Ministry of Education

Operational Review Report
Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board

January, 2010

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report details the findings and recommendations of the Operational Review of Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board (the school board) 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 5, 2009.

Introduction

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

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

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

Governance and School Board Administration

The school board's governance model clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees and the senior administration. The Board's seven trustees set broad policy and have established a strategic direction that reflects the school board's vision, mission, principles and values, and long-range goals. The senior administration is responsible for implementing the Board's policies and managing the operations of the school board. The roles and responsibilities of the Director of Education and trustees are documented in school board policies.

There are positive relationships among the senior administration, the Director, and the board of trustees.

The school board has established a formal policy on trustees' roles and responsibilities which is included in its *Policy Manual*. The Chair of the Board has developed a reference document for trustees regarding the Board's governance model, which includes trustees' code of conduct and principles for Board governance.

In February 2008, the Board approved a strategic plan for 2008-2011 that outlines expected outcomes, strategies and indicators of success, timelines, and responsibility. For each strategic priority, the Board has established a committee of trustees and school board administration. The school board administration does not develop an annual operating plan to implement the Board's strategic priorities.

The Board established its policy on Development, Approval, Amendments and Exceptions to Policies which includes a five-year review cycle for all policies. The school board has not implemented a scheduled review of policies over the past two years, and updates policies on an as-needed basis. Management is currently establishing a new schedule for policy review.

The school board's administrative leadership is represented by the senior administration, which is composed of the Director of Education, Superintendent of Business, two superintendents of education, Assistant to the Superintendent of Education and Assistant to the Director – Human Resources. The organizational chart of the school board's administration is not posted on the school board's website.

The school board's leadership team is currently taking part in a two-year leadership development program. The Ontario Directors of Education Institute on Leadership and Strategic Impact is an executive development program developed by The Learning Partnership in association with the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and the Rotman School of Management. The school board has not established a formal Succession and Talent Development Plan to build and sustain leadership capacity.

The senior administration actively participates in various committees both across the sector and locally. The school board's senior administration team is also extensively involved in community initiatives and partnerships.

Recommendations:

- The school board should develop an annual operating plan, incorporating both academic and non-academic departments. The plan should be aligned with the Board's multi-year strategic plan and contain goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

- Management should continue establishing a new review schedule for Board policies and ensure that all policies are reviewed according to the cycle.

Management should consider posting all Board policies on the school board's website.

- Management should publish the organizational chart of the school board administration on the school board's website.

- The school board should continue aligning its leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry leadership initiatives. It should develop a formal Succession and Talent Development Plan, in line with the Leadership Succession Planning and Talent Development Ministry Expectations and Implementation Continuum. As a first step, the school board should undertake data collection, identification of skills and competencies and professional learning needs.

Human Resources Management and School Staffing/Allocation

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

- The school board has established formal policy and procedures for staff employment. Management has established hiring procedures for all staff categories.

- To address collective bargaining issues, the school board has established five liaison committees: three for OECTA (elementary, secondary and occasional teachers) bargaining units, APSSP and one for CUPE.

- The school board has established policies and procedures for employee performance appraisal of all staff groups.

- The HR department actively supports the professional development of school board staff.

- The school board has updated pay equity reviews for all staff groups. When there are changes in the position classification, management reviews the respective pay equity plan.

- Data transfer among benefits, payroll and OMERS is automated and synchronized through using "e-access". The external pay processing providers automatically submit employee data to the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan at each payroll.

- The staff allocation process begins with enrolment forecasting, and factors in other elements, such as student needs, class size requirements and preparation-

time. The enrolment forecast is developed using various sources of data, including school-by-school projections, prior years trend analyses, demographic trend analysis, and school board information.

- During the year, management conducts an assessment of actual enrolment, and appropriate adjustments are made in staff allocation. The HR department prepares regular reports on staffing changes for senior administration and the Board.

- Central controls in the hiring process established by the HR department help to ensure that hiring is compliant with the established staffing allocation.

The HR department has established its mission statement and general goals. However, the department does not prepare an annual departmental operating plan. The department staff undertake planning and monitoring of activities through regular, informal communication during the year. In addition, the HR staff conduct a meeting in summer to set key goals for the year.

The school board uses progressive discipline practices, and the HR department provides principals with advice and guidance on disciplinary actions. Management does not have formal written disciplinary procedures.

The school board has formal procedures for reporting absences, and has hired an external consultant to identify options for a formal attendance management program. The school board has a formal policy and procedures for early return to work, and is implementing a pro-active wellness management program.

Management does not conduct formal exit interviews.

Recommendations:

- The HR department should develop an annual departmental operating plan that includes performance measures and targets for its specific goals and priorities, and supports the annual reporting on achievements. This will enable staff to focus on the planned targets for each priority throughout the year and provide support for reporting the department's accomplishments.

- Management should establish formal disciplinary procedures for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Existing progressive discipline practices should be formalized and communicated to all staff.

- The HR department should develop a comprehensive attendance management program, with policies and procedures for specific categories of absenteeism. This would provide a consistent and structured approach to improving

attendance, including positive reinforcement for employees and standardized practices across all employee groups.

- The HR department should periodically report on the effectiveness of the attendance management process/programs to senior administration and the Board.

- Management should develop administrative procedures for exit interviews. These interviews would provide input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement.

Financial Management

The finance department has implemented many of the leading practices:

- The finance department builds staff's understanding of finance policies and administrative procedures with formal and informal training.

- The school board has established a policy on preparation and approval of the operating budget. The policy identifies the budget development process, including contents of the budget document. The policy also highlights the development process of school budgets.

- Management ensures the transparency of the annual budget development process by providing the Board with periodic updates. The initial budget presentation to the Board contains information on key changes in the GSN, Ministry goals, and linkages with the Board strategic objectives and goals.

- The school board's integrated financial information system provides useful, timely, and accurate information for management and stakeholders.

- The finance function undertakes periodic planned internal audits of schoolbased funds. The senior administration presents a report on school-based funds to the Board annually. The school board has contracted a retired superintendent from the coterminous board to conduct targeted internal audits of school-based funds and PCards.

- The school board's cash management activities are consolidated with one financial institution. The school board has one general account and three trust accounts. Individual school accounts may be set up with other banks, due to the limited choice of financial institutions in some areas.

- The school board has periodically examined its banking arrangements, and occasionally considers information from various financial institutions.

- The Board has a policy statement on investments consistent with the Ontario Regulation 471/97. Management provides annual reports on investment activity to the Board.

- The school board's debt payments associated with capital projects are fully funded by the GSN.

- The school board has established policy and administrative procedures on

- School Generated Funds, which is based on the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) Guidelines for School Generated Funds.[1]

- Management ensures adequate controls are in place to safeguard non-grant revenue, and coordinates the annual reporting of revenues and expenditures from all sources.

- Management has drafted new administrative procedures for purchasing, which are aligned with the Ontario Supply Chain Guideline. The draft procedure contains a code of ethics, roles and responsibilities of the Supervisor of Purchasing and school board administration, general purchasing directions, and guidance in relation to the approved vendors list, Canadian preference and negotiations.

- The school board is part of the Shared Purchasing Service Consortium of Bruce Grey, with the coterminous school board and the County of Grey. Management also pursues group purchasing opportunities outside of the consortium.

- The school board has established administrative procedures and guidelines for the use of purchasing card (PCards). Management undertakes monitoring of compliance with PCard policies and procedures, including timely and accurate completion of reconciliations.

The business department plans its annual activities through identification of priority projects for the year, including timelines, resources and expected outcomes. The priority setting could be used to develop a formal departmental operating plan. During the year, the business department conducts regular Business Information Meetings to provide updates on department projects and activities and undertake short-term operational planning.

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[1] http://www.oasbo.org/admin/eZeditor/files/f_10_OASBO_SchoolGeneratedFunds_Guidelines_January_2009.pdf

Budget planning processes account for all required cost and revenue changes. However, management does not conduct comparisons of staffing costs with similar school boards.

The budget presentation to trustees identifies key challenges for the budget. Management does not formally identify and document significant budget risks and proposed mitigating actions.

Management prepares two types of interim financial reports: monthly financial reports by department and a summary report for the Board. The finance staff prepares monthly financial reports for all superintendents. The interim financial reports are presented to the Board three times a year, and include budget estimates, revised estimates and year-end actuals. The interim financial reports do not provide detailed explanation of significant variances. There is no formal sign-off of interim financial reports by the Superintendent of Business and the Director of Education.

The Board as a whole acts as the audit committee.

Management has not implemented an electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing and payment.

The school board currently uses EFTs only for large payments. Disbursements to vendors are mostly provided through cheques.

Recommendations:

- The business department should develop an annual departmental operating plan that includes specific and measurable targets, assigns responsibilities for key activities and specifies timelines. The operating plan should be aligned to the Board's strategic directions. An operating plan will enable management to track and report on the progress of the department's defined priorities and goals throughout the year.

- Management should identify and document all significant risks during the budget planning process, and develop strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond authorized/budgeted levels.

- Management should consider implementing recommendations provided by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) regarding the format of interim financial reporting.[2] In particular, management should consider including non-financial performance indicators in the report (e.g., enrolment and staffing) and

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[2] Ministry of Education Memorandum SB38, September 16, 2009

explaining key variances with conclusions. Management should also consider using standard templates provided as part of IFRC report.

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

- In accordance with the Ministry's internal audit and audit committee strategy, the school board could consider establishing an audit committee that includes external advisors, who would contribute to the committee's effectiveness.

- Management should consider implementing the electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing and payment.

- Management should continue extending the use of electronic funds transfers (EFT) for payments.

School Operations and Facilities Management

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

- The facilities department provides training to staff on relevant policies and procedures, and ensures compliance with the various regulatory requirements.

- The facilities department facilitates training for custodial staff to support ongoing skills development, build awareness of regulatory changes, and ensure work place safety.

- Management tracks the consumption of custodial supplies at each school. All cleaning products are purchased through the supplier catalogue and are certified as green.

- Management uses an electronic requisitions system to create work order requests.

- The school board has drafted a policy and administrative procedure for environmental stewardship. The policy statement is focused on the commitment of the school board to provide leadership in the implementation of environmental programs and procedures.

- The school board has established policies and procedures for occupational health and safety and student health which are consistent with the statutory health requirements.

- The school board has established safe schools policies, and implemented a number of safe schools initiatives and programs. The school board uses the safe schools document developed by the Ministry for training of principals and as a tool to educate students.

- The school board has established a policy for an emergency plan, related to the proximity of a nuclear plant. The school board also has a policy for emergency procedures in the event of fire or other emergencies.

- The school board has developed and submitted its five year capital plan to the Ministry through the Ministry's SFIS web site. The capital plan is reviewed annually.

- In the development of its capital plan, management considers low utilization of some school board facilities. Management is continually identifying ways to utilize all school board facilities by promoting community use, including early childhood development programs.

- The SFIS database is updated when there are changes in school board facilities. The ReCAPP database is updated annually. Management uses cost-effective designs, standard footprints, energy conservation, and economical construction practices to minimize construction and future maintenance and operation costs.

- Management has established a project management process, which allows it to monitor and control construction projects and their costs.

The facilities department is responsible for the maintenance and custodial operations and construction of all facilities at the school board. The facilities department does not currently have a formal annual business plan setting out its specific goals and priorities.

The school board has not established formal cleaning standards for schools. Management uses feedback from principals, staff and parents as a means to monitor school cleanliness and identify areas for improvement.

The school board purchases all cleaning supplies from a vendor with a certified green products line. Management uses the custodial staffing model that is based on square footage. The school board outsources its maintenance services.

In 2006, the facilities department developed an inventory of equipment maintained at school level by requiring custodians to provide an inventory listing. Custodians are responsible for maintenance of their equipment. Management does not track inspection and maintenance of existing equipment.

The facilities department develops an annual maintenance plan based on observations made during tours of schools, with input from school principals.

Management recognizes the importance of promoting energy conservation, and has implemented several programs and initiatives. The school board has not established a formal energy management plan. Management contracted third party consultants to conduct audits of all school board facilities. Using the results of the audits, management will develop an energy efficiency plan based on a balance of critical needs and those projects providing the best return on investment.

Management has been tracking utility consumption data for over seven years. Monitoring data has been only analyzed at a high-level, due to lack of resources. The school board does not receive consolidated billing from the utilities, since there are multiple vendors.

The school board has established a policy and administrative procedures on long standing relationships with some service providers, including architects. Management intends to develop a formal process for the selection of architects for future construction projects.

