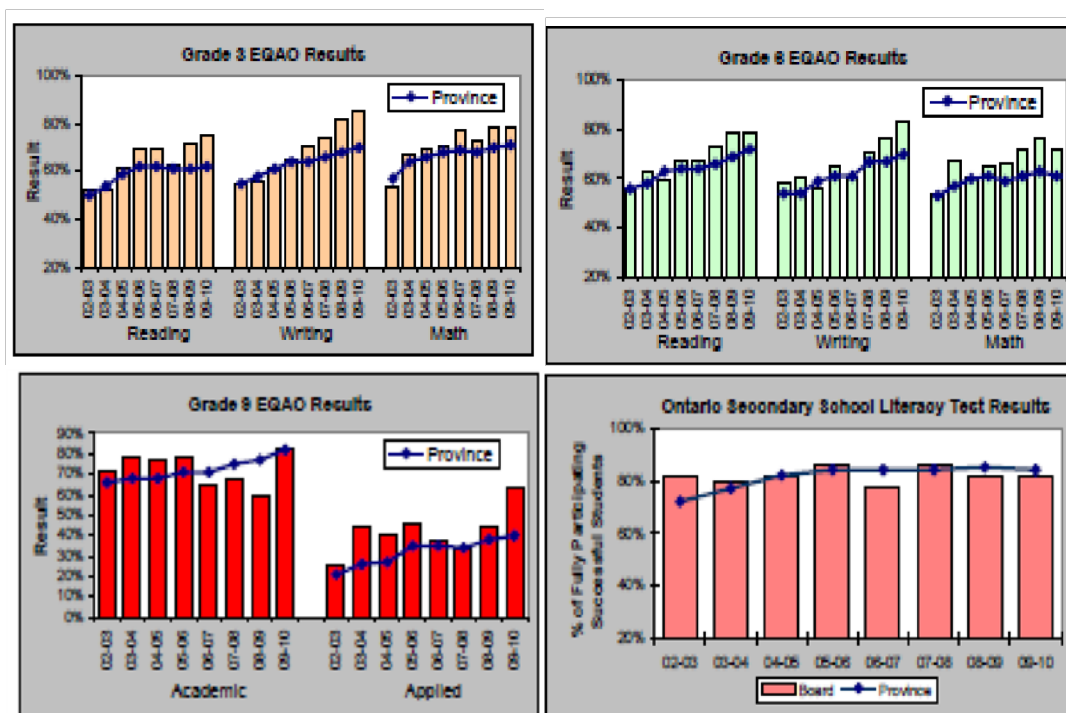
1.4   Fiscal Overview

The school board has achieved a balanced budget over the past several years. The 2009-10 revised estimates also indicate a balanced budget. The school board's 2009-10 revised estimates 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	$41,609,827	$42,098,431	$44,407,192
Local taxation	$8,032,446	$8,155,737	$8,168,739
Board Revenues	$1,035,114	$797,461	$531,469
Other Operating & capital Grants	$1,160,768	$1,075,495	$2,656,248
Total Revenues (Schedule 9)	**$51,838,155**	**$52,127,124**	**$55,763,648**

Summary Financial Data (Expenditure)

Expenditures:	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Financial Statements	2009-10 Revised Estimates
Operating expenditures	$48,670,497	$50,853,322	$53,501,733
Capital expenditures - Before transfers from reserves	$1,734,714	$408,719	$2,261,915
Transfer to (from) Reserves	$1,432,944	$865,083	$0
Total Expenditures	**$51,838,155**	**$52,127,124**	**$55,763,648**
In-year Surplus (Deficit)	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

School Board Reserves and Deferred Revenues

School Board Reserve and Deferred Revenues:	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Financial Statements	2009-10 Revised Estimates
Retirement Gratuities	$896,322	$1,107,063	$1,107,063
Reserve for Working Funds	$55,630	$56,606	$56,606
WSIB	$260,764	$263,693	$263,693
Student Transportation/Maintenance/Other	$2,757,931	$2,687,224	$2,687,224
Buildings and Grounds	$2,941,314	$3,740,572	$3,740,572
Total Reserve Funds (Schedule 5)	**$6,911,961**	**$7,855,158**	**$7,855,158**
Reserve for Classroom Expenditures	$1,728,361	$1,747,889	$738,710
Pupil Accomodation Allocation Reserve	$0	$685,844	$685,844
Energy Efficient School - Operating	$0	$112,899	$0
Energy Efficient School - Capital	$0	$161,497	$0

School Board Reserve and Deferred Revenues:	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Financial Statements	2009-10 Revised Estimates
Total Deferred Revenues (Schedule5.1)	$1,728,361	$2,708,129	$1,424,554
Total Board Reserves and Deferred Revenues	$8,640,322	$10,563,287	$9,279,712

1.5 Key Statistics: Renfrew County Catholic District School Board

Day School Enrolment

Day School Enrolment	2002-03 Actual	2009-10 Revised Estimates
Elementary Day School ADE	3,806	3,201
Secondary Day School ADE	1,207	1,188
Total Day School Enrolment	5,013	4,389

Primary Class Size

Primary Class Size	2003-04	2009-10
% of Classes 20 or fewer	47%	91%
% of Classes 23 or fewer	74%	100%
Average Class Size - Jr/Inter	24.19	22.02
% of 3/4 Classes 23 & Under	62%	100%
% of Combined Classes	42%	51%

Staffing

Staffing	2003-04	2009-10
School Based Teachers	301	301
Teacher Assistants	100	99
Other Student Support	32	34
School Administration	21	25
School Clerical	24	24
School Operations	37	35
Other Non-Classroom	25	23
Total Staffing	540	541

Staffing	2003-04	2009-10
Teacher - Pupil Ratio	**1:17**	**1:15**
FTE Staff per 1,000 Pupils (ADE)[1]	**107.7**	**123.3**
Total Salary & Benefits as % of Net Operating Expenditures	**74.1%**	**75.6%**

Special Education

Special Education	2003-04	2009-10
Special Education Incremental Expenditures	$6,297,864	$7,396,071
Special Education Allocation	$5,176,581	$6,050,159
Spending above Allocation (Reserve)	**$1,121,283**	**$1,345,912**

School Utilization

School Utilization	2003-04	2009-10
Number of schools	22	22
Total Enrolment (ADE)	5,013	4,389
School Capacity (Spaces)	6,148	6,377
School Utilization	**81.5%**	**68.8%**
Board Area (Km²)	**7,851**	**7,851**
Number of Trustees	**7**	**7**

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

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 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.	Yes

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 multi-year strategic plan and has goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely. Staff are assigned goals for which they are accountable.	Yes
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.	Yes

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.	Yes

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

The school board adheres to the principles of the policy governance model. There is a general understanding among the trustees and school board staff that the school board administration is responsible for operations, and the Board sets policies and strategic direction. The school board has established governance policies which outline the duties and powers of the school board administration, Board Chair and Vice-Chair, Board of Trustees, and individual trustees. It is stipulated in the policies that the Director of Education develops and maintains an effective organization, within policies established by the Board, and the programs required to implement such policies. It is also stated in the policies that supervisory officers appointed by the Board are responsible to the Board through the Director of Education for the performance of their statutory duties and the duties assigned to them by the school board.

Governance policies contain description of key roles and responsibilities of all members of the senior administration team. The policy on duties and powers of the Board of Trustees outlines these duties and powers in relation to student achievement and effective stewardship of resources, Catholic education, Board vision statement, policies and procedures, and communication with stakeholders. The Director and the Chair of the Board noted that the governance policies have been updated to reflect the provisions of Bill 177. The governance policies contain references to the *Education Act* and guidance on governance such as the report of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association *Educating Together: a handbook for trustees, school boards and communities and the* Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association document, *Catholic Trustees: advocates, guardians and stewards of Catholic education*.

The Board has established a formal code of conduct for trustees. As part of the review and establishment of governance policies in 2010, the Board has also updated the rules of procedure for the Board.

The Board is composed of seven trustees with varying degrees of experience. There is open communication between the senior administration and the Board. The senior administration ensures that trustees have sufficient understanding of various issues to make informed decisions.

The trustees continually enhance their knowledge and understanding of the governance model and the delineation of roles and responsibilities. This is done through their work with the senior administration and through formal training provided by the school board and externally. For all new trustees, management provides inservice on all aspects of governance and school board operations. The trustees are also encouraged to attend training events organized by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. The Board of Trustees have received initial information on Bill 177 and management is planning to provide formal training to trustees on the new legislation.

There is a positive working relationship between the Director and the Chair. The Director maintains open communication with the Chair, and is always available to provide input and advice.

The Chair of the Board maintains a positive relationship with trustees. The Chair of the Board has significant experience serving on the Board, and provides guidance to trustees on governance matters. The Chair is working collaboratively with the Director to ensure that trustees receive relevant and complete information on all issues brought to the Board. The Chair of the Board is the spokesperson for the school board.

Currently, there is no formal performance evaluation process for the Director. The Director's Annual Report is reviewed by the Board each year in the fall. The Director and the Chair of the Board recognize that the school board should establish a formal

annual performance appraisal process for the Director that would inform strategic and annual planning at the school board.

Each year, the Board of Trustees organizes a trustees' retreat, which gives them an opportunity to reflect on results and achievements and discuss opportunities for improvement.

Development of the Board's Strategic Directions/Plan

The school board has implemented an annual planning process for the school board since 2000. After changes to the legislation in 2009, the school board moved to a multi-year strategic planning process. As part of the first cycle of strategic planning, the senior administration conducted a series of meetings to discuss the approach and the content of the multi-year strategic plan. The Director notes that the development of the 2009-12 plan was guided by student achievement targets, Catholic education priorities and provincial directions and legislation. The school board has also conducted internal and external environmental scans.

After the initial planning discussions, management established strategic planning priorities and undertook planning of specific strategies to achieve priorities. The Director of Education established strategic planning focus groups. At the same time, principals are asked to plan for integration of the Board Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans in the strategic plan, and initiate presentation and discussion of system priorities at the school level. Management has presented key aspects of the planning process to the Parent Involvement Committee. The trustees took part in the initial strategic planning and provided feedback through Board meetings. The Strategic Plan was part of the Director's Annual Report presented to the trustees at the November 30, 2009 Board Meeting.

The current strategic plan of the school board contains the statement of the Board's vision. For each strategic area the plan identifies a strategic priority and strategic projects/initiatives to support their implementation. The strategic areas and priorities in the 2009-12 plan are as follows:

- Christian maturity

  o Raise the profile of Catholic education across Renfrew County

  o Support the faith formation of students, staff and the larger Catholic school community

  o Support and advocate for the needs of the poor, both locally and globally

  o Foster the local and global stewardship of God's creation

- Life-long learning

  - Raise student achievement

  - Close the gap in pupil achievement

  - Build public confidence in Catholic education

- Stewardship and sustainability

  - Live an environmentally responsible lifestyle that fosters a healthy ecosystem

  - Minimize our ecological footprint at work and at home

  - Maximize wellness and fulfilment in all that we do

  - Seek effectiveness and efficiency in our operations

For each strategic project or initiative, the plan establishes the responsibility within the management team, and outlines the monitoring strategy, including measures of success and timelines. The strategic projects and initiatives are planned for each year of the four-year strategic cycle. Therefore, the strategic plan of the school board is both the multi-year strategic plan and the annual operating plan. The plan addresses academic and non-academic strategic priorities. The Director noted that in developing the multi-year strategic plan, the school board reviewed examples of plans from other school boards in Ontario. The school board's strategic plan and the Board Improvement Plan are posted on its website.

