Ministry of Education

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Follow-up Report to the Operational Review

July 2009

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1.   Introduction

The Ministry is in the process of conducting Operational Reviews of the 72 district school boards across the province. 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 best practices. By identifying opportunities for continual improvement, school board administration and operations will be aligned to support the government's highest priority: student achievement.

In accordance with the stated objectives of the Operational Reviews, the Ministry has also engaged school boards to participate in a status and implementation update as part of the Operational Review cycle. Occurring approximately 8 to 12 months after the issuance of the final operational review report, the purpose of the update is to discuss with each school board the progress made in implementing the recommendations contained in the final report. It will also provide school boards with an opportunity to communicate to the Ministry their thoughts on the process, benefits that have been derived, and areas where some adjustments to the process would be beneficial.

As the recommendations vary between school boards, both in terms of quantity and scope, the following criteria were developed to help focus the review team, and the school board, on specific recommendations:

- Is the recommendation linked to the 7 Areas of Opportunity identified in the August 2007 Sector Summary Report?

- Does the recommendation represent a move toward more Strategic Planning on the part of Boards?

    o The departments that are responsible for the business functions perform significant activities in support of Student Success. The update should profile whether or not the school board is establishing links between the academic and non-academic functions through its strategic goals and priorities.

- Does the recommendation represent an area of potential risk to the board?

    o As an example, financial systems that are antiquated and require staff with very specialized knowledge could potentially disrupt the operations of the school board should those business skills be lost.

- Is the recommendation deemed to have positive Return on Investment?

- o For example, implementation of an attendance management system may have greater potential for savings to the school board than introducing an electronic funds transfer system.

- Does the recommendation reflect updates to the Leading Practices?

For each of the selected recommendations, the school board was asked to provide the following information to the Operational Review team:

- Description of action(s) taken/not taken by the board to address recommendation(s).

- Supporting documentation

- If implemented, describe benefits derived, if possible, and date of implementation.

Details of the prioritization of the recommendations can be found in Appendix A of this report.

The scope of the follow up review also includes high-level consideration of whether the school board demonstrates adoption of those leading practices that were added to the second edition of the Operational Review Guide, released to the sector in September 2008. These were not part of the original review process.

2. Status and Implementation Update

Introduction

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Operational follow-up review took place on June 26th, 2009 which was approximately twelve months after the release of the original Operational Review report. The Operational Review team conducted a teleconference with the Superintendent of Business and Treasurer of the Board. Also joining in the follow-up was the Associate Director of Education, the Executive Officer of Human Resources and senior management from the Finance department. A subsequent call with the Manager of Facilities was conducted on July 9th.

Summary of Recommendation Status

Since the operational review in November 2007, there are a number of recommendations that the school board has undertaken to review and action.

Of particular note is the succession planning programming. HWDSB provides leadership programming designed to meet the needs of its leaders at each stage in their leadership development. This programming is based on the HWDSB Leadership Competency Model, which is the framework for leadership development for all aspiring leaders in their system. These programs are continually updated and revised in order to address the variety of needs in their system, and are very comprehensive in nature. In addition, the school board also mentioned its budget process as a best practice to be highlighted, which involves stakeholder input through community consultation and Trustee involvement, and is directly tied to the strategic planning process.

There were 22 recommendations made in the original report. The operational review team focused on twelve of the recommendations during the follow-up review. Four of the recommendations relate to the seven areas of opportunity identified in the 2007-08 Summary Report, three are in the area of strategic planning, and five are related to a potential risk.

Three of the recommendations also reflect the new leading practices introduced in Wave 3 through the Second Edition of the Operational Review Guide. The selected recommendations and the corresponding criteria are listed in Appendix A.

Overall, senior administration has either implemented or has made some progress on eleven of the recommendations chosen for follow-up. There are two recommendations which senior administration has chosen not to accept and implement, which concern the automated receipting and matching of vendor invoices and the development of a multi-year maintenance plan.

3. Governance and School Board Administration

#1 Establishing Specific Refresh Cycles For All Policies And Related Procedures

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The Board should consider establishing specific refresh cycles for all policies and related procedures. Duration of the refresh cycle should be based on each policy, with a designated department responsible for tracking.	Partially Implemented

#1 Establishing Specific Refresh Cycles for All Policies and Related Procedures

The Associate Director submitted a report to the Policy Working Sub Committee that suggested changes to the HWDSB Policy Development Process should include a three year review/refresh cycle. The cycle would be flexible enough to reflect internal and external circumstances and drivers so that policies could be revisited when necessary.