Recommendations:

- Facilities management should establish a distinct annual departmental plan, with specific and measurable targets and indicators and assigned responsibilities for key activities. This would enable management to track and report the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.

- Management should continue increasing the use of green cleaning products and developing a Green Clean program in line with the Ministry guidance and the school board's overarching environmental stewardship policy.

- The school board should reconsider its custodial staffing model. As a starting point, the school board could consider conducting a comparison of its staff allocation model with other school boards to determine if other variables could be factored into their allocation formula.

- Management should establish a multi-year maintenance and renewal plan that includes the funding available to support it. This would provide the senior administration, the Board and its stakeholders with a clear forecast of the school board's critical needs over the next several years.

- Management should maintain and monitor an up-to-date inventory of major equipment used at school level. This measure would increase management confidence that staff are accountable for their use of the school board's assets.

- Using the results of the energy audits, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates quantifiable goals and targets.

- Management should ensure that successful conservation initiatives are communicated across all schools and with other school boards.

- Management should continue tracking and analyzing energy consumption/expenditure data at the facility level. This data should be used for the development of the energy management plan and formal annual reporting on the conservation savings.

- Management should obtain consolidated billing for all school board facilities from each utility, wherever practical.

- Management should proceed with the development of a formal process for the selection of architects for construction projects, and periodically evaluate and update the approved list of contractors, architects, and related professionals.

1. Background and Overview

1.1 School Board Profile and Structure

Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board provides educational services to approximately 3,468 students in 11 elementary and two secondary schools.

The school board's enrolment decreased by about 232 students from 2002-03 to the 2009-10 fiscal year, or about 6.3 per cent overall. This trend of declining enrolment, which is occurring across the province, is expected to impact on the school board over the next few years.

The school board's Senior Administration is as follows:
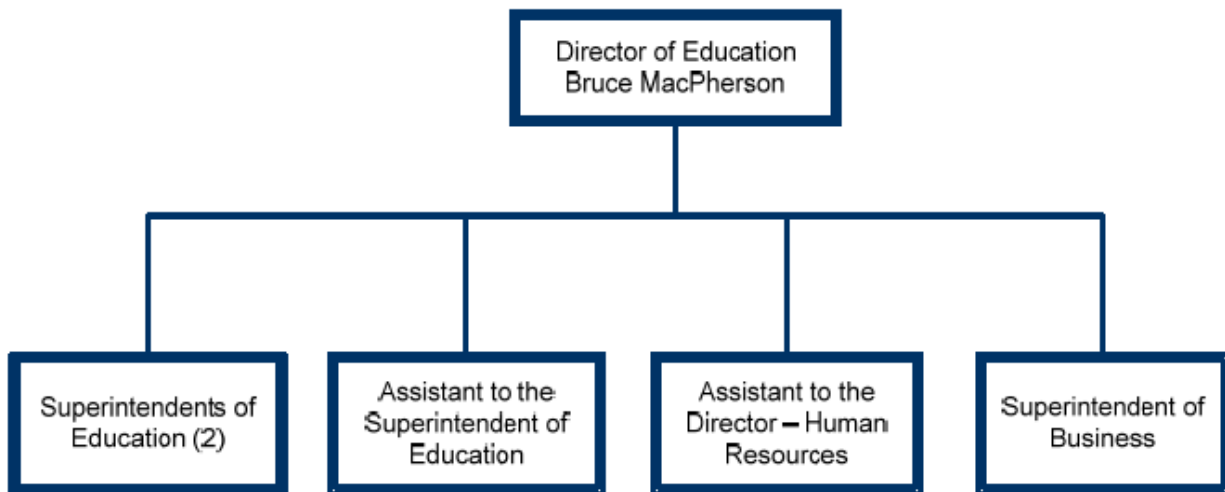
Figure 1

1.2 Key Priorities of the School Board

The school board's mission statement is:

"Committed to a vibrant Catholic education, we ensure quality learning experiences through community partnerships that:

- Nurture each student in body, mind and Spirit;

- Embrace the teachings of Christ, giving witness to Gospel values."

In 2007, the Board reviewed its strategic priorities and focused on four areas of strategic improvement:

- To undertake initiatives that sustain and grow the life and strength of Catholic education;

- To develop and implement communication initiatives and practices that both improve the quality and timeliness of Board communications and engage stakeholders in providing their perspectives, assessments and input;

- To continually develop effective and vibrant learning environments; and

- To undertake initiatives that contribute actively to the continuous development of an innovative and progressive organizational culture that enriches a quality Catholic education.

1.3   Student Achievement

The Grade 6 results in reading, writing and math have shown steady improvements over the last few years, including an increase in 2008-09 that meets or is above the province average scores.

Grade 3 EQAO results in reading, writing and math improved in 2008-09. The results in reading and writing meet the province average scores.

Grade 9 academic results improved in 2008-09 and meet the province average scores. Grade 9 Applied improved in 2008-09 and exceed the province results.

The following charts demonstrate the school board's EQAO results over the last seven years.
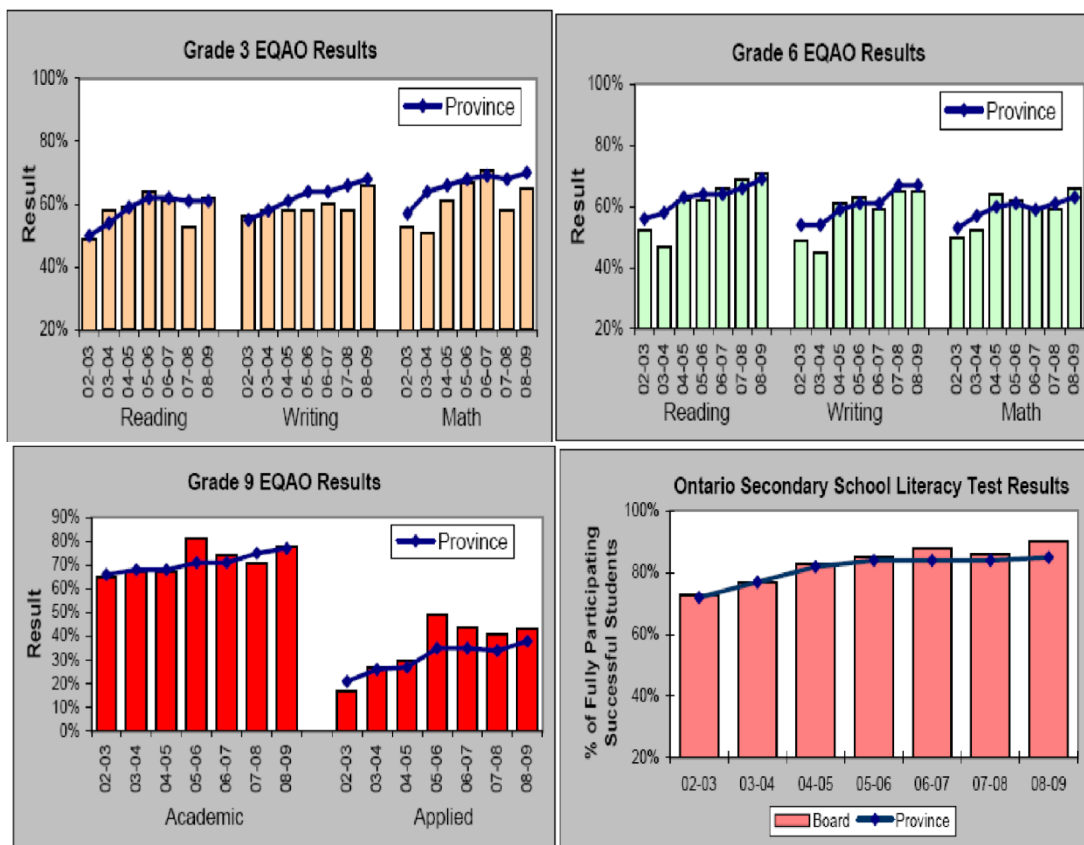
1.4 Fiscal Overview

The following table highlights key financial data for the school board.

Summary Financial Data (Revenues)

Revenues	2006-07 Financial Statements	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Revised Estimates
Legislative Grants	$28,238,975	$29,417,108	$31,291,293
Local taxation	$6,450,587	$6,744,735	$6,716,820
Board Revenues	$731,168	$798,809	$791,063
Other Operating & capital Grants	$1,207,802	$1,459,853	$18,797
Total Revenues (Schedule 9)	**$36,628,532**	**$38,420,505**	**$38,817,973**

Summary Financial Data (Expenditure)

Expenditures:	2006-07 Financial Statements	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Revised Estimates
Operating expenditures	$35,581,219	$60,952,850	$63,988,481
Capital expenditures - Before transfers from reserves	$1,063,293	$1,291,959	$2,172,691
Transfer to (from) Reserves	-15979	$754,490	-70000
Total Expenditures	**$36,628,533**	**$38,420,505**	**$38,817,973**
In-year Surplus (Deficit)	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

School Board Reserves and Deferred Revenues

School Board Reserve and Deferred Revenues:	2006-07 Financial Statements	2007-08 Financial Statements	2008-09 Revised Estimates
Reserve for Working Funds	$962,224	$962,224	$962,224
School Activities	$250,212	$295,572	$295,572
WSIB	$515,664	$521,488	$521,488
Equipment	$564,756	$524,856	$454,856
Demutualization	$155,953	$155,953	$155,953
Staff Development	$117,202	$117,202	$117,202
Benefit Renewal	$128,932	$128,932	$128,932
GPL Reserve	$0	$749,030	$749,030
Total Reserve Funds (Schedule 5)	**$2,694,943**	**$3,455,257**	**$3,385,257**
Reserve for Classroom Expenditures	$2,401,530	$2,401,530	$2,401,530
Total Deferred Revenues (Schedule5.1)	**$2,401,530**	**$2,401,530**	**$2,401,530**
Total Board Reserves and Deferred Revenues	**$5,096,47**	**$5,856,787**	**$5,786,787**

1.5 Key Statistics: Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board

The following table highlights key statistics for the school board.

Day School Enrolment

Day School Enrolment:	2002-03 Actual	2008-09 Rev. Estimates
Elementary Day School ADE	2,500	2,182
Secondary Day School ADE	1,202	1,347
Total Day School Enrolment	**3,701**	**3,529**

Primary Class Size

Primary Class Size	2003-04	2008-09
% of Classes Less Than 20	34%	90%
% of Classes Less Than 23	67%	100%
Average Class Size - Jr/Inter	23.48	21.8
% of 3/4 Classes 23 & Under	70%	100%
% of Combined Classes	47%	52%

Staffing

Staffing	2003-04	2008-09
School Based Teachers	223	240
Teacher Assistants	46	50
Other Student Support	18	20
School Administration	13	15
School Clerical	17	18
School Operations	37	34
Other Non-Classroom	23	22
Total Staffing	**377**	**399**
Teacher - Pupil Ratio	**1:17**	**1:15**
FTE Staff per 1,000 Pupils (ADE)[3]	**101.8**	**113.1**
Total Salary & Benefits as % of Net Operating Expenditures	**78.9%**	**80.1%**

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

Special Education

Special Education	2003-04	2008-09
Special Education Incremental Expenditures	$3,198,732	$4,563,808
Special Education Allocation	$3,109,867	$4,177,726
Spending above Allocation (Reserve)	**$88,865**	**$386,082**

School Utilization

School Utilization	2003-04	2008-09
Number of schools	13	13
Total Enrolment (ADE)	3,701	3,529
School Capacity (Spaces)	4,094	4,013
School Utilization	**90.4%**	**87.9%**
Board Area (Km2)	**8,673**	**8,673**
Number of Trustees	**7**	**7**

2. Governance and School Board Administration – Findings and Recommendations

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

Governance and school board administration processes are reviewed to:

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

- Assess the development of the annual plan (including the goals/priorities) and actions to engage and communicate with key stakeholders and the related reporting against the plan;

- Assess how policies and related procedures are generated and maintained;

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

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

This section provides a summary of the findings and recommendations of our assessment of the 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 field work, 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 BoardAdministration	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 on effective working relationship.	Yes

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

Leading Practices – Governance and School BoardAdministration	Evidence of Adoption?
The board of trustees, using a consultative process, develops and communicates a multi-year strategic plan that provides a framework for annual planning.	Yes
The director of education and senior administration develop an annual operating plan of their goals/priorities, incorporating both academic and non-academic departments. The plan is aligned with the Board's multi-year strategic plan and has goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.	No
The senior administration periodically/annually report 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 BoardAdministration	Evidence of Adoption?
The board of trustees and senior administration have appropriate processes for decision making to address student achievement targets and operational performance.	Yes
The board of trustees and senior administration have appropriate processes for the establishment and regular maintenance of policies and administrative procedures for the efficient and effective operation of the board.	No

Organizational Structure and Accountability

Leading Practices – Governance and School BoardAdministration	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

Leading Practices – Governance and School BoardAdministration	Evidence of Adoption?
A departmental organization chart (supplemented with a directory of key staff contact information) is publicly available on the board's website.	No

Succession and Talent Development

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

Establishment of an Effective Governance Model

The school board's governance model clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees and the senior administration. The Board's seven trustees set broad policies and have established a strategic direction that reflects the school board's vision, mission, principles and values and long-range goals. The senior administration is responsible for implementing the Board's policies and managing the operations of the school board. The roles and responsibilities of the Director of Education and trustees are documented in the policies.