The Director provides formal updates to the Board on progress in implementing the school board's strategic plan. The Director's Annual Report is structured around the strategic areas and priorities. All departments of the school board provide input for the Director's Annual Report, which covers student achievement results as well as accomplishments in all areas of school board's operations. Throughout the year, the Director provides interim reports on student achievement, as part of monitoring of the Board Improvement Plan. Various departments of the school board provide periodic reports to the Board on departmental plans and accomplishments. The school board should consider posting the Director's Annual Reports for the last three years on its website.

Decision-Making Process

In 2010, as part of the review of governance policies, the Board also reviewed the rules of procedure. The rules of procedure are based on the provisions of the *Education Act*, Ontario Regulations, and Robert's Rules of Order. The agendasetting process for Board

meetings is not included in the rules of procedure. The Board's policy on duties and powers of the Chair and Vice-Chair indicates that the

Chair of the Board establishes agendas for board meetings, in consultation with the Director of Education or the supervisory officer acting as the Director of Education.

There is a formal, consistent process to set the agenda. The potential agenda items are identified through the work of the two main Board committees: the Education Committee and Business and Corporate Services Committee. These committees consider all Ministry directives, new policies, and pending issues, and receive reports from the school board administration. The Chair and the Director decide which issues are submitted for consideration to the committees and those which are operational and referred to senior administration.

The Executive Committee, composed of the Director of Education, the Superintendent of Educational Services and the Superintendent of Business Services meets every Monday. On the Monday preceding a regular Board meeting, the Board Chair joins the Executive Council meeting and participates in the discussion and establishment of the Board meeting agenda, using the information and issues identified by the committees. The Executive Committee and the Chair use a standard agenda template to establish a formal agenda for the Board meeting. The agenda is sent to trustees five days prior to the Board meeting.

The rules of procedure include the mandatory physical presence requirements for Board meetings. The rules of procedure also allow trustees to take part in Board meetings by electronic means when necessary. The Chair has noted that the Board always has a quorum. The rules of procedure contain provisions regarding the attendance of Board meetings. The Chair has also noted that in general the Board reaches a consensus on all issues. In many cases, this is attributed to the sufficient background information prepared by management to support Board decision-making.

In addition to the Education and Corporate and Business Services committees, the Board has established several committees which are listed in the rules of procedure.

The statutory committees of the Board include the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). The Board has also established the Transportation Committee and Chair's Advisory Committee. The rules of procedure refer to the establishment of an Audit Committee as required by the *Education Act*. At the time of the operational review, the school board was working to establish an Audit Committee.

The Director and the Chair noted that, in general, the school board follows a fouryear cycle for review of policies and procedures. This cycle is based on the collective bargaining process. The Board's Governance policies and rules of procedures do not

indicate the cycle for policy review. From the review of policies and procedures posted on the school board's website, it appears that some of the policies have not been updated for over five years. Some policies do not indicate the date of the last revision. All Board policies are posted on the school board's website. Management should consider reviewing all policies posted on the school board's website to ensure they are up-to-date.

In addition to the four-year policy review cycle, policies and procedures are updated in line with any directives from the Ministry and provincial legislation. The school board's legal counsel also provides advice on required changes in policies. The development of new Board policies or updates to existing policies is usually delegated to the school board administration. Draft policies are presented to the Board for consideration, and input is sought from relevant stakeholders. The Board approves all policies. The Board's rules of procedure mandate that the Board delegates the authority to establish procedures and related matters necessary to carry out the Board Policies to the Director of Education or his or her designate. Administration drafts the necessary procedures, guides, and forms, and provides inservicing or training on new policies and procedures.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The school board's Executive Council is composed of the Director of Education, the Superintendent of Business, and Superintendent of Education. The Executive Council is responsible for all major decisions and meets every Monday.

The school board's Administrative Council consists of the Director of Education, Superintendent of Business, Superintendent of Education, and all managers. The Administrative Council addresses departmental issues and meets monthly.

The school board has also established the Leadership Team, composed of the Administrative Council, school principals, vice-principals, and coordinators. The Leadership Team makes decisions regarding education and school-based issues. The meetings are conducted monthly in the morning before the Administrative Council meeting.

The school board administration has an up-to-date organization chart that outlines the roles and organizational units. The school board has published its organizational chart on the website, which also provides a directory of staff in each department.

Succession and Talent Development

Leadership, succession and talent development strategies and initiatives have been focal areas for the school board over the last several years. The school board has implemented several initiatives to support succession and talent development for academic staff. Management recognizes that the next steps will include implementation

of similar initiatives for staff in the corporate services of the school board. Management plans and implements leadership development projects and initiatives in line with the Ministry direction. Succession planning and talent development are included in the current strategic plan of the school board. The school board's *Aspiring Leaders* workshops were open to all interested employees, including staff from the corporate services departments. The Director of Education and the Superintendent of Education provide mentoring and coaching to all potential academic supervisory officers candidates. All new principals receive continuous mentoring and coaching.

The Director has indicated that overall the management has made progress in all areas of the Ministry's Ontario Leadership Strategy. However, the school board has yet to develop a formal succession and talent development plan.

Stakeholder Engagement

The school board has a variety of formal mechanisms for communication and stakeholder engagement. The school board uses its website to engage the community. As the school board's spokesperson, the Chair of the Board works with the local media to deliver key messages to the community. The Director of Education also delivers communication regarding academic aspects of the school board. Local newspapers have periodic coverage of news at the school board. Each month during Board meetings, there are presentations on news and achievements from schools.

The school board issues a quarterly newsletter, *Notebook,* which follows a topic selected for the year. The newsletter is disseminated through schools and parishes. There are numerous print publications prepared by the school board for the community, providing information on issues of community interest.

Each year, management organizes a meeting with all school council members and principals. The meeting provides a networking opportunity for school councils and includes in-service for school council members and principals.

The school board's senior staff participate in various sector committees of provincial associations and Ministry workgroups such as English Catholic Council of Directors of Education (ECCODE), Regional Special Education Council Regional Education Council (RSEC), Council of Directors of Education (CODE), Ontario Association of School Business Officials, Council of Senior Business Officials, Ontario Catholic School Business Officials Association (OCSBOA) and Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers Association (OCSOA).

Recommendation:

- The school board should continue to align its leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry's leadership initiatives. It should finalize the

development of a formal leadership development and succession plan for key management positions in all academic and non-academic areas.

3. Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocation – Findings and Recommendations
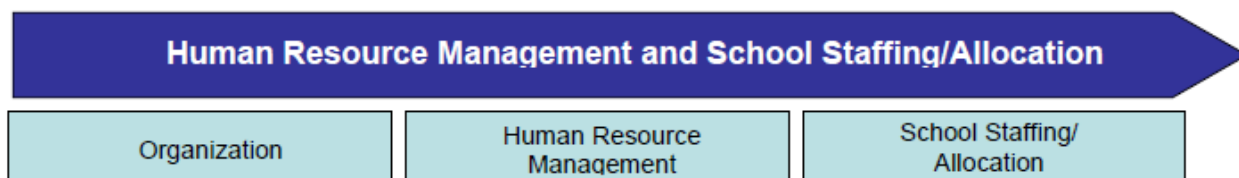
Effective management of human resources ensures an adequate number of qualified staff throughout the organization can perform their prescribed duties. Policies and procedures to develop staff are in place, through performance appraisals, professional development and support services. Staff allocations to schools and classrooms meet the Ministry's class size requirements, and are congruent with the 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 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 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.	Yes

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 department establishes a rolling multi-year department operating plan which is aligned with the school board's strategic and annual operating plan. The Administrative Council provides input in establishing the annual priorities for the HR department. The Executive Council reviews the proposed HR plan to ensure that it is aligned with the plans and priorities of other departments. The HR department establishes a three-year rolling plan to enable management to set realistic targets for some initiatives that may require a longer-term implementation timeline. When the three-year plan was prepared

in 2009, it was presented to the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. Each year, the HR department reviews and updates the three-year plan internally to confirm or re-assess priorities for the year.

The HR department undertakes in-year monitoring of progress in implementing the plan informally and provides input on key accomplishments for the Director's Annual Report. Management noted that senior administration plan to provide periodic reports on results and accomplishments to the Board from all departments throughout the year on a rotating basis.

The HR department maintains open communication with employees of the school board, and obtains feedback from many sources, including the Leadership Team and union representatives. Management noted that for all new initiatives, the HR department implements pilot projects to receive feedback from the employees before rolling out a system-wide initiative. The HR department provides presentations on projects and activities during monthly Leadership Team meetings.

Management noted that one of the key challenges for the HR department is the lack of an HR information management system. As a result, many HR processes are manual. Management noted that implementation of an HR information management system is a key department priority, which will be addressed over the next several years.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The HR department reports to the Superintendent of Business. The Manager of HR is supported by two HR assistants. One HR assistant is responsible for attendance management and supporting the recruitment/hiring process. The second HR assistant is responsible for managing HR records and liaising with the payroll function. All positions within the HR department have formal job descriptions. The HR department has also assisted other departments in developing formal job descriptions.

The Manager of HR holds a certificate in HR management, and has extensive relevant training and experience. One of the HR assistants holds a CHRP designation. Management noted that in the future, key positions within the HR department would require a formal HR management designation.

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

The HR department is responsible for implementing Board policies on hiring, leaves, performance appraisal, staffing, workplace harassment, and violence. All HR policies are posted on the school board's website. The HR department has implemented many centralized processes, which enable HR staff to monitor compliance with the existing policies and procedures. There are also various ways to build staff awareness and understanding of HR policies and procedures.

The Administrative Council provides input on changes in existing policies or the development of new policies. Draft policies are presented to the Leadership Team and shared with the unions. Once new policies or changes in existing policies are approved by the Board, they are communicated to the Leadership Team. The HR department also sends out memos and updates to relevant staff. When required, the HR department provides training on specific policies and procedures.

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 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.	No
HR management has established policies and procedures to minimize grievances.	Yes

Employee Performance Evaluation Processes

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

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
HR records are current, including the formal tracking of teacher qualifications and experience.	Yes
HR management has implemented an approved pay equity plan, which is reviewed periodically and amended as necessary.	Yes

Management of 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)).	Yes
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
Confidential exit interviews are performed for all staff who resign, take early retirement or transfer.	No

Staff Recruitment/Hiring

The school board has established a number of policies related to recruitment and hiring of various staff groups, including policies on redeployment, selection and recruitment of principals, vice- principals and teachers. The policy for teachers was adopted in 1996, and management noted that it is currently under review. The policy for principals and vice-principals was last updated in 2008. The Board has also established policies on employment equity and criminal background checks. All policies are posted on the school board's website.