The changes to the policy development process were submitted to the Board. An external consultant was engaged to begin the refresh of the policies in 2008. At the time of this report, the refresh is ongoing. The anticipated completion date is currently towards the end of the 2009/10 academic year.

4. Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocations

#1 Succession Planning

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The Director, in consultation with senior staff, should consider developing a formal succession plan to manage retirements and resignations at the senior administrative level.	Implemented

#1 Succession Planning

HWDSB is proactive in identifying staffing needs and looking within the organization for the talent it will need to fill key positions. Essentially, this is a five step process:

i. Recognize the need,

ii. Start at the top,

iii. Focus on organizational needs,

iv. Identify existing skills and talents within the organization,

v. Fill the gap

HWDSB provides leadership programming designed to meet the needs of their leaders at each stage in their leadership development. This programming is based on the HWDSB Leadership Competency Model, which is the framework for leadership development for all aspiring leaders in the school board. The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) has delivered a workshop on how to use the Ontario Leadership Framework of Effective Practices. The Framework describes a set of core skills and leadership practices for principals, vice-principals and supervisory officers. The challenge in the coming year will be to align the school board's leadership program to this Framework to ensure aspiring and practicing leaders meet the expectations described in the Framework.

HWDSB Leadership programs are continually updated and revised in order to address the variety of needs in the school board.

- Aspiring leaders are able to participate in the following programs:

  o ***Creating a Leadership Portfolio,***

  o ***Leadership 1,***

- o *Leadership 2,*

  o *7 Habits of Highly Effective People,*

  o *Facilitation Skills, and*

  o *New Teacher Mentorship.*

- Existing leaders are able to participate in the following programs:

  o *Preparation for Promotion series,*

  o *New Vice-Principal Induction Program,*

  o *New Principal Mentorship,*

  o *Lead to Succeed, and*

  o *Leadership: Great Leaders, Great Teams, Great Results.*

- "**Lead to Succeed**", a program to support potential supervisory officers has been developed, in partnership with York District School Board.

- **System leadership experiences** are made available to all staff through a First Class conference (e-mail application).

- Authentic, significant **school leadership opportunities** are available through effective schools direction team experience.

The Path to Leadership is a resource tool designed to meet the needs of potential leaders at each stage in their leadership development. This valuable resource informs potential and existing leaders and supervisors of the programs and in-service sessions available to guide their development needs. This program can be used to develop leaders at every stage of their career, from principal to executive leadership.

5. Financial Management

#1 Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The business department should compile the Statement of Intents (i.e. an individual's annual priorities) into an annual business service improvement plan aligned with the Board's strategic directions. The business department can report its accomplishments against this plan.	Partially Implemented

#2 Financial Reporting

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Finance staff should consider providing an expanded level of interim reporting in the format suggested in section 4.3 of this report. This would improve understanding of the year-to-date results.	Partially Implemented

#3 Internal Audit

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management and the Board should consider establishing an internal audit function. Management could start by identifying options for its mandate and scope and estimating annual costs for each option. Management's proactive assessment of need and cost would be a useful first step.	Partially Implemented

#4 Audit Committee

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The Board should consider establishing a standalone audit committee. Management and the Board should also consider expanding the membership of the audit committee to include external members as advisors.	Partially Implemented

#5 Review of Procurement Policies and Procedures

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
As part of the update of the procurement policies and procedures, authorization and threshold levels should be evaluated to ensure that purchasing power is commensurate with the Board's needs. This includes consideration of reducing the threshold for the use of electronic bulletin boards to $50,000.	Implemented

#6 Automated Receipting and Matching

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should develop a standard receipting and matching process at the school level to ensure that it only pays for goods it has received. The Board should consider performing a cost/benefit analysis of an automated receipting and matching process as part of any broader examination of its financial system requirements.	Not implemented

#1 Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

The Board recognizes that action on this recommendation is important. The initial objective is for the development of a business services strategic plan at the same time as work unfolds on all other key priorities over the 2008/2009 year.

As the school board proceeds to evolve the process, preliminary steps will include:

- Selection of a planning model

- Selection of a strategic planning facilitator

- Consensus among Business Managers regarding the approach

It should be noted that actions within the business services departments have been and will be governed by the objectives and expectations listed in the Directors Performance Framework and the goals and strategies documented in the Annual Operating Plan. The updated approach will be in use for the 2009/10 academic year.