The Board's commitment to policy governance and its effort to continuously monitor its practices has resulted in an effective governance structure. There are positive relationships among the senior administration, Director, and the board of trustees.

The Board is composed of experienced trustees. The Board has established a formal policy on trustees' roles and responsibilities, which is included in the Board's Policy Manual. The Chair of the Board has developed a reference document for trustees regarding the Board's governance model. This document includes trustees' code of conduct and principles for the Board governance. This reference document is used for in-service for trustees.

The board of trustees has several standing committees, including Annual Accessibility Plan Committee, Board Facilities Committee, Board Policy Review Committee, Faith Formation Committee, SEAC/SALEP/Spec. Education, Suspension/Expulsion Appeal, Saugeen First Nation Committee, and two union liaison committees. The Board has established a policy on Board committees. Trustees can participate on committees based on their interests and skills.

The Board holds its meetings monthly to accommodate the schedules of trustees who have full-time employment. The meetings are conducted during the day, which presents challenges for participants and stakeholders.

Development of the Board's Strategic Directions/Plan

In 2007, the Board of Trustees and the Director of Education identified an opportunity to develop a new Strategic Plan for the Board. The development of a new strategic plan was influenced by several factors, including the need to update the previous strategic plan, the appointment of a new Director of Education, and a recently elected Board. The Board hired an external consultant to facilitate the strategic planning process. The development of the strategic plan involved the completion of an environmental scan based on input from 20 stakeholder focus groups, and analysis of statistical and policy-based information. The external strategic planning facilitator also conducted a strategic planning workshop with trustees, senior management team, principals, and union representatives.

In February 2008, the Board approved a strategic plan 2008-2011 that identifies four areas of effort or strategic priorities: Catholicity, communications, student achievement, and organizational culture. For each strategic priority, the Board has outlined the expected outcomes, strategies and indicators of success, timelines and responsibility. For each strategic priority the Board has established a committee composed of trustees and school board administration. The school board administration does not develop an annual operating plan to implement the Board's strategic priorities.

In addition, the school board developed a 2009-10 Board Improvement Plan, which includes specific and measurable literacy and numeracy goals. The goals are developed based on a comprehensive needs assessment. Each specific goal established by the plan is accompanied by targeted implementation strategies, an evaluation cycle, and responsibilities.

The Director of Education provides an annual report to the Board on the status and outcomes of the board strategic plan and Board Improvement Plan. Senior administration provides periodic updates to the board of trustees on student achievement priorities, by organizing presentations by students regarding various initiatives and programs.

Decision Making Process

The Board has established a policy on agenda setting. The Senior Administration meets to discuss items to be presented to the Board. A draft agenda is submitted to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Director for review and approval. The Executive Assistant to the Director finalizes the agenda and distributes it to the Board, senior administration, and supervisors, the week prior to the Board meeting. The Director meets with the Chair and Vice-Chair on the day before the meeting, to review and finalize the agenda and make any necessary changes.

The school board has established a comprehensive policy development process. The Board established its policy on Development, Approval, Amendments and Exceptions to Policies. The policy states that the Secretary of the Board (Director of Education), or designate, with advice from Board Committees, the Board and members of the administration, is responsible for preparing draft proposals for the consideration of the Board. Members of the school board administration may initiate a review or update of a policy that is part of their portfolio.

The Board and the school board administration engage external stakeholders in the development of new policies through communication to school council chairs and the school board's website. Although all Board policies are included in the Board's policy manual, only a few policies are published on the school board's website. The school board is currently updating and improving the school board's website. As part of this initiative, management should consider publishing all school board policies and selected administrative procedures to ensure public access to this information.

The Board established a five-year review cycle for all policies. Each policy indicates the date it was last reviewed. A review of policy outside of the established review cycle can be initiated by the senior administration or trustees. The school board has not implemented a scheduled review of policies over the past two years and updated policies on as needed basis. Management is currently establishing a new schedule for policy review.

The senior administration is responsible for the development and update of administrative procedures. The senior administration presents new or updated procedures to the Board for information purposes.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The school board has a well defined organization chart that identifies key positions.

The school board's senior administration is composed of the Director of Education, Superintendent of Business, two Superintendents of Education, Assistant to the Superintendent of Education and Assistant to the Director – Human Resources.

Although the organizational chart is not posted on the school board's website, it does provide names and titles of key board staff.

Succession and Talent Development

The school board recognizes the need to plan for pending retirements at the senior administration level in the medium and long term. The school board provides leadership development opportunities for staff. The school board's leadership team is currently taking part in the two-year leadership development program with the Ontario Directors of Education Institute on Leadership and Strategic Impact. This is an executive development program developed by The Learning Partnership, in association with the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and the Rotman School of Management.

The school board has not established a formal succession and talent development plan to build and sustain leadership capacity.

Stakeholder Engagement

The school board has demonstrated that it consistently administers its responsibilities (both directly and through its committees) in an open and transparent manner. Communication is one of the strategic priorities of the Board. The Board's strategic goal is to develop communication initiatives and practices that both improve the quality and timeliness of Board communications, and engage stakeholders in providing their perspectives, assessments and input.

The school board uses a variety of media (including telephone surveys, its website and newsletters) to engage with stakeholders. There is a formal communication protocol for school board staff. When significant events or incidents occur, the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education often issue a joint letter, which is distributed to all schools and published in periodic newsletters and church bulletins. This approach ensures consistency in communication to the school board stakeholders.

The school board used its website to collect feedback from external stakeholders for the new strategic plan. As part of the project to update and improve the website, management should consider publishing the approved strategic plan (along with other key information) on the website.

The senior administration participates in various committees across the sector and locally. The school board's senior administration team is also extensively involved in community initiatives and partnerships. For example, the Director of Education takes part in the English Catholic Council of Directors of Education (ECODE), Council of Directors of Education (CODE), Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers Association (OCSOA), Provincial Poverty Initiative, and several committees with the local public

health authority. The Superintendent of Business takes part in the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO), Ontario Catholic School Business Officials Association (OCSBOA) and Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO). The Superintendent of Education responsible for special education participates in the Provincial Committee for Special Education, while another Superintendent of Education sits on several regional committees dedicated to student success, including Barrie Regional Steering Committee and Central Lake Regional Planning Team for School.

Recommendations:

- The school board should develop an annual operating plan, incorporating both academic and non-academic departments. The plan should be aligned with the Board's multi-year strategic plan and contain goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

- Management should continue establishing a new review schedule for Board policies and ensure that all policies are reviewed according to the cycle. Management should consider publishing all Board policies on the school board's website.

- Management should publish the organizational chart of the school board administration on the school board's website.

- The school board should continue aligning its leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry leadership initiatives. It should develop a formal Succession and Talent Development Plan, in line with the Leadership Succession Planning and Talent Development Ministry Expectations and Implementation Continuum. As a first step, the school board should undertake data collection, identification of skills and competencies and professional learning needs.

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

Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocation

| Organization | Human Resource Management | School Staffing/ Allocation |
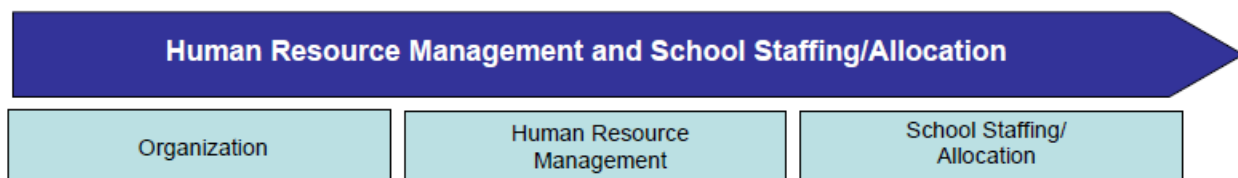
Effective management of human resources ensures an adequate number of qualified staff throughout the organization can perform their prescribed duties. Policies and procedures to develop staff are in place, through performance appraisals, professional development and support services. Staff allocations to schools and classrooms meet the Ministry's class size requirements, and are congruent with the 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 field-work, which included interviews with all key HR staff, as well as follow-up and confirmation of information.

3.1 Human Resource Organization

The review of the organization of the HR department assesses:

- Whether appropriate policies and procedures have been established and maintained to support the HR functions and required priorities, and whether they are aligned with the school board's directions;

- Whether an annual departmental plan setting out the goals and priorities and their alignment to the school board's strategic directions has been established;

- Whether the roles and responsibilities of staff support the key functions, activities and practices of HR;

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

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

Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Leading Practices – Human Resource Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The HR department's goals and priorities are documented in an annual departmental operating plan. They are aligned to the annual board operating plan accessible by key stakeholders. The plan incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines and identified accountability.	No

Organizational Structure and Accountability

Leading Practices – Human Resource Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The HR department has clearly defined organizational units and delineates the respective roles and responsibilities. A current organization chart is available to the public.	Yes
Senior HR staff have appropriate designations (e.g., Certified Human Resource Professional, etc.).	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 of the school board reports directly to the Director of Education. The HR department has established its mission statement and general goals. However, the department does not prepare an annual departmental operating plan. The department staff undertake planning and monitoring of its activities through informal regular communication during the year. In addition, the HR staff conducts a meeting in summer to set key goals for the year. Current priorities of the HR department include re-design of the payroll process and the review of attendance management in relation to leave days.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The department has established an organizational chart that shows the department structure and lines of reporting. The school board's website provides names and titles of key staff of the HR department.

The department is headed by the Assistant to the Director of Education – Human Resources, who is responsible for the HR department of the school board. The HR department also includes a payroll and benefits supervisor, a payroll officer, and two HR assistants.

The HR department maintains formal job descriptions. HR staff members are qualified as per job specifications based on their experience and other previously obtained qualifications. The Supervisor of Payroll and Benefits has a professional HR designation.

Monitoring and Communication of Policy

The HR department is responsible for the implementation of Board policies on hiring and recruitment, performance appraisal, and employee health and safety. All HR policies are included in the Board Policy Manual. The Manual is available to all school board staff in hard copy and electronically on the staff intranet.

The HR department provides regular updates and training to inform staff of new and revised policies and procedures. The HR department provides training to school board staff during professional development days. New or updated policies and procedures are posted on the school board's staff intranet, and distributed to principals and school secretaries. Management may seek input from stakeholders, including union representatives and school principals, in the development or revision of some policies.

Recommendation

- The HR department should develop an annual departmental operating plan that includes performance measures and targets for its specific goals and priorities, and supports the annual reporting on achievements. This will enable staff to focus on the planned targets for each priority throughout the year and provide support for reporting the department's accomplishments.

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 student achievement targets;

- Appropriate processes are in place to promote the personal and professional growth of all staff;

- Adequate systems and procedures are in place to manage employee compensation plans, labour relations, employee performance and attendance and other support services to foster employee satisfaction;

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

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

Staff Recruitment/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.	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?
HR management and the board of trustees have established labour/management committees.	Yes
HR management has established policies and procedures to minimize grievances.	Yes

Employee Performance Evaluation Processes

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

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
The HR department actively supports the professional development activities of the school board.	Yes

Attendance Management 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
Attendance management process/programs exist that include employee supportive policies and procedures to minimize the cost of absenteeism.	No
Management periodically reports on the effectiveness of the attendance management process/programs to senior management and the board.	No

Management of HR and Payroll Data

Leading Practices – Human Resource Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Payroll processing is segregated from employee data records, and changes to data are adequately controlled.	Yes
HR records are current, including the formal tracking of teacher qualifications and experience.	Yes
HR management has implemented an approved pay equity plan, which is reviewed periodically and amended as necessary.	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 school board's insurance carrier to ensure adherence to benefit plan's terms and conditions.	Yes
Employee data is automatically synchronized between the school 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.	Yes
Confidential exit interviews are performed for all staff who resign, take early retirement or transfer.	No

Staff Recruitment/Hiring

The HR department uses the Apply to Education website for recruitment of teaching and some non-teaching staff. The school board also advertises new/open positions in the local newspapers, and on the school board's website. Each year, HR staff members attend teacher recruitment fairs. The HR department has developed a promotional material package for recruitment fairs. Management noted that finding qualified candidates for French as A Second Language, math and sciences, and music teacher positions poses challenges for the school board. The school board discusses recruitment needs with other school boards, and has hired several staff using referrals from the neighbouring school board.