Due to declining enrolment, the school board has had limited pro-active recruitment activity over the past several years. The school board is using postings on the school board's website and Apply to Education as well as local newspapers as key recruitment

tools. Although the school board has not been attending university fairs, it provides student teacher placements for a number of universities. As a result, the school board was able to meet some recruitment needs, in particular recruitment of occasional teachers. Management noted that to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities, some casual staff positions are also posted in the local newspapers.

Overall, the main recruitment challenge for the school board is teachers of French as the Second Language (FSL). The Board employs several FSL teachers using Temporary Letters of Approval and Letters of Permission. Management also noted that the school board sometimes may experience a shortage of occasional teachers in some areas of the school board.

To mitigate some of these recruitment challenges, management advertises for occasional teachers and FSL teachers early in the annual staffing process. The school board uses the Apply to Education website for postings for occasional teachers and FSL teachers. For FSL teachers, the school board reviews anticipated vacancies, and makes offers of employment as early as possible.

Through HR user group meetings, staff share information with other school boards on strategies to attract a sufficient number of qualified candidates.

Over the past several years, the HR department has been working to centralize hiring processes to ensure consistency in processes and selection decisions. Currently, the HR department is directly involved in the hiring process for management staff, teachers, including occasional teachers, and education assistants.

The school board has implemented an electronic hiring process using the Apply to Education system in early 2010. Hiring of teachers is conducted in the spring, based on the analysis of staffing needs. Candidates for permanent teaching positions submit an electronic application in Apply to Education. When a vacancy is identified by the HR department and the Superintendent of Education, in consultation with the school administrator, the same group considers candidates for the short list. The HR department and/or the Superintendent of Education review the candidates' application packages with the principal either in person or by phone.

The interviews are conducted by a panel of three school administrators. The Manager of HR occasionally takes part in the interviews or provides standard questions to the interview panel. The Superintendent of Education is directly involved in the interview process for Special Project Assignment Teachers (SPAT), coordinators and Organizational Unit Heads. The interview panel makes a Recommendation for Hire to the Superintendent of Education. The Superintendent approves the hiring of permanent teachers.

The school board has also implemented a consistent process for hiring of occasional teachers. In the spring, management assesses the needs of each school for occasional teachers' support. Candidates for occasional teachers' positions are identified through applications submitted in Apply to Education. Student teachers applying for occasional teachers positions are also required to submit applications through Apply to Education. Short-listing of candidates is conducted by the HR department in coordination with principals. A panel composed of principals and the Manager of HR conducts interviews with candidates over one day. Interviewing for the Occasional Teachers List takes place three or four times a year. Once references are checked, the HR Manager, in consultation with the principals on the interview panel, approves the hiring of the teachers for inclusion in the Occasional Teacher List. Each June, occasional teachers currently on the list are sent correspondence to confirm that they wish to be on the Occasional Teacher List for the following school year at the schools for which they have previously been approved. The HR Manager considers any requests for change of assigned schools. When the school indicates that there is no need for additional occasional teachers, the HR department maintains a waiting list for that school.

The trustees are involved in the hiring panel for vice-principals, principals, managers and superintendents. The direct involvement of trustees in the hiring process for these staff groups is stipulated in Board's governance policies.

Labour Relations

The school board has established positive working relationships with the unions supported by open lines of communication.

The school board has established labour management committees with the following employee groups: Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO).

Management noted that labour management committee meetings provide an opportunity to discuss issues openly with the unions. In addition to periodic labour management committee meetings, management has regular informal discussions with union representatives.

The school board contracts its legal counsel as a chief negotiator during the bargaining process except when bargaining with CUPE. Depending on the bargaining unit, various management staff are directly involved in negotiations with support from the entire senior administration team of the school board. The Director of Education provides support as required. During negotiations with teachers' unions the Superintendent of Business, the Manager of HR and one elementary and one secondary principal are directly involved in the process. Negotiations with CUPE directly involve the

Superintendent of Business, Manager of HR, Manager of Plant Services and one principal.

Trustees are involved in the negotiations with the teachers' union. Two trustees are part of the bargaining team. It is recommended that trustees provide the school board with a policy and priority framework for bargaining, and not play a direct role in negotiations. For other employee groups, management provides the Board with regular updates during the bargaining process.

Management provides in-service for school principals on changes in collective agreements following the ratification of new agreements. Management has also contracted external consultants to provide seminars for principals and management on specific labour management issues. Issues and questions raised at the labour management committee meetings are shared and discussed with the Leadership Team.

The Manager of HR is responsible for managing the formal grievance process with support from the Director of Education. Using the advice of the school board's legal counsel, the Manager of HR drafts the required documents and provides them to superintendents for review. The Manager for HR takes part in the mediation process.

Employee Performance Evaluation Processes

The school board has established a formal performance appraisal process for teachers, occasional teachers and principals and vice-principals. However, formal procedures and processes have not been established for the Director of Education, superintendents, management and support staff.

In line with the Ministry's Supporting Teaching Excellence document, the school board evaluates its experienced teachers on a five-year cycle. New teachers are reviewed during the first and second year as part of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). Teacher Performance Appraisals (TPAs) are centrally coordinated by the HR department. School principals are responsible for ensuring that all teachers are evaluated within the established five-year cycle. Principals conduct performance appraisals and submit the documentation to the HR department. The HR department maintains a tracking list for teachers' performance appraisals. Each year in April a reminder is sent to school principals with a list of teachers who are due to have a performance appraisal. The HR department works with principals to ensure that performance appraisals take place as scheduled. Management noted that due to improved central coordination of the TPA process, the school board has most of the TPAs completed on time. The HR department also coordinates the NTIP process. The department tracks new teachers' progress through the program and reports notations to the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) for new teachers who have completed NTIP.

In 2009-10, the school board implemented a formal performance appraisal process for occasional teachers. This was piloted in 2009 with a group of long-term occasional teachers. The Joint Board-OECTA Working Committee agreed to use the criteria and approach from the NTIP to develop the formal process for occasional teachers. There is a guide and a standard form for the performance appraisal of occasional teachers.

For the 2010-11 school year, management has implemented a formal principal/viceprincipal performance appraisal process in keeping with Ontario Regulation 234/10. At the time of the operational review, principals and vice-principals had been notified about scheduled performance appraisals during the 2010-11 school year. The Director of Education and the Superintendent of Education will be leading the performance appraisal process for principals and vice-principals. The HR department will track and coordinate the process centrally.

The school board has established a formal policy on performance appraisal, which covers requirements for non-teaching staff performance appraisals. This policy and the corresponding procedure and performance appraisal document were last updated in 2004. Although it is indicated in the performance appraisal policy that it applies to all permanent non-teaching employees, principals and vice-principals, the school board has not implemented the performance appraisal process. The performance appraisal policy is scheduled to be reviewed in 2011-12. The implementation of the formal performance appraisal process for support and management staff is included in the HR department's three-year operating plan.

Management has documented guidelines for disciplinary action. The guidelines have been approved by the Administrative Council but have not yet been shared with principals and staff in supervisory roles. Management noted that disciplinary issues are addressed individually in accordance with provisions of collective agreements.

The HR department supports the professional development of HR staff and other staff groups, when appropriate. For example, the HR department coordinates the delivery of some mandatory training for all school board employees such as training on workplace violence. The HR department works closely with the Occupational Health and Safety Officer to deliver mandatory health and safety training for school board employees. The school board has implemented an e-learning application to support training of staff, in particular, statutory training. The system allows tracking completion of mandatory training by school board employees.

The HR department provides support to the unions in planning and delivering training for their members. For example, management noted that the HR department will provide assistance to CUPE in preparing and running a professional development day for support staff. Management encourages and supports employees in pursuing external training and professional development opportunities. The school board has

established a collaborative relationship with Algonquin College and encourages employees to enrol in courses offered by the college.

Attendance Support Processes/Programs

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 management program.

The school board has not implemented a formal attendance support program. The HR department does not have an information management system to support the department operations. This creates many challenges for tracking of various types of HR-related data including attendance. The HR department uses a spreadsheet program to track attendance data. Schools submit regular reports on staff absences, which are manually exported by the HR department staff into the consolidated spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is used to track sick days balance for all employees, and also allows tracking the reasons for absences. The HR department periodically cross-references the absence information from the spreadsheet with occasional teachers' timesheets.

Using the existing attendance data, the school board has started working with an external consultant to identify options for a formal attendance support program. The consultant has provided the school board with the analysis of sick leave data.

Using the attendance data, the HR assistant identifies staff members who have high absenteeism rates. The Manager of HR has reviewed the attendance spreadsheet for the 2009-10 school year to identify employees whose attendance needs to be tracked closely in the current year. Principals and supervisors also notify the HR department on absenteeism issues. The HR department follows up with employees with identified attendance issues based on the tracking data and information provided by principals and supervisors. The HR department has provided annual updates to the Administrative Council on absenteeism trends, using the analysis of attendance data.

The school board's Long-Term Disability (LTD) services provider offers an early intervention program, which aims to minimize prolonged absences. Employees are offered early return-to-work or adaptive work schedules, which are developed on an individual basis. The school board also has an employee assistance program offered by an external provider. Management noted that the school board is in the process of tendering for a new provider of employee assistance services. To this end, the school board has struck a selection committee, which involves staff from bargaining groups. Management has also worked with CUPE to discuss attendance support for this employee group. The HR department has had preliminary discussions with a local occupational health nurse regarding services to support employees on LTD/WSIB.

Management noted that there have been several *ad hoc* initiatives and events at the school board to promote wellness and healthy lifestyles.

Management of HR and Payroll Data

The payroll function is part of the Finance department. The processing of payroll is contracted out to an external provider. To ensure the appropriate segregation of duties, payroll approval forms are completed for all new hires by the HR department and submitted to payroll. When there are changes in the Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO) category, the HR department completes the HR change form including the required payroll change. The form is reviewed and approved by the Manager of HR and submitted to payroll. Given the lack of an HR information management system, the HR and payroll processes are manual.

Without an HR information management system, the HR department tracks teacher qualifications manually. For all new hires, the HR department receives the most upto-date qualification information automatically through the Apply To Education website. For existing teachers, the HR department downloads teacher qualifications each summer from the Ontario College of Teachers to ensure employees are in good standing.

The school board has up-to-date pay equity plans for all staff groups.

Management of the School Board's Benefit Plans

The school board uses the services of the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) as an external benefit consultant. OTIP undertakes review of claims administration, conducts comparison of the benefits plans with plans of other organizations, and provides advice to the school board for the annual renewal of benefit plans. Each September, the benefit consultant provides a renewal report that includes analysis of the usage trends and comparison of costs relative to other carriers. The school board last tendered for benefit plans in 2000.

The school board has not conducted independent compliance audits of its benefits plan carrier to ensure compliance with the plan's terms and conditions. Management noted that such audits have not been undertaken due to cost considerations. However, management recognizes the benefits of an independent compliance audit and has contracted an external consultant to undertake an independent compliance audit by the end of 2010.