#2 Financial Reporting

The school board took time to review the recommendation with Executive Council, the Committee of the Whole and the Finance Advisory Sub-Committee. HWDSB participated in the discussions at OASBO regarding review and proposed

recommendations from the workgroup established to examine the content and form of Interim Financial Reports.

The OASBO recommendations have resulted in a draft report which is currently being reviewed by the Ministry.

HWDSB has been corresponding with other school boards on this recommendation. It is positioned to implement Ministry recommendations regarding content and format of Interim Financial Reports to ensure consistency and best practices in the reporting of the stewardship of the financial resources of the HWDSB in 2009-2010.

#3 Internal Audit

The school board took time to review the recommendation with Executive Council, Committee of the Whole Report and the Finance Advisory Sub-Committee. HWDSB has also reviewed documentation from the Ministry and third party providers in order to define which service model types are best for their needs. HWDSB is currently awaiting policy direction from the Ministry.

By 2009/10, HWDSB expects to have finalized the structure of its desired audit function. The implementation of the function will proceed thereafter.

#4 Audit Committee

The school board took time to review the recommendation with Executive Council, Committee of the Whole and the Finance Advisory Sub-Committee. This finding was also shared with the external auditor (KPMG).

HWDSB has decided to alter the Terms of Reference and purpose of the Finance Advisory Sub-Committee (FASC) to assume the role of an audit committee. It should be noted that, although the Terms of Reference for the FASC have been expanded to include audit review responsibilities, this is not a standalone audit committee. Despite this, the FASC did engage in a more active role with the external auditor during the 2008 review. The FASC reviewed both the Audit Plan and Audit Report.

Additionally, there is agreement to expand the membership of the Finance Advisory Sub- Committee to include external members as advisors for agenda items that are not considered in-camera. Solicitation for external members will occur in the fall of 2009.

While the membership of the FASC has not changed to date, it expected that the Terms of Reference will be changed once the external members are identified.

#5 Review of Procurement Policies and Procedures

In 2008, HWDSB chose to engage in a Procurement Policy review in order to address this recommendation. The request was submitted to the Policy Working Sub-Committee. Draft Procurement Policy and Policy Directive Documents were developed which incorporated best practices as identified by other Ontario school boards. The requisition process and limits were updated to reflect alignment with current processes. The draft documents were also posted for Principal input and public consultation.

The documents were presented to Committee of the Whole in January 2009 and approved. Upon approval, a communication plan was developed to ensure all stakeholders would be aware of the policy and directive update.

The policy and policy directive were approved by Board of Trustees on January 2009. Since implementation, the revised policy provides clear direction regarding requisitioning levels. This has resulted in greater Pcard use, reducing low dollar purchase orders. Purchasing is also able to acquire a better audit trail for purchases over $1,000, ensuring a requisition and P.O. is created. Orders over $5,000 are required to have three written quotes (if not currently tendered) which aligns with the revised policy.

The improved processes ensure transparency in procurement. Management has also identified that the new processes are easier to enforce, resulting in time savings. Despite the increased usage of PCards, there have been little to no notable issues with suppliers.

#6 Automated Receipting and Matching

HWDSB investigated the cost/benefit of addressing this recommendation. It is noted that the external auditors have never issued a management letter point on this topic and the auditors have reviewed the current receipting system of negative confirmation. Furthermore, the value of goods is a low budget amount (approximately 2% of overall budget) and decentralized budgets are controlled by principals.

HWDSB recently completed its finance system upgrade to BAS2000 during the fall of 2008 and reviewed the automated receipting module of the BAS2000 system. The school board discussed the automated receipting module with other school boards who are using it. HWDSB found that a number of 'exceptions' have been made by one of the school boards in order to implement the system. There is also concern that this will be seen as extra work by the school office staff and a potential labour issue.

Finally, while there was concern that there is no standard receipting process in place, it has been noted that deliveries typically go to the school office with the exception of the

month of August when receipting occurs with the custodial staff. The school board believes that this mitigates the risk of errors in the receiving function.

6. School Operations and Facilities Management - Recommendations

#1 Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The facilities department should compile the Statement of Intents (i.e. an individual's annual priorities) into an annual business service improvement plan aligned with the Board's strategic directions. The facilities department can report its accomplishments against this plan.	Partially Implemented

#2 Multi-Year Maintenance and Renewal Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should consider establishing a multi-year (say 3 to 5 years) maintenance and renewal plan, including the funding available to support it. This would provide a clear forecast of the Board's critical needs over the next several years.	Partially Implemented

#3 Comprehensive Operational Health and Safety Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should develop a comprehensive operational plan that consolidates all elements of an effective health, safety and security program, and provides a foundation for reporting accomplishments to executive council and the Board.	Partially Implemented

#4 High Risk Workplace

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should develop an action plan to address its status as a "high-risk workplace" from the Ministry of Labour. Lessons learned from these orders must be considered for all future maintenance plans and new schools.	Implemented

#1 Development and Reporting of Annual Goals and Priorities

The Facilities Management department has initiated Statement of Intents and Business Service Plans for two (Caretaking Services & Capital Projects) of its three divisions.