The school board has formal policy and procedures for staff employment. The policy requires that recommendations for employment be submitted to the Board for formal approval. All candidates recommended for hiring are notified of this requirement.

Management has established hiring procedures for all staff categories. Candidates for senior management positions are interviewed by the Director of Education and a committee of trustees selected by the Board. All candidates for management positions are interviewed by the Chair of the Board, the Superintendent of Business and the Director of Education or their delegates. Applicants for positions of school principals or consultants are interviewed by the Chair of the Board, local trustee (where applicable) and the Director of Education (or their delegates). Candidates for teaching positions are interviewed by two principals or a principal and vice principal. The Superintendent of Education and/or Assistant to the Director – Human Resources provide advice for interviews, and are involved in the decision-making process following the interview.

Clerical and secretarial candidates are interviewed by the Assistant to the Director – Human Resources and the relevant supervisor or school principal. The Supervisor of Maintenance and Supervisor of Payroll interview candidates for maintenance and custodial positions. The policy and procedures also list all documents required to be submitted by candidates, including written references and a criminal background check.

The HR department arranges all advertising of vacancies. Interviewing of teaching staff is conducted at school level. The HR department has established a number of central

controls in the hiring process, to ensure compliance with policies and procedures. Hiring decisions are made in consultation with the principal, the HR department, and the superintendent of education.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) collective agreement sets the process for hiring of new occasional teachers. When there is a long-term occasional teacher vacancy, occasional teachers who have completed their probationary period are considered first.

The HR department has developed standard forms and templates for the hiring process including interview questions for each staff group. All new hires require two reference checks and a criminal background check. The school board has also established a formal policy on employment equity.

The HR department has developed orientation manuals for new long-term occasional teachers, permanent and casual support staff, and probationary teachers.

Labour Relations

To address collective bargaining issues, the school board has established five liaison committees: three for the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) (elementary, secondary and occasional teachers) bargaining units, one for the Association of Professional Student Services personnel (APSSP) and one for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

The school board's formal and informal practices regarding relations with the unions results in open communication.

The school board maintains a timely and effective approach responding to issues. HR staff are always available to provide advice and support to school principals addressing potential grievances. Management uses monthly principals' meetings to share information related to labour issues, including management of grievances. Management may invite union representatives to take part in these discussions with principals to ensure common understanding. For unionized staff, the grievance process is covered in collective agreements.

Employee Performance Evaluation Processes

The school board has established policies and procedures for performance appraisal of all staff groups. The policy states that the school board should provide fair, effective and consistent evaluation of all employees, in every school and department. The detailed performance appraisal procedures and standard forms and templates are included in performance appraisal manuals for each staff group.

A formal performance appraisal of support staff takes place every three years and the manual provides guidelines for evaluation, including job knowledge and skill, interpersonal skills, and personal attributes. Each principal/vice-principal is placed on a five year cycle for performance appraisal. The manual for performance appraisal of principals and vice principals provides detailed guidance regarding the overall model for performance appraisal, roles and responsibilities, scheduling, performance plan, annual growth plan, appraisal meetings, and rating scales. The manual also provides standard templates and forms. Performance appraisal of middle management employees takes place every three years. The HR department has established formal guidelines and standard templates for performance appraisal of middle management employees.

In line with the Ministry of Education's Supporting Teaching Excellence document, the school board evaluates its experienced teachers on a five-year cycle. New teachers are reviewed twice during the first year of employment, or in the second year if necessary as part of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).

The HR staff track performance appraisals of teachers using an Excel spreadsheet. Before the beginning of each school year, the HR department identifies teachers who are scheduled for evaluation, and send performance appraisal documents and forms to principals. The HR department has also established a similar tracking tool for performance appraisal of all staff groups.

The school board should consider implementing an electronic system for tracking performance appraisals, which would provide notifications to supervisors regarding outstanding appraisals.

Management does not have formal written disciplinary procedures. The school board uses progressive discipline practices, and the HR department provides principals with advice and guidance on disciplinary actions. The school board has policy guidelines regarding workplace harassment.

Professional development is a priority within the school board. The PD activities for teachers are planned by the Academic departments. The HR department's focus is non-teaching staff of custodial and clerical staff. The HR department conducts regular meetings with custodial management to plan professional development activities for this staff group. The HR department also coordinates job-related specific training for custodial staff delivered by external providers. The HR department proactively seeks feedback from clerical staff regarding their training needs. The school board and the coterminous board have jointly organized and conducted one training session for clerical staff. Management reported positive feedback from participants. The HR department also organizes wellness awareness sessions and events for all staff.

Attendance Management Processes/Programs

An effective attendance management system combines policies and procedures, information systems to record and analyze trends in absenteeism, and dedicated 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 does not have a formal attendance management program. However, management maintains processes to monitor staff attendance. Management has established standard employee absence forms, which are completed by school secretaries for all absences and sent to the HR department. The HR department enters data from the forms in the database, which was developed in-house. The format of the absence forms enables management to track specific reasons for absences. There is no central system at the school board for notification of absences.

Staff call their schools or supervisors, and HR requires a medical note for any sickness-related absence exceeding three days. Absence forms completed by school secretaries are signed by principals before submission to the HR department. The HR department provides regular reports to senior administration regarding attendance data, for example annual average sick day usage.

The school board has established an "earned leave" day, awarded to staff who use fewer than average system-wide absent days. Employees may accumulate up to five days in their Earned Leave Bank. These rules are included in all collective agreements. Staff receive annual statements for their Earned Leave Bank.

The school board has hired an external consultant to identify options for a formal attendance management program. The consultant conducted an analysis of the school board's paid sick leave utilization, and has been assisting the school board in analyzing its WSIB data. The school board has a formal policy and procedures for early return to work. The school board is also implementing a pro-active wellness management program. Management conducted a wellness survey several years ago, to help set goals and objectives of the wellness program.

Management noted that in the development of the attendance management program, the school board ensures that it obtains support from the bargaining units.

Management of HR and Payroll Data

The HR department is responsible for the payroll function. Management maintains appropriate control mechanisms to ensure the segregation and integrity of personnel and payroll data. The school board outsources payroll processing to external providers. All school board staff, with exception of casual staff, are enrolled in direct deposit.

The HR department works with superintendents and unions for position reclassification. An HR assistant is responsible for entering position reclassification data in the HR database. The HR department confirms standing with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) for all newly-hired teachers, or when staff are transferred between schools.

The school board has updated pay equity reviews for all staff groups. When there are changes in the position classification, management reviews the pay equity plan. There are no outstanding grievances at the school board.

Management of the School Board's Benefit Plans

The HR department manages the school board's benefit plans. In the past, the school board conducted formal independent compliance audits of its insurance carrier. Several years ago, management undertook independent compliance audits of specific types of claims, as result of a significant increase in the number of claims. Management should continue conducting independent compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier, to ensure adherence to the benefit plan's terms and conditions.

The school board contracts external benefits consultants to regularly review the existing benefit plan and negotiate new plans. The school board has recently changed its external benefit consultants, and negotiated a flexible term of contract with a view to ensuring high quality service. With support from the new benefit consultants, the school board negotiated the reduction of some rates or continuation of pre-renewal rates. The school board tendered its group plan in 2009, and has retained the previous medical and dental benefits carrier.

Management provides *ad hoc* reports to the Board on the management of its benefit plans. The Board is updated on renewals, results of tenders, and changes in carriers. Management provided the Board with forecasting of costs resulting from the last round of labour negotiations.

The school board implements a number of initiatives to mitigate costs related to its benefit plans, including the return to work program and wellness initiatives. Costs and trends are reviewed annually by management at the time of renewal, and the external benefit consultants provide a report.

There is a Benefits Review Committee, with representation from each union group as well as non-union staff for each employee group. Collective agreements and principals' contracts, and Terms and Conditions for non-union staff include provisions regarding benefit plans.

Data transfer among benefits, payroll and OMERS is automated and synchronized through "e-access". The external pay processing providers automatically submit employee data to the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan with each payroll.

Monitoring Staff Satisfaction

Several years ago, management conducted a confidential staff satisfaction survey to obtain feedback on health and safety issues and general staff attitudes. The survey helped to measure organizational health in addition to individual well-being, leadership and supervision, employment relationships, and overall satisfaction. Findings from the survey were used to inform new programs and initiatives at the school board. For example, management implemented a number of improvements in the areas of reward and recognition, workplace stress, work/life balance, and communication.

Management does not conduct formal exit interviews. Management noted that staff turnover rates at the school board have been very low.

Recommendations:

- Management should establish formal disciplinary procedures for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Existing progressive discipline practices should be formalized and communicated to all staff.

- The HR department should develop a comprehensive attendance management program, with policies and procedures for specific categories of absenteeism. This would provide a consistent and structured approach to improving attendance, including positive reinforcement for employees and standardized practices across all employee groups.

- The HR department should periodically report on the effectiveness of the attendance management process/programs to senior administration and the Board.

- Management should develop administrative procedures for exit interviews. These interviews would provide input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement.

3.3   School Staffing/Allocation

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

- Assess whether accurate and efficient processes are in place to forecast and plan for staffing needs to support student achievement target strategies;

- Ensure that staff optimization allocation processes are in place, supported by an effective attendance management system;

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

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

Processes for Annual Staff Planning and Allocation

Leading Practices – School Staffing/Allocation	Evidence of Adoption?
The school board policies and procedures govern the development of an annual staffing plan and allocation process that reflects the priorities of the Board and Ministry initiatives.	Yes
The staff allocation process monitors adherence to key Ministry and board policy parameters, such as: class size, prep time, collective agreement requirements and other board directions.	Yes

Monitoring and Reporting on Staff Allocation

Leading Practices – School Staffing/Allocation	Evidence of Adoption?
Systems are in place and accessible by both HR and Finance staff to establish and track an approved level of staff.	Yes
Management periodically reports on the actual allocation of staff, compared to the original approved allocation plan and budget (FTEs by function, department and program, actual versus budget).	Yes
Procedures are in place to enable adjustment of staff allocations for school based staff, if estimates for enrolment and funding change after budget approval.	Yes
Management's plan for providing student support services and staffing is based on student-needs analysis.	Yes

Processes for Annual Staff Planning and Allocation

The staff allocation process begins with enrolment forecasting, and includes other factors such as student need, class size requirements, and preparation-time. The enrolment forecast is developed using various sources of data, including school-byschool projections, prior years trend analyses, demographic trend analysis, and school board information.

The school board has established a formal policy on school staffing, which contains formulas for staff allocation for all staff groups. Each year management prepares elementary and secondary school staffing guidelines, which provide detailed procedures

for the allocation of various staff groups. Management also prepares a document for school principals, which discusses some considerations for school staffing, including the link between staffing decisions and improved student achievement, and school and system capacity.

Each April, senior administration meets with each school principal to complete a standard school staff assignment/class organization worksheet. These early meetings allow sufficient time for planning and notification to the unions about any changes in staffing. The Senior Administration meets to make staff allocation decisions for non-union staff. The collective agreements provide general guidelines for staff allocation. The school board does not require the approval of staff allocation formulas by the board of trustees.

Monitoring and Reporting on Staff Allocation

As part of the staff allocation process, management ensures compliance with key Ministry and school board policy parameters, including class size, prep time, collective agreement requirements, and other board directions. The board of trustees is not directly involved in the development or monitoring of staff allocations.

At the beginning of the school year, management assesses actual enrolment, and appropriate adjustments are made in staff allocation. Management uses staff "hold backs" for education assistants to meet emerging needs at the beginning of the school year. The HR department prepares regular reports on staffing changes for senior administration and the Board. Central controls in the hiring process established by the HR department help ensure that hiring is compliant with the established staffing allocation.