The school board's benefit plans are not managed on the Administrative Service Only (ASO) basis. The school board is continually tracking the costs of its benefits plan, and considers ways in which benefit costs can be controlled or reduced. There is one standard benefit plan and coverage for all employee groups. In the past, the school board conducted a survey of employees to identify potential ways to reduce costs. The

school board's early return-to-work program and employee assistance program are also believed to contribute to controlling benefit costs.

The school board uses *e-access* to synchronize the data with OMERS and Teacher Information Management System (TIMS) to synchronize the data with OTPP.

Monitoring Staff Satisfaction

The HR department has not conducted staff surveys to gauge staff satisfaction. The HR department does not conduct exit interviews.

Recommendations:

- The school board should review its hiring policies and procedures, including the composition of hiring panels, to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff in the 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.

- The HR department should establish a formal employee performance appraisal process for the Director of Education, superintendents, management and support staff. The formal process should be supported by documented policies and procedures.

- Trustees should provide the school board with a policy and priority framework for bargaining and not directly participate in negotiations.

- The HR department should finalize the process of adopting formal disciplinary guidelines and communicate the guidelines to principals and staff in supervisory roles.

- Management should implement a formal attendance support program which would utilize the available attendance data. Management should also continue to identify options for implementation of a human resources information management system which would enable the HR department to track and analyze staff attendance.

- Management should develop a way to assess and report on the effectiveness of the attendance support process/programs to senior administration and the Board.

- 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 conduct periodic and confidential staff surveys to improve communication with staff and provide input for professional development plans and HR policy.

- Management should also conduct exit interviews with all staff leaving the school board to obtain input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement. Management should consider developing formal policies and/or procedures for conducting exit interviews.

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

Each year, the school board follows standard practices for staff planning and allocation. However, there are no formal policies and procedures guiding this process for all staff groups. The school board's existing policies on redeployment, selection and recruitment of teachers and principals provide general statements on these processes. They have not been updated since 1996. A formal policy on staffing for school secretaries was updated in 2010. The policy provides parameters for allocation of school secretaries in elementary and secondary schools.

The allocation process for teachers starts with enrolment projections, which are prepared in February. The school board sets up the staffing committee, which is composed of the Superintendent of Education, the Manager of HR and OECTA representatives. The committee sets the timelines for the staff allocation process which are largely determined by provisions of collective agreements. Using the enrolment projections, the Finance and HR departments work with the Superintendent of Education to determine the allocation model based on the collective agreement and Ministry requirements. Concurrently, principals plan the staffing complement to determine the positions that will become vacant. The HR department maintains a consolidated spreadsheet with the proposed organization, which includes French as a Second Language and Special Education teachers. By March, principals complete a standard spreadsheet with the proposed school organization. This information is used by management to develop an overall staffing allocation model for the elementary panel.

The allocation of teachers at the secondary level is determined by the funding model. The Superintendent of Education and the Manager of HR are leading the allocation process.

Forecasts for education assistants and other school support staff are provided by the HR department in consultation with Special Education Co-Coordinator, Special Program Assignment Teachers (SPATs) and superintendents based on the assessment of student needs.

Custodial staff are allocated in accordance with provisions of CUPE Collective Agreement. The school board's allocation model for custodial staff is based on square footage. Management noted that the allocation of custodial and maintenance staff has been stable over the past several years. Any requests for additional staff must be approved by the Executive Council. An increase to the permanent staff complement also requires approval by the Board of Trustees.

Monitoring and Reporting on Staff Allocation

The HR department is responsible for ensuring that staffing is done according to the established allocation models. Management provides updates to the Board on staffing as part of the budget package, and in revised estimates. Management also provides information to trustees on new hires during the year, as well as a report on all new hires at the beginning of the year. Management is considering including staffing information (in FTE terms) in the interim financial reports provided to the Board. To this end, management should consider the format of reporting recommended by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) which includes staffing reports.

The Superintendent of Business prepares periodic analysis of funded versus actually allocated teachers. Management noted that additional grants sometimes allow allocating staff above the funding model.

Management noted that since the enrolment projections of the school board have been accurate, no major staff adjustments have been required during the year. If any adjustments are needed at the beginning of the school year, they are made before September 30.

Recommendations:

- Management should document policies and procedures which 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.	Yes

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 Finance department establishes a rolling multi-year department operating plan which is aligned with the school board's strategic and annual operating plan. The Administrative Council provides input in establishing the annual priorities for the Finance department. All Finance department staff provide input on departmental goals and priorities.

The Executive Council reviews the proposed Finance department plan to ensure that the plan is aligned with the plans and priorities of other departments. When the three-year plan was prepared in 2009, it was presented to the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. Each year, the Finance department reviews and updates the three-year plan internally to confirm or re-assess priorities for the year.

The Finance department undertakes in-year monitoring of progress in implementing the plan informally and provides input on key accomplishments for the Director's Annual Report. The Finance department also provides *ad hoc* and periodic reports, such as interim financial reports, to the senior administration team and the Board of Trustees.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The Finance department reports to the Superintendent of Business. It is composed of the Finance Officer, Payroll Supervisor, and Purchasing Supervisor, who report directly to the SBO. The department also includes Finance and Benefits Assistant, Accounting Assistant Payables/Payroll, and Payroll and Accounting Assistant/OnSIS. The Purchasing Supervisor supervises the warehouse staff. The organization chart of the Business Services department clearly indicates the structure of the Finance department and lines of reporting, and is current.

There are formal job descriptions for all staff of the Finance department. Management noted that the job descriptions are revised when there are changes in staff or significant changes in roles of existing staff.

The Finance Officer has a formal accounting designation. The Payroll Supervisor has certification from the Canadian Payroll Association. The Purchasing Supervisor has completed purchasing courses. Overall, all staff in the Finance department are required to have finance-related education and experience.

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

The Finance department is responsible for implementing Board policies on purchasing, travel and hospitality expenditures, and corporate credit cards. All policies are posted on the school board's website. For many policies, management has established supporting procedures. The Finance department has also developed procedure manuals, such as the School Budget Account Manual and guidelines, such as the Purchasing Guidelines.

The Finance department has implemented a number of centralized processes, which enable finance staff to monitor compliance with the existing policies and procedures. There are also various ways to build staff awareness and understanding of financerelated policies and procedures. New policies and procedures are communicated to the Administrative Council following Board meetings, and to the Leadership Team at its monthly meetings. The Finance department also sends out e-

mails to school secretaries when there are changes in finance-related policies and procedures. The Finance department provides individual and group training to school secretaries, including online training on the school board's web-based systems, such as the school cash management system.

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.	No
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 Finance Officer manages the budget development process, which is overseen by the SBO. Management does not establish documented budget guidelines or timelines to be shared with all relevant stakeholders prior to the beginning of the budget development process.

The budget development process starts in February. Enrolment projections are prepared centrally and reconciled with projections made by each school. From February to May, enrolment projections are used, along with other parameters such as class size, preparation time and Board priorities to develop staffing requirements and related expenditure estimates.

The Superintendent of Business is responsible for preparing enrolment projections. Management noted that overall the enrolment projections have been accurate. At the end of September, management conducts a school-by-school comparison by grade (based on actual enrolment) and examines and analyzes causes of any significant variances.

After the GSN announcement in April, management presents to trustees during the Business and Corporate Services Committee meeting. The presentation includes a discussion on funding, in comparison with previous years and the Renfrew County District School Board, which is the coterminous board.

From April to June, the Finance department coordinates the development of departmental budgets. Department managers identify department priorities and prepare budget requests based on the previous year's budget, considering new initiatives and other changes. Any changes from the previous year's budget are discussed with the Finance Officer. The department managers are aware of the budget timelines through the Administrative Council meetings, and are allowed several weeks to submit budget requests for their departments. To facilitate the development of department budgets, the Finance department provides departments with historical data on actual expenditures.

In April and May, the Finance department undertakes a preliminary budget review by comparing prior year actuals to current year to date actuals. This analysis is used to determine if any significant changes or adjustments are required in the proposed budget.

Throughout the budget development process, the Finance Officer ensures that any specific new initiatives identified by senior management are included in the budget. Draft budgets are discussed with the Executive Council and Administrative Council.

From May to June, the Finance department estimates revenue, using the historical information. The capital budget is developed at the same time, using the analysis of Ministry grants in consultation with the Manager of Plant Services.

In June, the Finance Officer and the SBO meet several times to make final adjustments in the draft budget. The final budget revisions are discussed at the Executive Council and Administrative Council, and approved at the end of June by the Director and Supervisory Officers. The Finance Officer and SBO meet with the Chair of the Business and Corporate Services Committee, Chair of the Board and the Director to review the draft budget in full, prior to it being presented to the Board. In 2010, the budget was approved by the Board on July 19.

At the beginning of the budget development process, feedback from the community stakeholders is collected through Regional School Council Meetings, which are held at the family of schools level. This feedback is presented to the Board by a representative group from each family of schools at the School Council Advisory Meeting Planning Session, which is held in February. This feedback is incorporated into the budget development process.

The draft annual budget is presented to the SEAC Committee for discussion and feedback on special education priorities. SEAC feedback is incorporated into the budget development process.

Risk Mitigation and Board Approval

Management incorporates all identified risks in the budget estimates. However, management does not formally document the risks and proposed mitigation actions during the budget development process. Management noted that it takes a prudent approach to developing budget estimates, underpinned by conservative enrolment projections.

Management has many mechanisms in place to control budget expenditure, including controls in the purchasing process, close monitoring of enrolment projections, and periodic financial reports for the management team and the Board of Trustees. The Executive Council meets weekly to discuss various issues, including budget pressures.

The Administrative Council meets on average every second month, and discusses budget pressures and necessary adjustments when required.

The process of reporting on risk mitigation strategies varies significantly among boards. An enhanced process 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 a 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 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 Board. 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.

The school board has several types of reserve funds. The school board has a number of internal reserve funds, including working reserve funds, retirement gratuities, WSIB, maintenance, textbooks, transportation and capital projects. The use of reserves requires Board approval.

Recommendations:

- 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 strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond budgeted levels.

- Management should consider providing a budget process initiation presentation containing an outline of budget timelines and stages to the Board each year. This would help ensure that the budget development process is clearly communicated and understood by all trustees. Throughout the budget development process, management should provide information to trustees on key stages in the budget development process.

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 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

Leading Practices – Financial Reporting and Analysis	Evidence of Adoption?
Senior management is held accountable for the integrity of financial reporting through formal sign-off and approval procedures.	No
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 has an integrated financial system that provides adequate, timely, and accurate information to management, school staff and the board of trustees. The system was implemented several years ago, and was recently updated.

The school board uses the accounting, general ledger, accounts payable, and purchasing modules of the system. The school board is implementing an accounts receivable module and a warehouse inventory module to automate warehouse management processes.

The Finance department has established an additional tool to prepare the financial data for EFIS and prepare monthly financial reports.

The Finance Officer is responsible for establishing new general ledger account codes in the financial system.