These plans were completed for the years of 2006-07 and 2007-08. Development of Statement of Intents and a Business Service Development Plan for all three divisions for 2008-09, have yet to be completed. Because of the turnover at the leadership level, these plans were never prioritized even though successful planning did occur with managers once new leadership was identified.

The strategic planning process with management of all three divisions has already begun in 2009/10. Once completed, these statements will be used to develop a combined Business Service Development Plan for all three divisions: Caretaking Services, Capital Projects, and Maintenance & Energy. The plans will also be aligned with the expectations listed in the Directors Performance Framework and the goals and strategies documented in the Annual Operating Plan.

#2 Multi-Year Maintenance and Renewal Plan

The Facilities department does not currently have a multi-year maintenance and renewal plan, because the demand for major maintenance services against the supply of available budget is always oversubscribed. Instead, the facilities department initiates and tracks maintenance work orders through utilization of a work order management system. Funding for maintenance work is established and allocated to the various maintenance disciplines through the annual budget process.

The department has chosen to focus their efforts on the development of a Capital Projects Plan (CPP) instead, which indicates all current projects' work and tracks completed projects, work underway and proposed projects forecasted for the coming years. The school board has also restructured committees and processes so that major capital project decisions can be made in conjunction with major maintenance decisions. The purpose of this is to develop a seamless relationship between management and project decisions so that projects are initiated where the most benefit will be derived.

#3 Comprehensive Operational Health and Safety Plan

The school board's Occupational Health & Safety department provides support to employees, all levels of management and the Joint Health and Safety Committee through the development and implementation of policies, protocols, safety procedures and training which meets or exceeds legislative requirements.

Operational elements of an effective Health, Safety and Security program include: policies, procedures, programs, Joint Health and Safety Committees, training, communications, risk assessments, yearly reviews and reporting and worker education programs. To this end, the school board is striving to implement a more formalized Operational Health and Safety management plan in accordance with CSA standard Z1000-06: Occupational Health and Safety Management. This plan will ensure consideration of the organizational hazard risk assessment currently underway and

facilitate the development and implementation of evidence based Occupational Health and Safety programs.

It should be noted that HWDSB has a comprehensive program in place with a significant number of activities and reporting guidelines. Health and Safety reporting has become an established practice over the last number of years at HWDSB. On an annual basis the following reports are presented to Executive Council and Trustees:

1. Executive Report to the Board- Incidents/Injuries

2. Executive Report to the Board- Healthy Workplace

#4 High Risk Workplace

The school board's designation as a high risk employer by the Ministry of Labour was primarily based upon the number of lost time and health care incidents reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board during the time frame of statistical collection for this Ministry's initiative. "High Risk" employers were identified by comparing their data against other firms within their sector. A thorough analysis of HWDSB incident statistics revealed three major trends amongst the numbers. Firstly, that Educational Assistant's were reporting a significant number of first aid and health care incidents as a result of being struck or contacted by a student. Secondly, that caretaking staff were experiencing many strains and over exertion type incidents resulting in many days lost. Lastly, that incidence of slips, trip and falls amongst all employee groups is a large contributor on a yearly basis to increased incident statistics.

In response to this issue, the school board is adding an additional Return to Work Coordinator in September 2009, to facilitate returning injured workers back to meaningful, sustainable work more effectively. In May 2009, the school board had an audit of its Health and Safety and Disability Management Systems by the School Board's Cooperative Inc. This initiative will allow the school board to target areas where additional attention is warranted and can factor into the future comprehensive OHS plans. Finally, in 2009, the school board demonstrated sufficient due diligence to Ministry of Labour resulting in a reduction of formal WSIB Orders and removal of its designation as a high risk employer.

7. School Board Adoption of New Leading Practices

The following leading practices were added to the Second Edition of the Operational Review Guide that was released to the sector in September 2008. Some of these leading practices are a result of the observations and learning's during Wave 1 & 2 reviews.