The Superintendent of Education responsible for special education maintains central responsibility for monitoring allocation of education assistants. When there are changes in special education needs in schools, management works closely with the bargaining unit to enable adjustments in the allocation of education assistants.

4. Financial Management – Findings and Recommendations
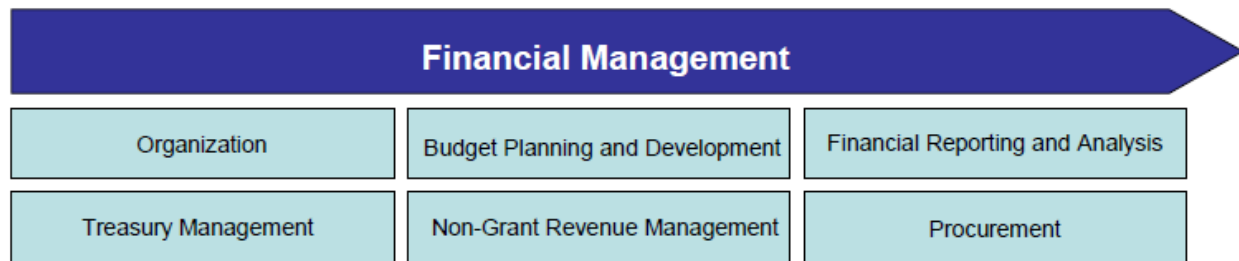
The financial management of the school board ensures the efficient and effective use of fiscal resources. Financial management ensures that the annual budget is developed within the Ministry's allocation and aligned with student achievement targets. It also ensures that appropriate financial policies 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 support of the roles and responsibilities for the key functions, activities and practices;

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

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

Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

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

Organization Structure and Accountability

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

Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

The business department plans its annual activities through identification of priority projects for the year, including timelines, resources, and expected outcomes. The project plan is documented, indicating projects, tasks, responsibilities and timelines. The current priority projects of the finance function include:

- Implementation of the new financial system

- Implementation of the Public Sector Supply Chain Management Code of Ethics

- Budget development

- Implementation of policy changes related to trustee generated accounts

- Year end preparation

- Financial statement modernization

The priority setting could be used to develop a formal annual departmental operating plan.

During the year, the business department conducts regular Business Information Meetings to provide updates on department projects and activities, and undertake short-term operational planning. These meetings are open to staff from other departments of the school board. During Business Information meetings the business department identifies goals and priorities for the year.

In addition to periodic budget reports, the business department provides regular updates to the Board regarding major projects.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The business department is composed of the Superintendent of Business, a Financial Analyst, an Accounting/Assessment Officer, and a part-time Accounting Assistant.

The department's key responsibilities include accounting, budgeting, and financial reporting.

The school board's organizational chart shows the structure of the business department and lines of reporting. The school board's website provides names and titles of key staff in the business department. There are formal job descriptions for all finance positions. The department staff have appropriate professional designations and experience.

Monitoring and Communication of Policy

The business department has formal policies for finance and budget control, purchasing, staff expenses, investments, school generated funds, and other key activities. These policies are included in the Board Policy Manual, which is available to all school board staff. A few of these policies are published on the school board's website.

An Administrative Procedures Manual outlining those services associated with the business operations is available to all staff. Staff who use PCards submit their expenses using a web portal, which includes administrative procedures.

The finance department provides updates on financial policies and procedures for school principals during monthly principals' meetings. When there are significant changes in procedures, finance staff ensure that relevant staff receive appropriate training. For example, when PCards were introduced, finance staff conducted oneon-one training with all school administrators.

If board staff need assistance with particular financial policies, procedures, or systems, the Finance staff provide informal ongoing support. The Superintendent of Business and the Financial Analyst have special privileges in accessing information in the financial system, and can assist staff directly.

As part of implementing a new financial system, the finance department has developed and documented process maps for key financial processes.

Recommendation

- The business department should develop an annual departmental operating plan that includes specific and measurable targets, assigns responsibilities for key activities and specifies timelines. The departmental operating plan should be aligned to the Board's strategic directions. An operating plan will enable management to track and report on the progress of the department's defined priorities and goals throughout the year.

4.2   Budget Planning and Development

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

- Understand the linkages between the board of trustees' goals and priorities and the operational budgeting process;

- Assess whether sufficient transparency and controls exist in the budget planning and development process;

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

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

adopted at the time of the review, a "No" indicates that an improvement opportunity exists.

Annual Budget Development Process

Leading Practices – Budget Planning and Development	Evidence of Adoption?
The annual budget development process is transparent, clearly communicated and incorporates input from all key stakeholders including management (with principals), board of trustees and the community.	Yes
Management has adopted an integrated (at school board and school level) approach to enrolment forecasting that drives the budget process	Yes
Budget planning 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	No

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 school board has established a policy on preparation and approval of the operating budget. The policy identifies the budget development process, including contents of the budget document. The policy also highlights the development process for school budgets.

Following the Ministry's announcement of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN), management prepares a presentation to the Board. The presentation reflects the key changes in the GSN, Ministry goals, and the links with the Board's strategic objectives and goals. It contains information on the financial position of the school board and key fiscal challenges. Management also sets out the budget development process for the upcoming year.

The first step in the budget development process is the calculation of revenues based on the GSN and revised enrolment projections submitted by the principals. In April-May,

management presents elements of the budget to the Board (e.g., salaries and benefits, transportation, and facilities). Each of these is supported by detailed working papers.

The school board prepares its enrolment projections internally, using several sources of data. Management has completed a 15-year enrolment projection for its capital plan.

For expenses (other than payroll) the business department collects budget proposals from individual departments. Draft departmental budgets are prepared, based on historical data and trends. The business department provides all departments with budget preparation reports, which contain a three-year historical analysis of the department's budget.

In June, the Senior Administration presents the draft balanced budget to the Board. The draft budget highlights the revenue and expenditure projections for the fiscal year, notes key changes from the previous year, comments on the challenges and constraint measures, and presents a motion for approval of budget.

The school board makes an effort to involve key stakeholders in the budget development process, through presentations to district school council meetings, labour liaison committees, and Special Education Advisory Committees. Budget information is posted on the school board's website, to ensure that the public has an opportunity to provide feedback.

The school board does not undertake formal comparison of staffing costs with other school boards. Each year the Superintendent of Business attends a workshop organized by the trustees' association, where there are presentations on cost comparisons between school boards.

Risk Mitigation and Board Approval

In the budget presentation to the Board management, ensures that the Ministry's and school board's strategic priorities are clearly identified The presentation also identifies the key challenges associated with the budget.

There are no special provisions or contingencies included in the final budget, and any significant variances are addressed at year end. If budget changes are required during the year, they are presented to the Board for discussion and approval. Management does not formally identify and document significant budget risks and proposed mitigating actions.

Recommendation:

- Management should identify and document all significant risks during the budget planning process, and develop strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond authorized/budgeted levels.

4.3 Financial Reporting and Analysis

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

- Assess whether procedures are in place to ensure that management, the board of trustees and the Ministry receives timely, accurate and complete financial information of all school board activities;

- Identify opportunities to support continual improvement in the effectiveness and efficiencies of all processes;

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

Integrated System for Variance Analysis and Financial Reporting

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

Interim and Annual Financial Reporting

Leading Practices – Financial Reporting and Analysis	Evidence of Adoption?
Interim financial reports provide sufficient detail (including a comparison of actual to budget and to appropriate benchmarks and with appropriate variance explanations) for a clear understanding of the status of the current year's budget and the outlook for the year.	No
Senior management is held accountable for the integrity of financial reporting through formal sign-off and approval procedures.	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.	Yes
The Board has an audit committee with external members as advisors.	No
The external auditor's planning and annual reports are presented to the Board's audit committee, and any recommendations are acted upon by management.	Yes

Integrated System for Variance Analysis and Financial Reporting

The school board has recently implemented an integrated financial system that provides adequate, timely, and accurate information. The financial system includes the following modules: purchasing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, general ledger, and asset management. The finance department has been gradually implementing the modules of the financial system, starting with accounts payable and purchasing. Finance staff have sufficient knowledge and skills to operate and support the financial systems.

The system's advanced reporting function allows management to closely monitor expenditures. Overspending is highlighted automatically.

Interim and Annual Financial Reporting

Management prepares interim financial reports. These are the monthly financial reports (by responsibility centre) prepared for all department heads (i.e., superintendents, etc.) These reports are produced using the financial system. They provide detailed information for each account code and program, and reflect the expenditures against budget and the amount and percentage of funds remaining. It is anticipated that with implementation of the additional modules in the financial system, all staff responsible for programs and accounts will have online access to financial information.

The finance department prepares three interim financial reports for the Board: estimates, revised estimates, and year-end financials. Management provides two reports on enrolment with estimates, prepared in February and updated in September. The revised estimates report provided to the board of trustees contains a high-level summary of adjustments and changes, a comparison of budget to revised estimates, and variance expressed as amount and percentage. The interim financial reports do not provide detailed explanations of significant variances.

There is no formal sign-off of interim financial reports by the Superintendent of Business and the Director of Education.

Audit

The board of trustees acts as the audit committee of the Board.

The Board conducts meetings with external auditors, and reviews the auditor's reports. The school board's external auditors provide an audit report with the general auditors' opinion regarding the school board's financial statements. Management acts on recommendations provided in the management letter. Management should consider providing formal reports to the Board on follow-up and corrective actions.

Finance staff have conducted internal audits focused on enrolment and school generated funds. The school board has also contracted a retired superintendent from the coterminous board to conduct targeted internal audits of school-based funds and PCards. This approach has been used to ensure independence in the internal audit process. The internal auditor provided detailed reports with recommendations to management. Management acts on recommendations, and conducts re-audits of schools or employees expenses the following year.

Recommendations:

- Management should consider implementing recommendations provided by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) regarding the frequency and format of interim financial reporting.[4] In particular, management should consider including non-financial performance indicators in the report (e.g. enrolment and staffing) and explaining key variances with conclusions. Management should also consider using standard templates provided as part of IFRC report.

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

- In accordance with the Ministry's internal audit and audit committee strategy, the school board could consider establishing an audit committee that includes external advisors, who would contribute to the committee's effectiveness.

4.4   Treasury Management

The purpose of reviewing treasury management processes is to assess:

- Whether processes are in place to ensure the optimal use of cash, investments and borrowings within school board;

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[4] Ministry of Education Memorandum SB38, September 16, 2009

- 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 consolidated with a single financial institution.	Yes
Management periodically reports to the board on the performance of the investment activity and the approved investment policy in accordance with the *Education Act*.	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 finance staff monitor the cash in accounts daily. The Accounting Assistant conducts monthly bank reconciliations, which are approved by the Superintendent of Business. During the implementation of the new financial system, the school board used manual cheques, which were signed by the Superintendent of Business.

The new system and enhanced use of EFTs will enable the school board to improve its cash management processes. The reporting capabilities of the new financial system will allow finance staff to identify unusual accounting transactions and other critical exceptions. The finance department has implemented procedures to prevent unauthorized wire transfers, with the use of a password to authorize new recipients. The Superintendent of Business authorizes new recipients before a transfer is made.

The school board's cash management activities are consolidated with one financial institution. The school board has one general account and three trust accounts. Individual school accounts may be set up with other banks, due to limited choice of financial institutions in some areas of the school board.

The school board has from time-to-time examined its banking arrangements, and occasionally considers information from various financial institutions. However, management noted that the existing banking arrangements provide the best value for the school board.

The school board has established a policy and administrative procedure on professional services. The administrative procedure formalizes long-term relationships with some professional service providers, including financial services providers, which will remain in place at the school board's discretion. The school board undertakes comparisons of its banking arrangements with other school boards through OASBO.

The Board has established a policy on investments consistent with the Ontario Regulation 471/97 regarding eligible investments. The school board only has investments in trust funds. These trust funds are invested in government bonds. Management provided annual reports on trust funds to the Board. The annual report provides the balance in the trust funds and amounts that will be available for investment in the next fiscal year.

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 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.