Interim and Annual Financial Reporting

Management provides monthly financial reports to the Business and Corporate Service Committee of the Board. The format of the monthly financial reports was established several years ago and approved by trustees. The reports include a detailed list of expenditures relative to budget, also expressed as a percentage. The reports also provides a historical comparison with the same period in the previous year. There are no explanations provided in the report for any significant variances, but the SBO

provides a verbal explanation of such variances during the Business and Corporate Services Committee meetings.

Management has considered the format of interim financial reporting recommended by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC). However, management noted that the existing format of monthly financial reports is preferred by the Board. The Finance department is considering enhancing the existing format of reports with staffing information.

The IFRC provided 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, which will provide meaningful financial updates and forecasts in a concise, understandable document for trustees. Management should continue considering the recommendations made by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) on frequency (a minimum of three reports) and format of interim financial reporting to the Board. 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, which compares budget to forecast.

- A table summarizing staffing, which 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.

Information on the IFRC report and templates is available on the School Business Support Branch website at https://sbsb.edu.gov.on.ca.

All monthly financial reports are reviewed by the SBO prior to presentation to the Board. However, these reports are not formally approved or signed off by the Director and the Superintendent of Business.

In addition to the monthly financial reports, the Finance department prepares reports for department managers when requested. Management noted that all budget holders have direct access to the information on their cost centres in the school board's financial system.

Management noted that, in the past, the school board had difficulty meeting the Ministry timelines for financial reporting. Management contracted external services to assist in preparing financial reports. However, meeting the financial reporting timelines remains a challenge for the school board. The 2010-11 estimates have been submitted on time.

Audit

The school board does not have an independent internal audit function. The school board is, however, actively participating in the Ministry's regional audit initiative, which provides funding for some dedicated internal audit staff for the eight regions in the province of Ontario. The regional audit team will provide independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve the school board's operations. This internal audit initiative will help the school board accomplish their objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

As part of this initiative, the regional internal audit manager will submit a summary of the audit plan (current year work schedule and multi-year plan), staffing plan and budget for the following fiscal year to the Director of Education, senior business official and audit committee of the Board. The school board should work with the regional audit team to ensure annual audit plans are clearly documented. Audit report recommendations should be followed up and acted upon by management. Audit plans should also be approved by the audit committee.

At the time of the Operational Review, the Board did not have an audit committee in place. However, the Board governance policies refer to the establishment of an Audit Committee. Management was also aware of the new Audit Committee Regulation and was planning to set up a separate audit committee with external members. 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 should continue to become familiar with the new Audit Committee Regulation and the Ministry's internal audit initiative, including the establishment of regional internal audit teams and the development of a risk assessment to establish priority areas for internal audit activities.

The school board has a long-standing relationship with its external auditors. Following the audit, the auditors provide their report to the senior administration, who then present the information to the Board. The Board has an opportunity to meet with external auditors *in-camera*. However, management noted that the school board's external auditors have not requested such meetings. Management noted that the school board has not received management letters from the external auditors over the past several years as there were no sufficient issues noted by auditors.

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

- The school board should establish approval procedures for interim financial statements, and implement a formal sign-off process of these statements by senior management.

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

- Management should work with the regional audit team to ensure annual audit plans are clearly documented. Audit report recommendations should be followed up and acted upon by management. Where management chooses not to

implement an audit recommendation and to accept the risks associated with an audit finding, the justification should be clearly documented and agreed to by the Audit Committee.

- The Board should establish an Audit Committee and recruit external advisors to sit on the Audit Committee in accordance with the new Audit Committee regulation.

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.	Yes
Management periodically compares the school board's banking terms and conditions to those of similar school boards.	Yes
Management monitors financial risk related to cash/investment management and has a plan to mitigate associated risks.	Yes

Cash and Investment Management

The school board takes part in a joint initiative with other local public sector organizations for banking services. The administration of the Renfrew Area Administrators Group (RAAG) is composed of chief executive officers of the coterminous school boards, Pembroke Regional Hospital, County of Renfrew, Family and Children Services, City of Pembroke, and Renfrew County District Health Unit. All of the school board's idle cash is pooled within the consortium and can be borrowed on a short-term basis by any participating organization.

The consortium is managed by a bank. As part of the consortium arrangement, banking services are tendered every five years. Each year, the school board conducts an internal review of this arrangement to ensure that it continues to be beneficial for the school board. Each year, management provides monthly detailed Bank Operating Loan reports to trustees. These include monthly information and year-to-date information on bank balances, interest revenues, and expenditures. The report also includes a monthly comparison to the prior year information.

Currently, bank reconciliations are completed by the Finance Officer who also signs off the reconciliations. Previously, the reconciliations were performed by the Accounting Assistant/Accounts Payable. There is segregation between bank reconciliations and deposits. Cash receipts are prepared and entered into the accounting system by the Executive Secretary for the Finance department.

The Finance department has implemented a number of central controls to prevent potential cash management issues. The school board uses electronic cheques, generated by a single designated computer. The Finance department prepares a complete cheque log which is provided to trustees as part of monthly reporting.

The school board maintains a current account, deferred salary leave accounts, payroll accounts, a registered charity account, and scholarship accounts with the same banking institution that administers the RAAG pooled cash arrangement. Schools may use local banking institutions.

Management noted that the school board has limited investment activity. The school board invests scholarship funds. Board governance policies include a statement on investing. It is stated in policies that, as Board Treasurer, the Superintendent of Business Services shall comply with the investment, borrowing and education development charge requirements of the *Education Act* and the related Regulations. Management provides annual scholarship investment reports to the administrators of bequests.

The school board monitors and mitigates the financial risk related to cash and investment management in several ways. The Finance Officer reviews all cheque runs.

For cheques over $1,000, the Finance Officer reviews the supporting documents. Prior year documentation is stored in two secure vaults at the school board office and at secure off-site storage. All current year documentation is stored in locked filing cabinets or in the safe at the school board office.

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 Revenue

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 school board has established a policy on fundraising activities. There are no policies and procedures guiding management of school-based funds. Management has, however, developed a school council financial protocol. The protocol outlines recommendations for cheque signing, bank statements, reports on fundraising, retention of records, and payment of invoices.

Management follows standard processes in tracking school-generated funds and reporting on revenues and expenditures. The school board has implemented specialized software to support management of school cash. The Finance department monitors transactions in the cash management software as a way to ensure that schools account for various transactions correctly.

Most schools have one account for school-generated funds. Three schools have a separate account for school council funds.

The school board's policy on fundraising provides high-level rules for fundraising activities allowed by the school board.

Management of Non-Grant Revenue

The main sources of non-grant revenue for the school board are: tuition fees, longterm leases, and Education Programs - Other (EPO) grants. Management noted that costs associated with the community use of schools are covered by the community use of schools grant. The school board does not have any issues regarding collecting fees and payments.

There are management guidelines and a policy in place for the community use of schools, last revised in 2003. The school board is continually looking for options to enhance the community use of facilities program, using the funding provided by the Ministry of Education. Management noted that the school board is implementing an online booking system for community use. The school board has established the role of

Community Outreach Coordinator. Management provides monthly reports to the Board on community use of facilities.

When EPO grants are announced, the Finance Officer sets up a new budget account. Each staff lead responsible for an EPO grant is accountable for ensuring spending within the established budget. Management uses "sign-off" sheets for professional development events funded through EPOs to ensure that occasional teachers' costs are accurately tracked. Program leads are also responsible for reports required by terms and conditions of grants. If reporting includes any financial matters, it requires preparation by the Finance Officer and a sign-off by the Superintendent of Business. All EPOs are tracked centrally and are reconciled and reported at Program Team Meetings or as requested by staff and at March and August through the Ministry financial reporting cycles.

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

Leading Practices – Supply Chain/Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
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

Leading Practices – Supply Chain/Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Commitment accounting is in place to monitor budget utilization.	Yes
Management has implemented electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing and payment.	No

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.	No

Policies and Procedures

In 2010, the school board established a supply chain/procurement policy aligned with the Ontario Broader Public Sector Supply Chain Guidelines (SCG). The school board has also adopted the Supply Chain Code of Ethics. The policy and Code of Ethics are posted on the school board's website and also sent to all schools. The SBO has provided a presentation to the Leadership Team on key changes in purchasing procedures. The school board has also established separate policies for trustees and employees on travel, hospitality, and equipment expenses.

The procedure indicates exceptions for competitive procurement, including emergencies, single sourcing and sole sourcing. The policy provides a clear description of circumstances under which single sourcing or sole sourcing are permitted, and sets out requirements for documentation.

Management noted that tender documents (including bid evaluation criteria) indicate that price is not the only criterion for awarding contracts, and takes into account factors such as value and quality of service.

The school board has established the following competitive purchasing thresholds:

- Less than $500 – purchases are made by using petty cash, school banking, expense claims or corporate cards;

- $501- $5,000 purchases are made by purchase order through the Purchasing department;

- $5,001 - $25,000 – requires a purchase order and up to three quotes;

- $25,001 - $99,999 requires a purchase order and invitational competitive procurement (a minimum of three suppliers are invited to bid);

- $100,000 or more – purchases are made through an open competitive process.

The school board's purchasing activities are overseen by the Purchasing Supervisor, who is also the main buyer for the school board. All requisitions approved by appropriate levels of staff are directed to the Purchasing Supervisor who prepares and issues POs. The Purchasing Supervisor also coordinates and oversees competitive procurement and annual bulk purchasing of custodial supplies.

Management is continually monitoring the Ontario Education Collaborative Marketplace (OECM) opportunities. The school board has used the OECM Vendor of Record (VOR) list for the procurement of energy audit services.

Participation in Group Purchasing Initiatives

The purchasing policy and procedures state that the school board may participate in tenders/contracts administered by cooperative purchasing agencies (involving school boards and/or governmental agencies) whenever it is in the best interests of the school board.

Management noted that the school board is continually examining opportunities and options for group purchasing. In particular, management discussed such opportunities with the Renfrew Area Administrators Group (RAAG). The school board is kept informed about emerging cooperative purchasing opportunities. The school board is purchasing photocopier paper through OECM.

Purchasing Levels of Authority

The school board's policy and procedures set out the following approval levels for purchasing:

- Purchase of $10,000 or less require approval of the principal;

- Purchase of $20,000 or less require approval of Supervisor of Purchasing;

- Purchases of $50,000 or less are approved by Manager;

- Purchases of 250,000 or less require approval of Superintendent;

- For purchases of $999,999 or less the approval of the Director of Education is required; and

- Any purchase of $1,000,000 or more requires the approval of the Board.

The levels of authority for purchasing requisitions are set up in the school board's financial system. After appropriate approvals all requisitions are directed to the Purchasing Supervisor who prepares POs and coordinates competitive procurement when required. If required, the quotes are requested by either the requisitioner or the Coordinator of Purchasing.

Policies and Procedures for PCard/Corporate Card Use

The school board does not use PCards. Management noted that it has evaluated PCards, but the school board's banking institution could not provide the product, services and controls required by the school board.