School boards that were reviewed prior to September 2008 were not assessed against the new leading practices identified below. During this follow-up review process, the Operational Review team asked those school boards to comment on the extent to which they demonstrate adoption of these practices.

Governance and School Board Administration

New Leading Practice	Adopted?
The school board's governance model clearly delineates the division of duties between the board of trustees and the director of education. The board has established clearly defined duties and responsibilities to support on effective working relationship	Yes
The board of trustees develops and communicates a multi-year strategic plan that provides a framework for annual planning.	Yes
The board of trustees and management have appropriate processes for the establishment and regular maintenance of policies for the efficient and effective operation of the board. Policies are posted on the board's web site.	Yes
The director has established a formal succession plan to manage retirements and resignations of key managers/ administrators.	Yes

The school board reported that it had already adopted many of these leading practices. For example, it has developed role definitions for both the board of trustees and the Director of Education. The working relationship is articulated in part through the annual performance appraisal of the Director. As well, the board of trustees and management has appropriate processes for policy management. Policies are reviewed on a planned, periodic basis but can be updated sooner if required. The Board is continuing with a refresh of all of its policies which are posted on the board's website.

The school board also has a multi-year strategic plan and is currently completing the vision it established with its three-year strategic plan of 2006-09. Plans are in place to develop a new three-year strategic plan for 2009-12 and will continue once a new Director of Education is identified.

HR Management and School Staffing/Allocation

New Leading Practice	Adopted?
Management periodically reports on the effectiveness of the attendance management process/ programs to senior management and the board.	Yes
Management has established policies and procedures for staff/professional development and monitors staff take-up, budget, and outcomes.	Yes
Systems are in place and accessible by both HR and Finance staff to establish and track an approved level of staff.	Yes

The school board has an active attendance management program and reports on its achievements to the board of trustees and recently increased its staffing complement to specifically focus on attendance support. The school board actively benchmarks against other school boards in this area.

The school board has a system in place to establish and track an approved level of staff. On a monthly basis, the budget department, with assistance from HR, report on the staff complement to the board of trustees. A position control process exists so that all new positions created, posted and filled have been vetted and approved through the process.

Financial Management

New Leading Practice	Adopted?
Management completes and files all financial reports in accordance with established timelines.	Yes
The board has an audit committee with external members as advisors.	In Progress
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
Management performs regular cash/funding forecasting to ensure the board's debt service can be met to maturity.	Yes
Management ensures adequate controls are in place to safeguard non-school board funds and coordinate the annual reporting of revenues and expenditures from schools and school councils.	Yes
Purchasing Managers monitor and ensure compliance with the board's procurement policies and procedures.	Yes

The school board reported it has already adopted many of these leading practices. For example, the school boards financial reporting schedule is driven by the Committee of the Whole meeting schedule, which is set one year in advance. Reports are developed by the finance department and reports typically progress up through the Finance Audit Subcommittee, to the Committee of the Whole and on to the Ministry.

Management ensures adequate controls are in place to safeguard non-school board funds and all school bank accounts are reported into the finance department of the school board for review and reconciliation. School council funds are co-mingled with the school bank account.

The school board has also developed a new process with revised approval thresholds and increased usage of PCard for low level transactions. This has increased management's ability to track and review expenditures and allowed management to provide greater oversight when reviewing larger transactions.

One area that is in progress is the addition of an external member to the audit committee. It was reported that an external member as an advisor is expected to be on-boarded in the fall of 2009.

Operations and Facilities Management

New Leading Practice	Adopted?
Process exists to monitor new legislation and regulations and implement necessary changes.	Yes
Operations management follows Ministry guidelines, policy and legislation on healthy schools.	Yes

The school board reported that it has already adopted these leading new practices. For example, senior management sits on the OMC committee and often hears updates from the Ministry. When a change occurs, the School Business Official receives the guidelines, reviews them, and passes instruction on to the appropriate manager for action.

The school board has also adopted a two-pronged strategy on healthy schools:

1. Nutrition focus: developing policy guidelines on calories counts proper purchasing for schools

2. School Environment focus: as part of the healthy schools initiative, there is also a focus on creating a Healthy Physical Environment which involves an environment that is free from physical hazards, such as poor air quality, unsafe school playgrounds and unsanitary conditions.

Appendix A – Selection of Recommendations

- **SP** - Strategic Planning

- **AR** - Areas of Risk Categories

    - AR 1 - Undue reliance on specific human and / or non-human resources

    - AR 2 - Reputational risk in the community from not acting on the recommendation

    - AR 3 - Financial risk impacting school board's financial position

- **ROI** - Potential for material Return on Investment

- **SAO** - Seven Areas of Opportunity from 2008 sector report

- **NLP** – New leading practices introduced in Wave 3 through the Second Edition of the Operational Review Guide.