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

The following table summarizes the leading practices defined for 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 and expenditure for each EPO program. Management monitors activity to ensure compliance with terms and conditions.	Yes

Management of School-Based Funds

The school board has established policies and administrative procedures on schoolbased funds, which are aligned with the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) Guidelines for School Generated Funds[5]. The policy provides a definition of school-based funds, acceptable and unacceptable sources of funds, and the use of funds. The administrative procedures set out the roles and responsibilities and financial reporting requirements for school-based funds. The procedures state that there are four approved signing officers in each school: principal, secretary, school council chair and an alternate staff member. The principal and the secretary sign all cheques related to general school expenditures. The principal and the school council chair sign all cheques related to school council expenditures. Each school is required to prepare and submit a monthly bank reconciliation and financial report. In addition, each school prepares an annual financial report, which is submitted to the Superintendent of Business.

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[5] http://www.oasbo.org/admin/eZeditor/files/f_10_OASBO_SchoolGeneratedFunds_Guideline s_January_2009.pdf

The school board uses a software application for school banking to manage schoolbased funds. The finance function has central access to school-level information and data on the system.

The finance department undertakes periodic planned internal audits of school-based funds. Finance staff provide assistance and guidance to school secretaries in preparing year-end financial reports.

The senior administration presents a report on school-based funds to the Board annually.

Management of Non-Grant Revenue

The key sources of the school board's non-grant revenue include tuition fees for nonresident students, long-term lease of facilities (day care), and the driver's education program.

The community use of schools program provides nominal revenue to the school board. The school board has established policies and procedures for community use of schools. The policy provides a fee schedule, which is applied to commercial, private and individual profit-making activities. However, non-profit community organizations are the largest category of community users of school board facilities, and their costs are covered by the grant for community use of schools.

The administrative procedure for community use of facilities includes a standard application and permit for the use of school facilities. The school board has paperbased registration for community use, which is completed at the school level. The school board has several joint use agreements with municipalities. Several years ago, the school board conducted a survey of community groups regarding the general level of satisfaction, including accessibility. Each year management provides a report to the Board on community use of each school.

Management has established procedures to record and track the various EPO grants received. Once a signed contract is received, the finance function sets up a separate code for each program. The superintendents of education are responsible for EPO grants management. The finance function notifies the superintendents when grant advances are received, and sets up a tracking binder. Information related to EPO grants, which concerns staff of the school board, is published on the school board's intranet. For example, management posts relevant expense codes in professional development schedules. The Superintendent of Business reviews the status of each EPO at year end to determine if the project is complete, and if all expenses have been properly captured against the project code.

4.6   Supply Chain/Procurement

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

- Whether supply chain/procurement policies and practices are in place to ensure that the school board acquires goods and services through an open, fair and transparent process;

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

- Whether school board processes ensure value for money from all acquired goods and services;

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

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

Policies and Procedures

Leading Practices – Supply Chain/Procurement	Evidence of Adoption?
Approved procurement policies and practices are clearly communicated to staff with purchasing authority and are periodically reviewed and updated.	Yes
Approved procurement policies clearly outline circumstances under which the board will use competitive versus noncompetitive 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.	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?
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 board's finance department performs three-way matching (purchase order, receipts/invoice and inspection) before invoices are paid.	Yes
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 use of electronic funds transfer (EFT) for vendor payments.	No

Policies and Procedures

The school board is part of the Shared Purchasing Service Consortium of Bruce Grey with the coterminous school board and County of Grey. The consortium agreement identifies a Management Committee comprised of the superintendents of business of the two school boards. The Supervisor of Purchasing manages the operations of the consortium, and reports directly to the management committee. The office of the consortium is located in the administration office of the Bruce-Grey Catholic DSB. The consortium has adapted polices and procedures of the coterminous school board, with

some provisions from policies and procedures of Bruce-Grey Catholic DSB. As a general rule, the consortium management applies the more stringent requirement from the two sets of policies and procedures.

Management of the consortium is taking efforts to achieve consistency in purchasing policies and procedures of the two school boards. Management has drafted new administrative procedures for purchasing, which are aligned with the Ontario Supply Chain Guideline. The draft procedure contains a code of ethics, roles and responsibilities of the Supervisor of Purchasing and school board administration, general purchasing directions, guidance in relation to the approved vendors list, Canadian preference, and negotiations. In December 2009, management of the consortium will provide both school boards with a summary of required changes in policies and procedures to bring them in line with the Supply Chain Guidelines.

The current purchasing policy of the school board contains guidelines regarding purchasing and tendering methods, and procedures for each method. The policy is published on the school board's website.

The purchasing policy states that the school board subscribes to the principles of economy, quality, and service. The policy also emphasizes that Board's view that maximum education value is achieved when expenditures for the purchase of supplies, equipment, and services are supported in a competitive purchasing environment.

The school board has updated its rules for various methods of purchasing to ensure consistency with the Broader Public Sector (BPS) initiative:

- <$1,000 – a oral quote is required as a minimum

- $1,000-$5,000 – three quotes are required

- $5,000 – $10,000 – three written quotes are required and must be documented on the requisition system by the requisitioner and retained by requisitioner as part of the purchase file

- $10,000 – $15,000 – a formal tender process is required, followed by review by the Supervisor of Purchasing before a PO is created

- $15,000 – $25,000 – a formal tender process is required, followed by review by the manager of the Consortium before a PO is created

- $25,000 – $100,000 - a formal tender process is required, followed by review by the Manager of the Consortium and the Superintendent of Business before a PO is created

- Over $100,000 - a formal tender process (published on MERX) is required.

The purchasing department has begun reviewing all procurement contracts signed by the school board to create a contracts database, as required by the Ontario Supply Chain Guidelines.

The school board has used an existing Ontario Government Vendor of Record arrangements for courier services.

The school board has provided formal training for staff on purchasing, in light of the changes related to the implementation of the Ontario Supply Chain Guidelines. Relevant information is shared with principals during the regular principals' meetings.

Participation in Group Purchasing Initiatives

The school board is part of the Shared Purchasing Service Consortium of Bruce Grey with the coterminous school board. Through the purchasing consortium the school board purchases a range of commodities and services. Management continuously examines and pursues group purchasing opportunities outside of the consortium.

For example, the school board participated in the buying group facilitated by OASBO for purchasing of fuel and electricity. The school board is also working proactively with the Ontario Catholic Association of School Business Officials, Ontario Educational Buyers Association, Ontario Public Buyers Association, and other school boards to identify additional group purchasing opportunities. The school board has also started working with Ontario Education Co-operative Marketplace.

Purchasing Levels of Authority

The school board has been using an electronic requisitioning system. The new financial system has an add-on that will be implemented to integrate the requisitioning system with the general ledger module of the financial system. The integration will allow the department managers to track budget versus actual expenditures and flag overspending. The current requisition system contains an authorization matrix that indicates authorized staff in departments and the authority level for purchases.

Policies and Procedures for PCard/Corporate Card Use

The school board has established administrative procedures and guidelines for the use of purchasing card (PCards). The Purchasing Cardholder Agreement is included in the guidelines. The school board has nearly 70 PCards, most with a transaction limit of $500 or $1,000 and commensurate with the staff responsibilities.

The guidelines clearly state restrictions on the use of PCards. Employees are allowed to use PCards for travel expenses. The Accounting is responsible for monitoring

compliance with PCard policies and procedures including timely and accurate completion of reconciliations. In addition, the finance function undertakes periodic internal audits of PCards.

The finance department has recently implemented a web-based PCard management system, which automatically allocates PCard transactions to specific general ledger codes.

Accounting for Completeness of Purchase/Payment Cycle

The school board's current requisition system enables on-line entry of requisitions, and approval routing and central purchase order generation. At the school level, secretaries are responsible for matching receipts with POs. Accounts Payable (AP) matches invoices with POs. If the invoices match POs, AP approves payment. If there is a discrepancy, the invoice is sent to the requisitioner for approval.

The new requisition system currently being implemented by the school board will allow the receiver to enter receipt information for each PO. The Accounts Payable will match the invoice and receipt information and issue payment. The general ledger will be automatically updated. Management should continue implementing the new requisition system to support matching of POs, receipts/invoice and inspection before invoices are paid.

Management has not implemented an electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing and payment. As part of the new requisitioning system, the school board will implement on-line supplier catalogues

The school board has a commitment accounting process.

Use of Electronic Funds Transfer for Greater Efficiency

The school board currently uses EFTs only for large payments. Disbursements to vendors are mostly done through cheques.

Recommendations:

- Management should consider implementing the electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing and payment.

- Management should continue extending the use of electronic funds transfers (EFT) for payments.

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 reviewingthe organization of operations and facilities is to assess:

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

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

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

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

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

Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Leading Practices – Operations and Facilities Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The School Operations and Facilities Management department's goals and priorities are documented in an annual departmental operating plan. They are aligned to the annual board operating plan, accessible by key stakeholders. The plan incorporates measurable targets, specific timelines and identified responsibility.	No

Organizational Structure and Accountability

Leading Practices – Operations and Facilities Organization	Evidence of Adoption?
The School Operations and Facilities department has clearly defined organizational units and delineates 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.	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 understating 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 facilities department is responsible for the maintenance and custodial operations and construction of all facilities at the school board. The facilities department does not currently have a formal annual business plan setting out its specific goals and priorities.

The Supervisor of Maintenance takes part in the regular Business Information Meetings, which are held to provide updates on priority projects and undertake short term operating planning for the business services department of the school board.

Organizational Structure and Accountability

The facilities department is part of the business services department of the school board. The Supervisor of Maintenance reports directly to the Superintendent of Business. The Supervisor of Maintenance supervises 28 custodians. The school board outsources its maintenance services.

The roles and responsibilities of the Supervisor of Maintenance are clearly outlined in the job description. The school board's organizational chart indicates the structure of the business department and lines of reporting. The Supervisor of Maintenance is qualified as per job specifications, and has relevant professional experience.

Monitoring and Communication of Policies

The facilities department maintains a set of administrative procedures covering facilities and operations management. These procedures are included in the administrative procedures manual, which is available to all school board staff.

The Supervisor of Payroll and Employee Benefits ensures that changes in health and safety regulations are reflected in policies and procedures. The Supervisor of Maintenance is also a member of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) and receives information on many regulatory changes through this affiliation. The Superintendent of Business is also responsible for monitoring changes to the various regulations that govern the school building and property matters.

The facilities department periodically sends memoranda to staff regarding specific aspects of facilities policies and procedures. Information on such changes is also posted on the school board's intranet. The facilities department provides regular updates on policies, procedures, and regulatory changes during principals' meetings. Appropriate training is provided to custodial staff to address policy issues, and the need for compliance with the various regulatory requirements. Examples of such training include changes in use of elevating devices, and water testing and flushing procedures.

Recommendation:

- Facilities management should establish a distinct annual departmental operating plan, with specific and measurable targets and indicators and assigned responsibilities for key activities. This would enable management to track and report the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.

5.2 Custodial and Maintenance Operations

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

- Whether custodial and maintenance services are responding effectively and efficiently to maintaining an optimized learning environment;

- 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.	No
The school board has implemented a formal green clean program as part of its overarching Education Environmental Policy.	No
Management's custodial/maintenance allocation model optimizes the use of staff and considers various factors (e.g. square footage, portables, gyms etc).	No

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 and optimizes the use of available funding (Annual Renewal Grant and Good Places to Learn funding). The plan is approved by the Board and is 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 staff addresses ongoing skill development and emerging regulatory issues.	Yes

Standardization of Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies

Leading Practices – Custodial and Maintenance Operations	Evidence of Adoption?
Management uses an inventory system to track and control major cleaning and maintenance equipment.	Yes
Management has defined common standards to ensure efficient procurement of supplies in order to minimize costs, promote energy and operating efficiency, and environmental sustainability.	Yes

Project Management, Monitoring and Support Systems

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

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

The school board has not established formal cleaning standards for schools. Management uses feedback from principals, staff and parents to monitor school cleanliness and identify areas for improvement.

Management noted that all the school board's cleaning supplies are certified as green. The school board has been purchasing cleaning supplies from a vendor with a certified green products line.

The school board outsources its maintenance services.

Development of Annual and Multi-Year Maintenance Plan

The facilities department develops an annual maintenance plan. In March, the facilities department sends out a notice to principals requesting them to submit a list of maintenance projects. This list is presented to Senior Administration and the Board.

Following the presentation of the preliminary list of maintenance projects, the facilities department conducts tours of each school to review the maintenance proposal requests. The tours are attended by trustees, school council representatives, student representatives, head custodians, and senior administration.

The tours provide an opportunity review the state of the school facility and future needs and identify both ongoing maintenance needs and critical maintenance issues. The tours take several days and at the end of each day the group discusses observations and identifies priorities.