There are 20 corporate cards issued to supervisory officers, managers, purchasing supervisor, maintenance staff, special assignment teachers and executive secretaries. Corporate cards are mainly used for procurement of maintenance supplies and travel bookings. The school board has established a formal policy for corporate cards. The school board has established a policy and procedures on use of corporate cards. All expenditures are approved the employee's immediate supervisor. All expenses incurred by the trustees and the Superintendent of Educational Services and SBO must be approved by the Director of Education as the designated senior official of the Board. All expenditures incurred by the Director of Education must be approved by the Chair of the Board. All statements/expense claims are submitted at the end of the month to the SBO for payment/reimbursement.

Accounting for Completeness of Purchase/Payment Cycle

At the school level, purchasing requisitions are approved by the school principal. The purchasing system submits the requisition to the Purchasing Supervisor, who creates a PO and issues it to vendors. Schools are encouraged to order supplies for the year through an annual consolidated bulk purchase. The school board also conducts annual bulk purchasing of custodial supplies. Orders are received and stored in the school board's warehouse. The warehouse staff provide a receiving report to the Purchasing Supervisor who enters the receipt information into the financial system for finance to match with the PO and invoice before issuing payment. At the time of the operational review, the school board was in the process of implementing an electronic warehousing system to streamline the ordering process and inventory management.

Additional purchases can be made throughout the year, which are delivered directly to schools. Invoices for these orders are provided to school principals to match the invoice with the receipt information and notify finance that the invoice can be paid. If the shipment is incomplete, the principal is responsible for contacting the vendors and resolving any issues.

The school board uses commitment accounting. The budget is committed in the financial system when a PO is issued. There is an automated feature in the financial system that flags budget overspending. Purchasing will not process expenditures beyond the allocated budget without the approval of the Superintendent of Schools. The Finance department monitors compliance with the overall established budget for all cost centres. The Purchasing Supervisor undertakes periodic reviews of outstanding POs. The school board does not pay partial invoices. The school board has not implemented electronic supplier catalogues.

Use of Electronic Funds Transfer for Greater Efficiency

The school board has started working with its banking institution to establish electronic funds transfers (EFTs) with vendors. The financial system has been updated to enable EFTs. It is planned to test the EFTs with some vendors before full implementation which is included in the current operating plan of the Finance department.

The school board uses electronic cheques or electronic transfers for all payments.

Recommendations:

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

- Management should continue identifying opportunities for implementation of the electronic supplier interface and catalogues for ordering, processing and payment.

- The school board should continue working with its bank to establish EFTs for its vendors.

5. School Operations and Facilities Management – Findings and Recommendations
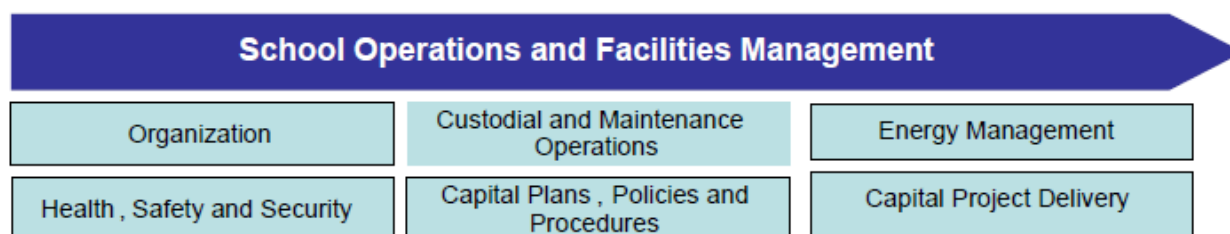
Efficient and effective management of the school board's facilities (particularly schools) is an important factor in student achievement. Along with providing a positive learning environment for students, this function sets and meets standards of cleanliness and maintenance, examines opportunities to 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 reviewing the organization of operations and facilities is to assess:

- Whether the board of trustees and management have established policies and procedures that support the key departmental functions and activities, strong internal controls and financial management;

- Whether the department supports the overall goals, priorities, and accountability established by the school board in support of student achievement targets and strategies;

- The efficiency and effectiveness of the departmental structure and whether roles and responsibilities support the key functions/activities and the required business practices;

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

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

Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Leading Practices – Operations and Facilities Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The 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.	Yes

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 to the public.	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

The Plant Services department establishes a rolling multi-year department operating plan, which is aligned with the school board's strategic and annual operating plan. The

Plant Services department obtains input from the Administrative Council, the department staff, and schools for the development of the annual operating plan. The annual operating plan includes overarching objectives in the area of capital projects, plant services and health and safety. At the operational level, the activities of the department are guided by the annual capital/renewal plan and plans for individual initiatives and projects.

The Plant Services department undertakes in-year monitoring of progress in implementing the plan informally and provides input on key accomplishments for the Director's Annual Report. The Plant Services department also provides *ad hoc* reports to the senior administration team and the Board of Trustees. Since the significant amount of maintenance work is completed in summer, the department provides summer reporting to the Board to highlight accomplishments and improvements.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The Plant Services department has a current organization chart outlining the positions within the department. The school board's administration organization chart (which is posted on the website) indicates the structure of reporting of the Manager of Plant Services. The website also provides the list of key staff within the Plant Services department and their contact details.

The Manager of Plant Services is supported by the Health and Safety/Plant Services Officer, Assistant to Plant Services, and Plant Services Secretary. The Health and Safety/Plant Services Officer is responsible for some aspects of caretaking services including monitoring of cleanliness standards and standardization of custodial products. Plant maintenance staff report directly to the Manager of Plant Services and the caretaking staff report to the Plant Services Officer and the Manager of Plant Services. There are five full-time and one part-time maintenance staff. The school board also has 32 employee caretakers. Services are provided by contracted caretakers at 10 out of 22 schools. Maintenance staff are assigned to specific schools, but they may be re-assigned to other schools as necessary, based on the information in the work order system. Management noted that the position of the Assistant to Plant Services is a temporary position which was established to support the department during a long-term leave of an employee. However, given the increasing number of various plant services projects, the department kept the position in its organizational structure and extended the position for one year.

Administrative positions within the Plant Services department have various requirements for professional qualifications and experience. The HR department maintains up-to-date job descriptions for all staff in the Plant Services department. The Manager of Plant Services has an engineering designation, and lead maintenance staff

are licensed carpenters. All management staff within the Plant Service department have relevant professional experience.

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

The Plant Services department is responsible for policies and procedures related to school facilities, security, community use of schools, and occupational health and safety. The Health and Safety/Plant Services Officer is responsible for monitoring compliance with health and safety policies, and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, including water quality testing. The Manager of Plant Services is responsible for monitoring changes in regulations and legislation which require changes in school board's policies. The Manager of Plant Services, Health and Safety Officer and Assistant to Plant Services are members of OASBO. All formal policies and procedures are posted on the school board's website.

The Plant Services department communicates new and changed policies and procedures to principals and other staff using e-mail. The department also provides periodic updates to the Leadership Team on changes in policies and statutory requirements.

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.	No
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.	No
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

The school board has a Custodian Manual and Guidelines with formal cleaning standards. The Plant Services Officer is responsible for monitoring compliance with cleaning standards by periodic inspections, carried out at least once per semester. Although there is a standard checklist for inspections, the Plant Services Officer documents his observations during the inspection. A copy of the observations report is provided to the Manager of Plant Services, the school caretaker, and the principal. The written reports contain recommendations for actions. The Plant Services Officer follows up on recommendations to ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken. In addition to scheduled inspections, complaints from parents or students may trigger an inspection.

Management noted that use of space and square footage is the key factor in the allocation model for custodial staff. However, other factors, such as the use of portables, are also taken into account. Management also noted that the collective agreement prescribes the number of caretaking staff per school. Out of a total of 22 schools, there are 10 schools that have caretaking services provided by contractors.

The school board has started implementing initiatives to promote green cleaning across all schools. There are approximately eight new green products used for cleaning, which make up about 50 per cent of all cleaning products. The Plant Services department continues to consider and pilot new green products, comparing costs and usage to inform future decisions on procurement. The school board has also started working to develop formal green procurement guidelines, in line with the Ministry Green Clean Resource Guide. The school board has not yet implemented a formal Green Clean program. The school board also does not have a formal environmental policy.

The Green Clean Resource 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

Management plans and undertakes major maintenance and renewal projects within the available annual capital expenditure and school operations and maintenance budget. Major school board capital expenditures are funded by Ministry of Education grants and/or by Ministry of Education long-term funding (debentures). The current planning document prepared by the Plant Service departments indicates projects completed over the past several years, and sources of funding. The document also includes ongoing or active projects, costs, and source of funding. It is indicated in the planning documents that projects implemented with Good Places to Learn funding have been identified as high priorities in the initial Ministry survey or by the school board in ReCAPP. Projects in the Renewal category have been identified by management. The document also identifies projects implemented with energy efficiency funding.

There is no formal process in place to collect input from principals regarding maintenance and renewal priorities. Principals have regular contact with the Manager of Plant Services (including the monthly Leadership Team meetings) to discuss plant projects. Once the plan is established, school principals are notified about plans for their schools. Often this communication also often takes place informally. Management noted that the school board undertakes mostly reactive maintenance. In addition to major renewal projects, day-to-day maintenance is identified through by work order requisitions. The school board does not develop and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects which would address the school board's preventative and deferred maintenance priorities.

Training to Support Skills Development and Safety

The school board purchased and implemented training software to provide mandatory training to staff. The Plant Services department also organizes and provides job-specific training for custodial staff. Usually, a professional development day is organized in summer, and includes health and safety training.

When a member of staff begins and completes an online course in the training software, a notification is automatically recorded by the program. For other courses, such as First Aid/CPR, there is manual tracking of attendance and completion.

Standardization of Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies

Each site of the school board has are least two pieces of major cleaning equipment. Management noted that it started to develop the inventory list to track these pieces of equipment. There are no school board-owned vehicles. Major pieces of maintenance equipment are kept in the maintenance shop and borrowed by maintenance staff as needed. There is no formal process in place to track inventory of maintenance equipment.

The Plant Services department uses standardized cleaning products across all schools. The custodial supplies are purchased through bulk orders once a year, and are stored in the school board's warehouse. Custodians send a paper form requisition to the warehouse and supplies are delivered to schools. Management noted that the process is expected to be improved with the implementation of a computerized warehouse inventory system. The Plant Services department conducts periodic analysis of product use and costs including analysis of the use of green cleaning products. The school board uses dispensing units for cleaning products in all schools.

Project Management, Monitoring and Supporting Systems

The Plant Services department has implemented a paper-based work order system. Schools use paper forms to submit their work order requests. The requests are reviewed by the Plant Services department to determine if service or maintenance contractors are required. If external maintenance services are required, the Plant Service department prepares a purchase order which is submitted through the purchasing system. Work orders which are determined to be completed by school board's maintenance staff are allocated to individual maintenance staff.