Governance and School Board Administration

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
1.	The Board should consider establishing specific refresh cycles for all policies and related procedures. Duration of the refresh cycle should be based on each policy, with a designated department responsible for tracking.	Yes	AR2

HR Management and School Staffing/Allocation

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
2.	The HR Department should conduct independent, periodic compliance audits of the Board's benefits insurance carrier. These audits, conducted by HR or through its benefits consultant, would ensure adherence to the plan terms and conditions, especially the adjudication of claims	No	
3.	As part of its on-going review of its needs for human resources management systems, the HR department should look to build in functionality that allows for automated synchronization of data between HR benefits, payroll, and external carriers.	No	

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
4.	The Director, in consultation with senior staff, should consider developing a formal succession plan to manage retirements and resignations at the senior administrative level.	Yes	AR1 / NLP
5.	The HR department should consider performing exit interviews with staff and management. Combined with the employee satisfaction survey, this can provide management with valuable input for HR professional development and policies.	No	

Financial Management

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
6.	The business department should compile the Statement of Intents (i.e. an individual's annual priorities) into an annual business service improvement plan aligned with the Board's strategic directions. The business department can report its accomplishments against this plan.	Yes	SP
7.	Finance staff should consider providing an expanded level of interim reporting in the format suggested in section 4.3 of this report. This would improve understanding of the year-to-date results.	Yes	SAO
8.	Management and the Board should consider establishing an internal audit function. Management could start by identifying options for its mandate and scope and estimating annual costs for each option. Management's proactive assessment of need and cost would be a useful first step.	Yes	SAO / NLP
9.	The Board should consider establishing a standalone audit committee. Management and the Board should also consider expanding the membership of the audit committee to include external members as advisors.	Yes	SAO / NLP
10.	Management should consider tendering its banking services at least every five years. Management should periodically review banking terms and conditions and compare them to school boards of similar size, to ensure the most competitive terms.	No	
11.	Management should develop an investment policy for approval by the Board, as required by the Education Act. The policy would define the investments permitted and define the nature of annual reporting on investment results.	No	

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
12.	Management should assess the cost/benefit of an electronic registration and payment system for continuing education. This could expedite the registration and management of all continuing education services, increase access to registration, and improve reporting capabilities	No	
13.	As part of the update of the procurement policies and procedures, authorization and threshold levels should be evaluated to ensure that purchasing power is commensurate with the Board's needs. This includes consideration of reducing the threshold for the use of electronic bulletin boards to $50,000	Yes	AR3
14.	To maximize payment processing efficiency, the Board should analyze existing PCard and lower value purchase order transactions ($350-$1000). This would define the dollar value distribution of current payments and help to identify opportunities to increase purchase order threshold limits and promote increased use of PCards	No	
15.	Management should develop a standard receipting and matching process at the school level to ensure that it only pays for goods it has received. The Board should consider performing a cost/benefit analysis of an automated receipting and matching process as part of any broader examination of its financial system requirements.	Yes	AR3
16.	Management should implement EFT payments to the majority of suppliers to gain greater efficiency and minimize the risk of payments being altered prior to clearing the bank.	No	

School Operations and Facilities Management

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
17.	The facilities department should compile the Statement of Intents (i.e. an individual's annual priorities) into an annual business service improvement plan aligned with the Board's strategic directions. The facilities department can report its accomplishments against this plan.	Yes	SP
18.	Management should consider establishing a multi-year (say 3 to 5 years) maintenance and renewal plan, including the funding available to support it. This would provide a clear forecast of the Board's critical needs over the next several years.	Yes	SAO
19.	Management should develop a comprehensive operational plan that consolidates all elements of an effective health, safety and	Yes	SP

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
	security program, and provides a foundation for reporting accomplishments to executive council and the Board.		
20.	Management should develop an action plan to address its status as a "high-risk workplace" from the Ministry of Labour. Lessons learned from these orders must be considered for all future maintenance plans and new schools.	Yes	AR2
21.	The facilities department should maintain an accurate and current assessment database of facility conditions, based on industry standards in the ReCAPP system. Few updates have been made since an initial (and extensive) benchmarking exercise in 2002.	No	
22.	Management should benchmark its facility construction costs against peer boards, to demonstrate that its construction costs are in line with other school boards.	No	