Over the summer, management finalizes the list of priorities and estimates costs of proposed projects. In October, the list is presented to the Board. Each school principal is notified of the projects scheduled to be undertaken during the year

In the development of the maintenance plan, facilities management uses ReCAPP data. ReCAPP is updated at least one time a year.

Management provides reports on major projects, in particular renovations, to the Board.

Training to Support Skills Development and Safety

The facilities department facilitates training for custodial staff to support ongoing skills development, build awareness of regulatory changes, and ensure work safety. Management provides formal training to custodial staff during the board-wide professional development days.

All staff complete Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS) online training. The HR department supports the development of a training plan for custodial staff, and has identified communications skills and computer use as current training needs of custodial staff. To ensure involvement of custodial staff in systemwide activities, management encourages [participation of custodial staff various board committees (e.g. strategic planning, wellness and communications).

School principals are also encouraged to include custodial staff in staff meetings. Management conducts regular meetings with the CUPE liaison committee, which involve discussion around custodial staff training needs. When the Operations, Maintenance and Construction Committee of the Ontario School Business Officials Association conferences are in the area, the Supervisor of Maintenance invites some head custodians to attend.

Management requires that suppliers conduct training on all new products, and invites suppliers to provide updates on the use of chemical products.

Standardization of Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies

Three years ago, the facilities department developed an inventory of equipment maintained at the school level, by requiring custodians at each school to provide an inventory listing.

Management does not track inspection and maintenance of existing equipment. Custodians are responsible for maintenance of their equipment.

The school board has central warehousing of custodial supplies. However, chemical supplies are shipped directly to schools. Management uses a spreadsheet to track stock levels. There is a re-order point when supplies can be replenished. Most of custodial supplies are purchased through the Grey-Bruce Consortium.

Management tracks the consumption of custodial supplies at each school. Management noted that all cleaning products are purchased through the supplier catalogue, and are certified as green.

Project Management, Monitoring and Supporting Systems

Management has used the electronic requisitions system to create work order requests. The school board is moving to implementation of a new requisition system which will support the processing of work orders. Work orders are created at the school level and submitted to the Supervisor of Maintenance for approval. Work orders over $5,000 require approval by the Superintendent of Business.

Recommendations:

- Management should continue increasing the use of green cleaning products and developing a Green Clean program in line with the Ministry guidance and the school board's overarching environmental stewardship policy.

- The school board should reconsider its custodial staffing model. As a starting point, the school board could consider conducting a comparison of its staff allocation model with other school boards to determine if other variables could be factored into their allocation formula.

- Management should establish a multi-year maintenance and renewal plan that includes the funding available to support it. This would provide the senior administration, the Board and its stakeholders with a clear forecast of the school board's critical needs over the next several years.

- Management should maintain and monitor an up-to-date inventory of major equipment used at school level. This measure would increase management confidence that staff are accountable for their use of the school board's assets.

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	Yes
Successful conservation initiatives are communicated across all schools and with other school boards.	No

Tracking and Reporting Energy Conservation

Leading Practices – Energy Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management provides formal annual reporting on the conservation savings achieved against the plan.	No

Leading Practices – Energy Management	Evidence of Adoption?
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.	No
The Board has established an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices	Yes

Energy Management Plan

Management recognizes the importance of promoting energy conservation, and has implemented several programs and initiatives. The school board has not established a formal energy management plan.

Management has installed energy-saving lighting and high efficiency heating equipment in the board office and many of the schools. Currently, the school board is preparing trial projects and business cases for a number of energy efficiency initiatives supported by the Ministry. Management is awaiting approval regarding its proposal for the trial projects under the Green Schools Pilot Initiatives. Management is working to complete three business cases for the Renewable Energy Funding, including implementation of solar, in-floor, and geothermal systems.

As a prerequisite for receiving the Energy Efficiency Funding, the school board has conducted energy audits of all facilities, using third party consultants. Using the results of the audits, management will develop an energy efficiency plan based on a balance of critical needs and projects providing best return on investment.

The school board implements EcoSchools projects across all schools, and has launched a waste reduction program. Management noted that with progress in the implementation of new energy efficiency initiatives, the results and progress of the initiatives will be broadly communicated to schools.

The school board has drafted a policy and administrative procedures for environmental stewardship. The policy statement is focused on the commitment of the school board to providing leadership in the implementation of programs and procedures designed to protect and conserve the environment. The school board has identified the following areas of leadership:

- Environmental education will be fostered across the curriculum from JK - 12, in a framework of environmental literacy and learning outcomes

- Compliance with applicable legislation

- In-service training for school board employees

- Current waste management programs

- Making environmentally responsible purchases given quality, price and service

- Implementation of environmental principles in the location, design, operation and maintenance of all its facilities, grounds and equipment

- Co-operating and supporting environmental programs developed by local municipalities, agencies and the coterminous school board.

Tracking and Reporting Energy Conservation

Management has been tracking utility consumption data for over seven years. Monitoring data has been analyzed at a high-level due to lack of resources to undertake in-depth analysis. Management recognizes the potential benefits of the Utility Consumption Database developed by the Ontario Government, and has committed to provide the required data.

The school board has implemented centralized control systems that automate energy regulation and conservation in most schools. Several schools have automatic shut-off of computers.

The school board does not receive consolidated billing from the utilities, since there are multiple vendors.

Recommendations:

- Using the results of the energy audits, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates quantifiable goals and targets.

- Management should ensure that successful conservation initiatives are communicated across all schools and with other school boards.

- Management should continue tracking and analyzing energy consumption/expenditure data at the facility level. This data should be used for the development of the energy management plan and formal annual reporting on the conservation savings.

- Management should obtain consolidated billing for all school board facilities from each utility, wherever practical.

5.4 Health, Safety and Security

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

- Whether adequate planning and communication exist to support the provision of a safe teaching and learning environment;

- Whether school board structure and processes are in place to implement safety precautions;

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

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

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 procedures and ensures that the school board is in compliance with associated occupational health and safety statutory requirements.	Yes
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 of a health strategy/plan that reflects the board's health policies and procedures and ensures the board is in compliance with statutory health requirements.	Yes

Health, Safety and Security Management

The human resources department is responsible for the school board's occupational health and safety policies and procedures. The school board has established a multisite health and safety committee which meets five times a year. The committee includes the Supervisor of Payroll and Employee Benefits, Manager of Human Resources, Community Outreach Coordinator, Supervisor of Maintenance and two school principals. Six members of the committee are selected by the unions. Key themes from committee meetings are presented to the Board. Each month, the committee inspects at least one facility.

The HR department prepares monthly presentations to staff regarding health and safety topics, and builds awareness of health and safety issues by conducting online contests for staff. Formal health and safety training is provided to custodial staff, and management is considering extending such training for all staff groups. Management has established a formal reporting format for incidents among staff or students, and provides support to staff in understanding the reporting requirements and process.

The school board maintains a positive relationship with the Ministry of Labour. The Supervisor of Payroll and Employee Benefits volunteers with the Industrial Accident Prevention Association.

The school board has established policies and procedures for student health, consistent with the statutory health requirements. The school board works closely with the local health unit, and has established a pandemic plan. Policies and procedures for student health and safety include student excursions, skiing and other physical activity of students. The school board uses the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) guidance for all student activities, and provides training and awareness sessions for all school board staff. The school board also provides mandatory online training to staff on Sabrina's law every two years.

Management implements a number of initiatives to promote healthy eating among students. Each high school has a food committee which involves the school principal, student representative, and the Director of Education, addressing issues of food quality provided by school caterers. The caterer prepares an annual report which is shared with the school board's Wellness Committee. The Director of Education participates in the child obesity committee of the local public health unit.

The facilities department is responsible for regular monitoring of air and water quality standards. The school board's procedures for water testing and flushing are consistent with legislation. Water testing is performed by custodians once per year. All testing is done during the days identified by administration and documented. The Supervisor of Payroll and Employee Benefits reviews the testing process and results with each head custodian over the phone. There is a formal procedure for lead flushing, and custodians maintain a log. Testing of air quality is done based on feedback from staff.

The school board has established safe schools policies, and implemented a number of safe schools initiatives and programs. The safe schools policies include code of conduct, suspensions, progressive discipline, and bullying prevention. The school board provides training and awareness sessions for school principals and district school councils regarding safe schools. The school board uses the safe schools document developed by the Ministry for training of principals and as a tool to educate students. There is a safe school committee at each school, and chaplains at both high schools are actively involved in the delivery of safe schools programs and initiatives. The school

board partners with the coterminous school board and a children's mental health charity to deliver a program to support children with behavioural issues. At the secondary level, the school board implements a program to support elementary students transitioning to Grade 9. The support is provided by secondary students.

The school board has established a policy for an emergency plan related to the proximity of a nuclear plant. The school board also has a policy for procedures in the event of fire or other emergencies. The plan contains response procedures for all types of safety emergencies, including procedures for lock down, bomb threat and severe weather.

The school board conducts regular fire drills. The school board has established a policy on the security of its facilities.

5.5   Capital Plans, Policies and Procedures

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

- Assess whether school capital assets are being utilized effectively and efficiently;

- Assess how well management is planning for future capital requirements, based on enrolment forecasts and the capacity/maintenance issues of the existing asset base, relative to the funding available from the Ministry (i.e. NPP funding);

- Assess whether management is appropriately prioritizing the maintenance and renewal expenditures in light of the available Ministry funding and 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.	Yes
The school board has an approved pupil accommodation review policy.	Yes

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

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

Development of Annual and Multi-Year Capital Plans

The school board has developed and submitted its five year capital plan to the Ministry through the SFIS web site.

The school board considered a range of factors as part of the development of the plan, including enrolment forecasts, and utilization of school board facilities. The capital plan is reviewed annually. Management reported that recent changes in the plan have been related to changes in enrolment and the desire to eliminate portable classrooms. The school board's capital plan has been approved by the Board.

The Ministry requires that the plan include both projects with identified funding and those in which the funding is unknown. This data is required by the Ministry to provide an understanding of the potential needs of all school boards over a given time. The school board submits the capital liquidity template to the Ministry.

Management has been prudent in the development of the school board's capital plan. Management does not plan for capital projects that would require long-term financing. The school board used the facility renewal funding to fund its capital expenditures. Management noted that earmarking most of the available facility renewal funding for major capital projects significantly limits funds available for maintenance projects.

In the development of its capital plan, management considers low utilization of some school board facilities. Management is continually identifying ways to utilize all school board facilities by promoting community use, including early childhood development programs. Management considers low utilization of school board facilities and potential closures and consolidations as part of the capital planning. The school board has established policy on the accommodation review process, available on the school board's website.

Ongoing Monitoring and Maintenance of Data to Support Capital Planning

The Superintendent of Business is responsible for updating SFIS. The database is updated when there are changes in school board facilities. The Supervisor of Facilities is responsible for annual updates of ReCAPP.

5.6   Construction Management

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

- Whether processes are in place to ensure that school boards complete construction projects on-time, on-budget and with due regard to economy;

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

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

Cost Effective Practices in the Design and Construction of Facilities

Leading Practices – Construction Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Management uses cost-effective designs, standard footprints, energy conservation, and economical construction practices to minimize construction and future maintenance and operation costs.	Yes
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	Yes

Leading Practices – Construction Management	Evidence of Adoption?
school board construction costs and design standards (including coterminous boards).	

Monitoring and Reporting on Progress of Construction Projects

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

Maintaining Current Approved Professional Service Providers

Leading Practices – Construction Management	Evidence of Adoption?
Senior administration periodically evaluates and updates the approved list of contractors, architects and related professionals no less than once every five years	No

Cost-Effective Practices in the Design and Construction of Facilities

For new construction projects or major renovations, management maintains a list of prescriptive requirements and standards. For each project, management identifies standards that can be enhanced, based on performance of specific construction materials in other schools. Management provides architects with an outline of the proposed construction project. The architects develop detailed plans, and identify other standards, including energy efficiency.

In the development of preliminary plans and requirements, management consults with staff, student representatives, and school councils. The board of trustees participates in consultations for the development of a draft plan and specifications, and approves final plans and tenders.

The school board informally compares costs per square foot with those of other school boards.

Monitoring and Reporting of Progress on Construction Projects

Management has established a project management process, which allows it to monitor and control construction projects and their costs. Management has established a standard cost control sheet for tracking project budgets. The Financial Analyst prepares the detailed cost control sheet monthly. The finance department sets up a specific account in the financial system for each construction project. The Superintendent of

Business, Supervisor of Facilities, and Financial Analyst review the monthly cost control sheet. The Supervisor of Facilities makes decisions on progress payments. The Superintendent of Business signs off all progress payments. The Supervisor of Facilities also approves any change orders. Budgets for construction projects include a small holdback amount to ensure quality of construction work. A monthly summary report on the progress of the construction project is prepared for the Director of Education. The Director provides regular updates to the Board on the progress of construction projects.