Management noted that for emergency work orders, communication takes place via telephone or e-mail. The Plant Services department uses a spreadsheet to track work orders. Management noted that the geographical location of maintenance staff is the main criteria for allocating work orders. However, sometimes assignments are based on staff availability and specific needs associated with the work order. Lead maintenance staff have cell phones, and maintain binders with work orders. Maintenance staff are responsible for prioritizing the work orders that have been assigned to them. Maintenance staff complete timesheets and submit to the Plant Services Secretary for processing and consolidation.

Recommendations:

- The school board should finalize the development of formal green procurement guidelines aligned with the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The development of formal green procurement guidelines along with the

overarching Education Environmental Policy should be the first step in implementing a formal green clean program.

- Using a consultative process, management should develop and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The Plan should address the 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 accessible to the public.

- Management should examine options for implementing an automated workorder system.

- Management should finalize the development of inventory of major custodial and maintenance equipment.

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

Leading Practices – Energy Management	Evidence of Adoption?
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

Energy conservation has been a focus of the school board over the past several years. The school board has been identifying the needs and priority projects. However, the school board has not yet established a formal energy management plan with measurable goals and targets.

The school board has implemented a number of projects and initiatives in the area of energy management. Using the energy efficiency funding provided by the Ministry of Education, the school board has contracted energy management consultants to conduct energy audits of all schools. As result of the audits, the consultants have identified potential projects and discussed options with the school board. At the time of the operational review, the school board was working to develop an implementation plan for the identified projects. Management incorporates energy efficiency projects funded through the Ministry grants in the school board's capital and renewal plans.

The school board is carrying out a pilot project to install solar panels in one of the schools. The school board has also applied for additional Ministry funding for green energy projects, and received approvals for three additional solar projects.

Management noted that that energy efficiency is taken into account in the purchasing of equipment. Management should consider documenting energy efficiency requirements in the school board's purchasing policies. The school board should also establish an overarching environmental policy which would include, among other principles,

procurement of energy efficient equipment. The school board is currently considering participation in the OECM consortium for purchasing of electricity and other options for cooperative purchasing of utilities. The school board purchases fuel oil for several schools through a joint purchasing arrangement.

Management ensures that the ongoing energy conservation initiatives are communicated within the school board community. For the solar panel pilot, the school board organized an official project launch event and invited local media. Science consultants have taken on the role of energy conservation champions and facilitate communication on energy conservation and related projects within schools and across the school board. Management noted that the solar panel project underpinned the development of a high school program in energy management. However, the school board has not yet established an environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices.

Tracking and Reporting Energy Conservation

The Plant Services department maintains a spreadsheet to track energy costs. The data for the spreadsheet is obtained from the school board's financial system. Management noted that it is considering options for tracking the consumption data through working with the energy management consultants. The school board has provided the requested data for the Ministry-sponsored Utilities Consumption Database.

The school board has implemented Building Automation Systems (BAS) in two high schools. However, there is no remote control capability for the existing BAS. Management is working on installation of BAS across more schools and implementing a remote energy regulation and control.

The school board uses multiple utility providers which has limitations for consolidated billing arrangements. However, natural gas billing is consolidated for most schools, except three schools which use different providers and have a large volume meter installed. Hydro bills are not consolidated, as there are several providers. However, from each provider, the school board receives one package with bills for all schools.

Recommendations:

- Using the data available through the energy management system, 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 the formal energy management plan is established, the school board should ensure that its procurement policies and practices support the objectives and targets of the plan. Management should also consider documenting the energy efficiency requirements in procurement policies and procedures and/or the environmental policy.

- 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 school board has established an Occupational Health and Safety policy, which is updated each year. There is a central Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and Occupational Health and Safety representatives at each school who are appointed on a voluntary basis. Health and safety inspections are conducted monthly at each school and reports are sent to the Health and Safety Officer. School principals are also informed about the outcomes of inspections. The central Joint Health and Safety Committee reviews all inspection reports during four meetings that take place each year and addresses any critical issues such as serious accidents and significant WSIB claims.

The Health and Safety/Plant Services Officer is responsible for coordinating all matters pertaining to occupational health and safety at the school board, including mandatory training for school board staff. The school board is using online training software to provide and track mandatory health and safety training. Management is continually considering options for enhancing the use of the software.

The school board has established an Emergency Response Reference Guide and emergency measures policy. School principals review the policy and guide with school staff two times a year along with a review of safe schools policies and programs. Management noted that the school board also has a Nuclear Response Plan, given the proximity of a nuclear power plant to school board facilities.

Schools work with local police services to develop appropriate protocols. The Superintendent of Education oversees programs and initiatives related to student health and safety such as healthy schools and safe schools.

Overall, the school board ensures compliance with statutory requirements for occupational and student health and safety. Although the school board has a number of initiatives in place to support compliance with statutory heath requirements, there is no documented health strategy that would address the 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 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.	Yes
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 annual renewal plan described in Section 5.2 of this report is the current capital/renewal plan of the school board. The plan identifies various projects, including major and minor renewal projects, projects identified through ReCAPP, and projects related to energy efficiency. Management noted that the main sources of capital funding for the school board are Good Places to Learn (GPL), energy efficiency funding, and Prohibitive to Repair (PTR) funding.

Management provides periodic reports to the Board Corporate and Business Services Committee on individual capital and renewal projects. Management also prepares reports on energy efficiency funding, which specify expenditures to date and the remaining balance. In 2009, management prepared a report for trustees on capacity and utilization of school board facilities, to discuss challenges and long-term capital planning considerations. Management noted that the long-term planning perspective is taken when decisions are made about maintenance projects in schools that may be closed in the future.

The SBO has overall responsibility for the capital/renewal plan. The school board has completed the Capital Wrap-Up Template.

The Board has established an accommodation review policy. Although the school board has not conducted recent accommodation reviews, management has identified a number of schools with significant under-capacity, where accommodation reviews may be necessary in the future.

The school board has established draft Facilities Partnership policy. At the time of the operational review, the draft policy was being finalized for submission to the Board for approval.

Ongoing Monitoring and Maintenance of Data to Support Capital Planning

The Plant Services Secretary is trained to use SFIS. SFIS data is updated when there are changes. In June 2009, management provided SFIS data to school principals to obtain validation and provide comments and any required changes.

The Manager of Plant Services is also responsible for updating ReCAPP data. Management indicated that ReCAPP data is up-to-date and includes all completed and pending projects.

Recommendation:

- The school board should finalize the Facility Partnership 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
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

With funding support from the Ministry, the school board has been working to promote the community use of schools. The school board is piloting an online booking system, and plans to implement an online payment system. The school board is also working closely with the coterminous board and other public sector organizations to enhance the utilization of available space. The school board has established reciprocal agreements with several municipalities for the use of facilities such as sports facilities and libraries. Currently, the school board and the coterminous board are building two new schools on land donated by the Town of Petawawa.

Given the declining enrolment and significant excess capacity in a number of schools, the school board has not been undertaking many new construction projects over the last several years. The most recent project involved building of an addition to the existing school. At the time of the operational review, the school board completed a tender process for the construction of a new school.

Management noted that recent construction projects, including additions, required customization to meet the specific needs of existing facilities. However, in all construction projects, management uses cost-effective features and standards, such as cold weather construction standards. For energy conservation standards, the school board relies on advice from the school board's architects and engineering consultants.

For the ongoing new school construction project, the school board has established a design committee composed of the architect, principal, Superintendent of Education, local trustee and Manager of Plant Services. The school board has organized public unveiling of the design. Management noted that for the new construction project the school board contracted cost consultants to estimate the project budget. Management has also considered construction project benchmarks. However, they could not develop the budget within the benchmarks due to the relatively small size of the new school and the lack of the economy of scale. The school board's business case for the new school, which was submitted and approved by the Ministry, also included some program elements, such as a daycare, that are not included in the Ministry's construction benchmarks. These elements contributed to the total cost of the project and can partly be attributed to the project costs exceeding the Ministry's benchmarks.

Monitoring and Reporting of Progress on Construction Projects

Management noted that the project management approach for construction projects has been enhanced over the past several years. In general, management uses process, documents and forms developed by the Canadian Construction Documents Committee (CCDC). The Manager of Plant Services has the role of the project manager during construction projects. The Manager of Plant Services is responsible for tracking of the project budget including change orders. The school board's architects approve progress payments and prepare a certificate of payment, which is submitted to the Manager of Plant Services. The Manager of Plant Service reviews the certificate and signs off for payment. The Board of Trustees receives regular updates on the new construction project. Management noted that the frequency of updates may be increased if there are any issues in the course of the project.

Maintaining Current Approved Professional Service Providers

The school board has started using a pre-qualification process for general contractors. The school board uses CCDC standards contracts and documentation.

For the new school construction project, the school board advertised the prequalification announcement on Biddingo, and invited five pre-qualified contractors to submit their bids.

Management noted that the school board has a long-standing relationship with its current architects. However, management is planning to reconsider the approach to contracting of architects, to meet the requirements of the Supply Chain Guideline.

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 boards, with recommendations that support improvement in non-academic operations;

- Highlight existing successful business practices used by boards, to the sector and to school board communities;

- Leverage "best practices" across the education sector;

- Provide support and assistance to ensure that 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 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 boards under each functional area.

Each of the processes was examined based on its activities and its adoption of sector agreed leading practices, including alignment and support of student achievement strategies.
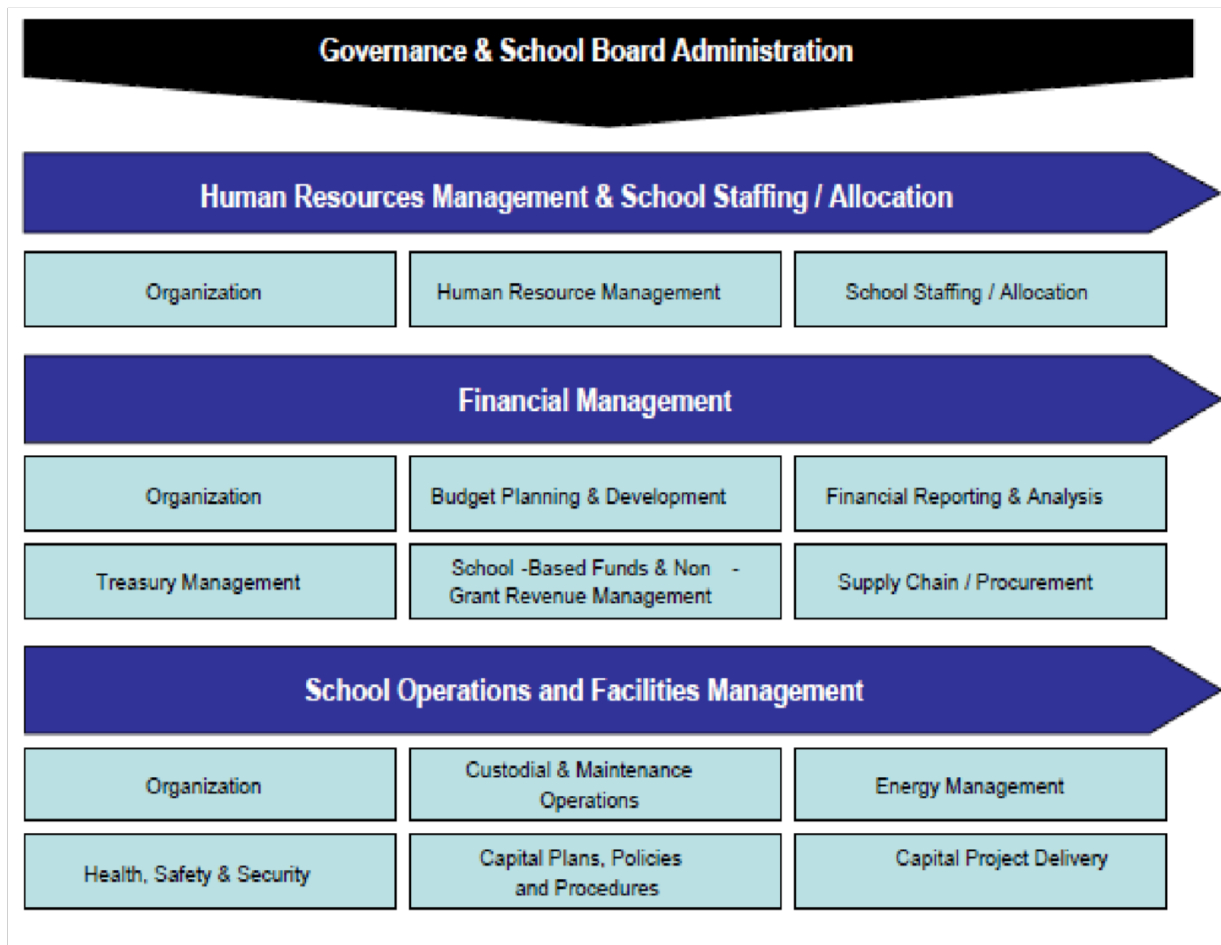
Operational Review Summary Approach

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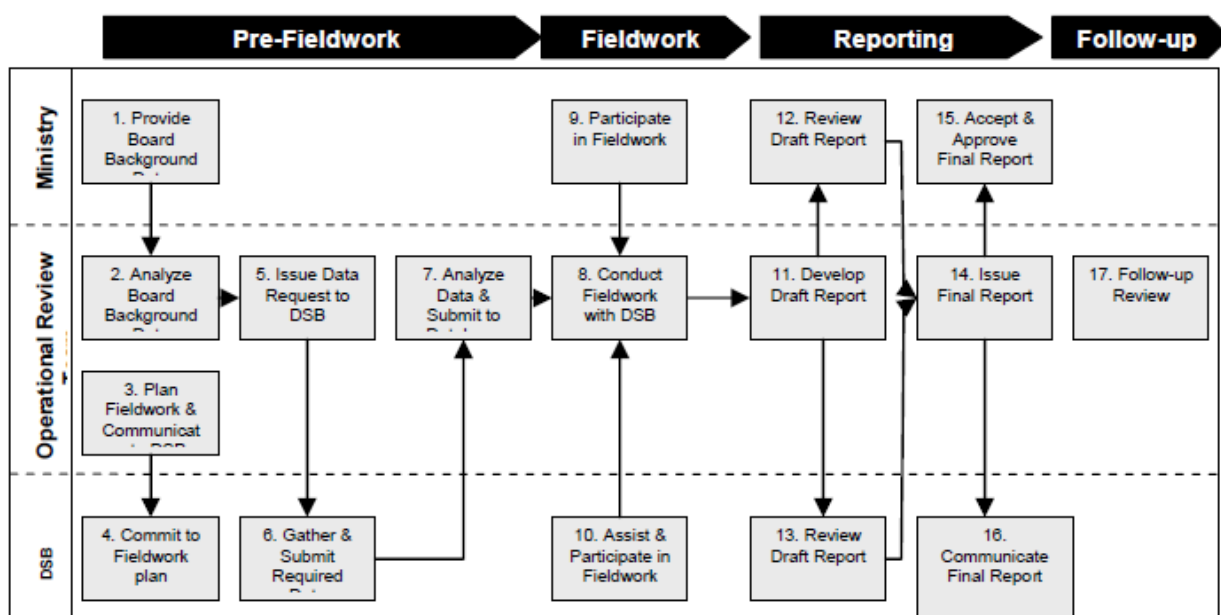
The Table below defines the key phases and activities which comprise the Operational review Methodology.

Phase: Pre-Fieldwork

Key Activity	Description
Provide Board Background Data	The Ministry collects and maintains significant quantities of 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 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 boards before the start of the next review cycle.
Commit to Fieldwork Plan	Boards are required to commit to the Operational Review schedule. The Ministry and the review team will attempt to accommodate scheduling conflicts.
Issue Documentation Request to School Board	Before the start of fieldwork, a request for supporting documentation is generated to gather operating and other information for each focus area. The review team uses this information to enhance its understanding of the school board before the start of field work.
Gather and Submit Required Documentation	Upon receipt of the request for supporting documentation, each board compiles the requested data. 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 board and adds the results to a sector-wide database to compare the results for each board.

Phase: Fieldwork

Key Activity	Description
Conduct Fieldwork with Board	The fieldwork is conducted for each 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 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 board senior staff to review and obtain feedback.
Prepare Final Report	The review team incorporates the feedback from the both the Ministry and the board and prepares a final report.
Accept and Approve Final Report	The final report is issued to the Ministry for approval and release.
Communicate Final Report	The Ministry issues a final report to the board.

Phase: Follow-up

Key Activity	Description
Follow-up Review	Eight to 12 months after the release of the final report, the review team conducts a follow-up review to determine the extent the 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.
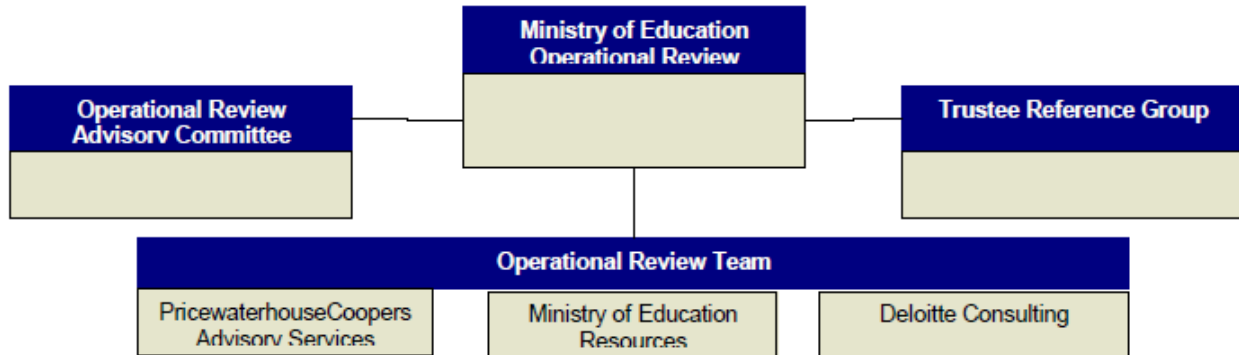
Limitations of this Review

The purpose of this report is to document the results of the Operational Review of the Renfrew County Catholic 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 align its leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry's leadership initiatives. It should finalize the development of a formal leadership development and succession plan for key management positions in all academic and non-academic areas.

Human Resources Management and School Staffing/Allocation

No.	Recommendation
2.	The school board should review its hiring policies and procedures, including the composition of hiring panels, to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff in the 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.
3.	The HR department should establish a formal employee performance appraisal process for the Director of Education, superintendents, management, and support staff. The formal process should be supported by documented policies and procedures.
4.	Trustees should provide the school board with a policy and priority framework for bargaining and not directly participate in negotiations.
5.	The HR department should finalize the process of adopting formal disciplinary guidelines and communicate the guidelines to principals and staff in supervisory roles.
6.	Management should implement a formal attendance support program which would use the available attendance data. Management should also continue to identify options for implementation of a human resources information management system which would enable the HR department to track and analyze staff attendance.
7.	Management should develop a way to assess and report on the effectiveness of the attendance support process/programs to senior administration and the Board.
8.	Management should periodically conduct independent compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier to ensure adherence to the benefit plans' terms and conditions.
9.	Management should conduct periodic and confidential staff surveys to improve communication with staff and provide input for professional development plans and HR policy.
10.	Management should also conduct exit interviews with all staff leaving the school board to obtain input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement. Management should consider developing formal policies and/or procedures for conducting exit interviews.
11.	Management should document policies and procedures which govern the development of an annual staffing plan and allocation process.

Financial Management

No.	Recommendation
12.	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 strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond budgeted levels.
13.	Management should consider providing a budget process presentation containing an outline of budget timelines and stages to the Board each year. This would help ensure that the budget development process is clearly communicated and understood by all trustees. Throughout the budget development process, management should provide information to trustees on key stages in the budget development process.
14.	Management should take into account the recommendations made by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) on frequency (a minimum of three reports) and format of interim financial reporting to the Board. Management should continue to discuss with trustees how the existing format of interim financial reports can be enhanced to align with IFRC recommendations.
15.	The school board should establish approval procedures for interim financial statements, and implement a formal sign-off process of these statements by senior management.
16.	Management should continue working with the regional audit team on the development of a risk assessment to determine priority areas for internal audit activities.
17.	Management should work with the regional audit team to ensure annual audit plans are clearly documented. Audit report recommendations should be followed up and acted upon by management. Where management chooses not to implement an audit recommendation and to accept the risks associated with an audit finding, the justification should be clearly documented and agreed to by the Audit Committee.
18.	The Board should establish an Audit Committee and recruit external advisors to sit on the Audit Committee in accordance with the new Audit Committee regulation.
19.	The school board should expand its use of a central three-way matching process for all orders before invoices are paid. To this end, management should examine options within the existing purchasing system to automate all or some elements of the process.
20.	Management should continue identifying opportunities for implementation of the electronic supplier interface and catalogues for ordering, processing and payment.
21.	The school board should continue working with its bank to establish EFTs for its vendors.

School Operations and Facilities Management

No.	Recommendation
22.	Using a consultative process, management should develop and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The Plan should address the 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 accessible to the public.
23.	The school board should finalize the development of formal green procurement guidelines aligned with the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The development of formal

No.	Recommendation
	green procurement guidelines along with the overarching Education Environmental Policy should be the first step in implementing a formal green clean program.
24.	Management should examine options for implementing an automated work order system.
25.	Management should finalize the development of inventory of major custodial and maintenance equipment.
26.	Using the data available through the energy management system, 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.
27.	Once the formal energy management plan is established, the school board should ensure that its procurement policies and practices support the objectives and targets of the plan. Management should also consider documenting the energy efficiency requirements in procurement policies and procedures and/or the environmental policy.
28.	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.
29.	The school board should establish an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices, including energy conservation.
30.	Management should provide formal annual reporting on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.
31.	The school board should consider establishing an integrated health plan/strategy that would reflect the existing policies and 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.
32.	The school board should finalize the Facility Partnership Policy.