Maintaining Current Approved Professional Service Providers

The school board has established a policy and administrative procedures on long standing relationships with some service providers, including architects. Management intends to develop a formal process for the selection of architects for future construction projects. Architects contracted by the school board are responsible for conducting tenders for construction projects. The school board works with architects to pre-qualify contractors and subcontractors (e.g. mechanical, electrical, masonry). Management noted that the school board sometimes has difficulty finding contractors for small scale projects.

Recommendation

- Management should proceed with the development of a formal process for the selection of architects for construction projects, and periodically evaluate and update the approved list of contractors, architects, and related professionals.

Appendices

Appendix A: Overview of the Operational Review

Operational Review Objectives

In order to perform an effective and consistent operational review the Ministry has worked with independent consultants to develop a Sector Guide that defines consistent standards and leading practices against which the operational reviews and analysis will be based.
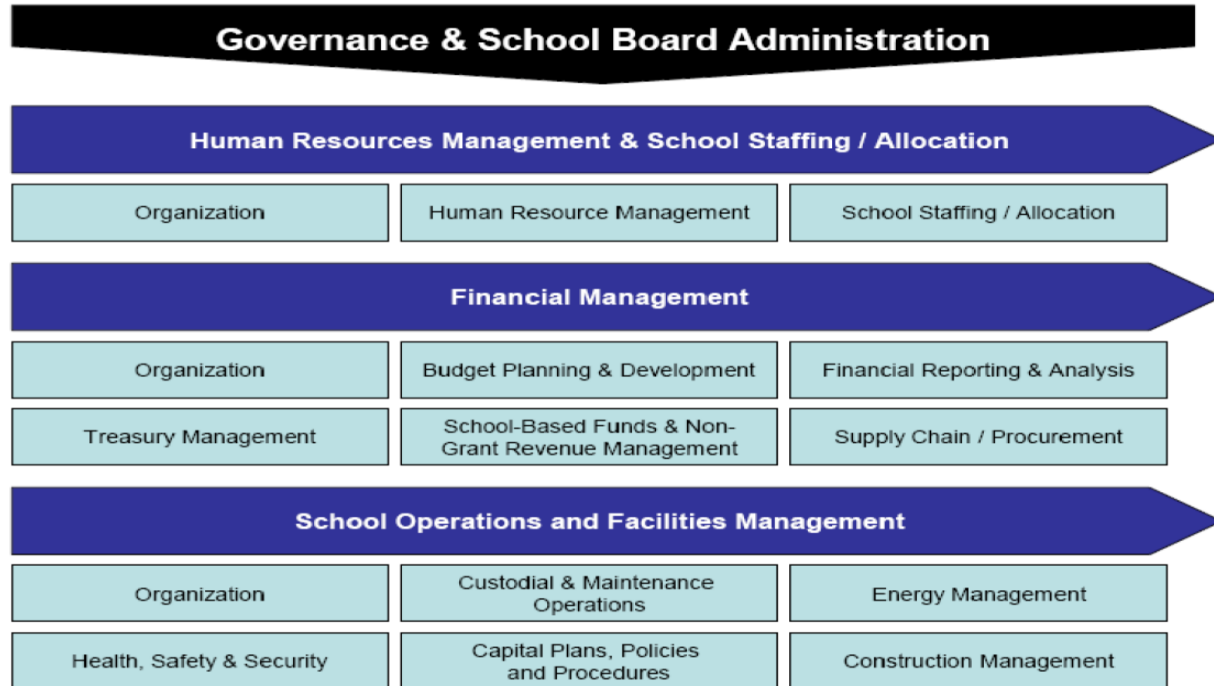
Recognizing the unique characteristics of each DSB, the specific purpose of the Operational Reviews is to:

- Strengthen management capacity in 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.

Governance & School Board Administration

Human Resources Management & School Staffing / Allocation

| Organization | Human Resource Management | School Staffing / Allocation |

Financial Management

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

School Operations and Facilities Management

| Organization | Custodial & Maintenance Operations | Energy Management |
| Health, Safety & Security | Capital Plans, Policies and Procedures | Construction Management |

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.
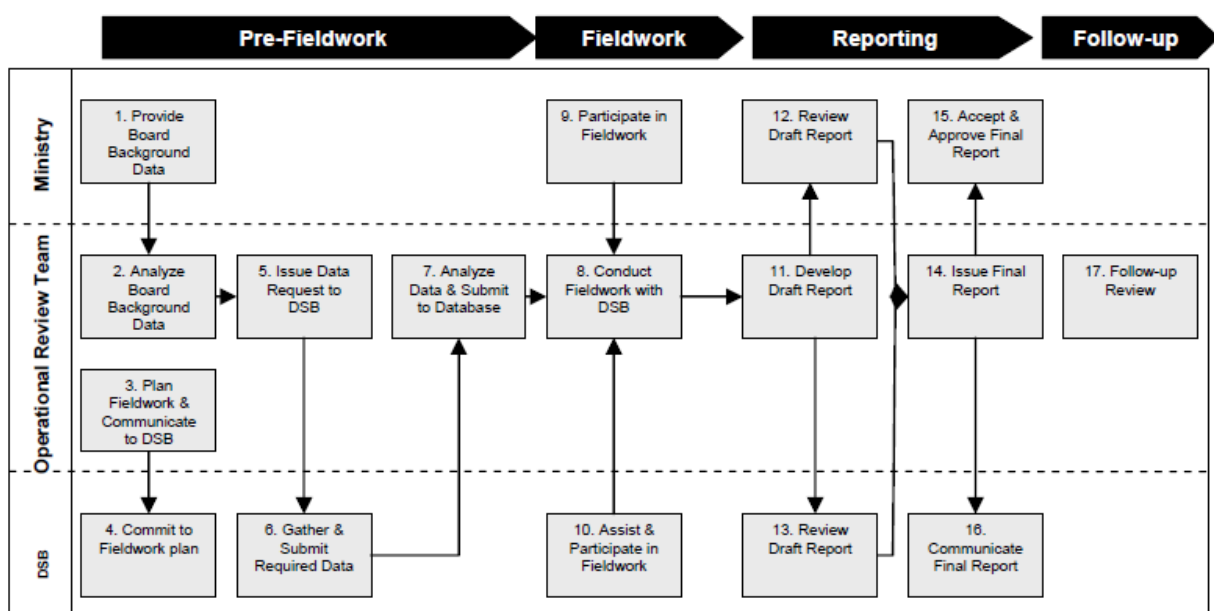
The Table below defines the key phases and activities which comprise the Operational review Methodology.

Phase: Pre-Field Work

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.

Key Activity	Description
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: Field Work

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.
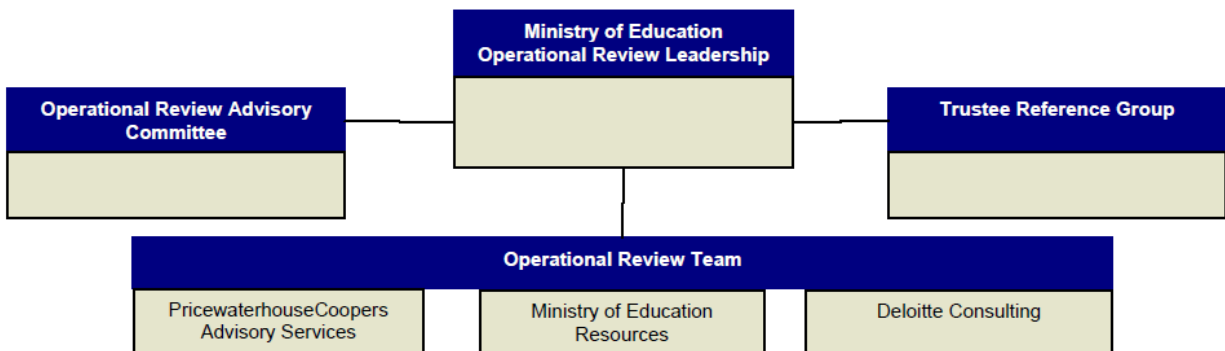
Limitations of this Review

The purpose of this report is to document the results of the Operational Review of Bruce-Grey 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 develop an annual operating plan, incorporating both academic and non-academic departments. The plan should be aligned with the Board's multi-year strategic plan and contain goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.
2.	Management should continue establishing a new review schedule for Board policies and ensure that all policies are reviewed according to the cycle. Management should consider publishing all Board policies on the school board's website.
3.	Management should publish the organizational chart of the school board administration on the school board's website.
4.	The school board should continue aligning its leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry leadership initiatives. It should develop a formal Succession and Talent Development Plan, in line with the Leadership Succession Planning and Talent Development Ministry Expectations and Implementation Continuum. As a first step, the school board should undertake data collection, identification of skills and competencies and professional learning needs.

Human Resources Management and School Staffing/Allocation

No.	Recommendation
5.	The HR department should develop an annual departmental operating plan that includes performance measures and targets for its specific goals and priorities, and supports the annual reporting on achievements. This will enable staff to focus on the planned targets for each priority throughout the year and provide support for reporting the department's accomplishments.
6.	Management should establish formal disciplinary procedures for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Existing progressive discipline practices should be formalized and communicated to all staff.
7.	The HR department should develop a comprehensive attendance management program, with policies and procedures for specific categories of absenteeism. This would provide a consistent and structured approach to improving attendance, including positive reinforcement for employees and standardized practices across all employee groups.
8.	The HR department should periodically report on the effectiveness of the attendance management process/programs to senior administration and the Board.
9.	Management should develop administrative procedures for exit interviews. These interviews would provide input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement.

Financial Management

No.	Recommendation
10.	The business department should develop an annual departmental plan that includes specific and measurable targets, assigns responsibilities for key activities and specifies timelines. The operating plan should be aligned to the Board's strategic directions. An operating plan will enable management to track and report on the progress of the department's defined priorities and goals throughout the year.
11.	Management should identify and document all significant risks during the budget planning process, and develop strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond authorized/budgeted levels.
12.	Management should consider implementing recommendations provided by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) regarding the format of interim financial reporting.[6] In particular, management should consider including nonfinancial performance indicators in the report (e.g., enrolment and staffing) and explaining key variances with conclusions. Management should also consider using standard templates provided as part of IFRC report.
13.	The school board should establish approval procedures for interim financial reports and implement formal sign-off of these reports by senior management.
14.	In accordance with the Ministry's internal audit and audit committee strategy, the school board could consider establishing an audit committee that includes external advisors, who would contribute to the committee's effectiveness.
15.	Management should consider implementing the electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing and payment.
16.	Management should continue extending the use of electronic funds transfers (EFT) for payments.

School Operations and Facilities Management

No.	Recommendation
17.	Facilities management should establish a distinct annual departmental plan, with specific and measurable targets and indicators and assigned responsibilities for key activities. This would enable management to track and report the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.
18.	Management should continue increasing the use of green cleaning products and developing a Green Clean program in line with the Ministry guidance and the school board's overarching environmental stewardship policy.
19.	The school board should reconsider its custodial staffing model. As a starting point, the school board could consider conducting a comparison of its staff allocation model with other school boards to determine if other variables could be factored into their allocation formula.
20.	Management should establish a multi-year maintenance and renewal plan that includes the funding available to support it. This would provide the senior administration, the Board and its stakeholders with a clear forecast of the school board's critical needs over the next several years.

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[6] Ministry of Education Memorandum SB38, September 16, 2009

No.	Recommendation
21.	Management should maintain and monitor an up-to-date inventory of major equipment used at school level. This measure would increase management confidence that staff are accountable for their use of the school board's assets.
22.	Using the results of the energy audits, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates quantifiable goals and targets.
23.	Management should ensure that successful conservation initiatives are communicated across all schools and with other school boards.
24.	Management should continue tracking and analyzing energy consumption/expenditure data at the facility level. This data should be used for the development of the energy management plan and formal annual reporting on the conservation savings.
25.	Management should obtain consolidated billing for all school board facilities from each utility, wherever practical.
26.	Management should proceed with the development of a formal process for the selection of architects for construction projects, and periodically evaluate and update the approved list of contractors, architects, and related professionals.