

**Ministry of Education**

**Limestone District School Board  
Follow-up Report to the Operational  
Review**

**August 2012**

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## 1. Introduction

The Ministry has conducted 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 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 12 Areas of Opportunity identified in the 2008 Sector Summary Report (seven) and the 2009 Sector Summary Report (five)?
- Does the recommendation represent a move toward more Strategic Planning on the part of Boards?
  - 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?
  - 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?

- 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.

## **2. Status and Implementation Update**

### **Introduction**

The Limestone District School Board Operational Review follow-up review took place on June 15, 2012, approximately 13 months after the release of the initial Operational Review report. The Deloitte Operational Review team conducted a teleconference with the Superintendent of Business. In advance of the teleconference, the Deloitte team selected recommendations from the Operational Review Report and asked the board to provide an implementation status along with any related supporting material.

### **Summary of Recommendation Status**

The school board has made progress in many of the recommendations since the completion of its original review back in May 2011. Of particular note was the school board's implementation of a professional development program for non-academic staff. In this regard the board has developed a comprehensive and customized leadership development curriculum for non-academic staff. Additionally, the school board has several key recommendations in progress that should be ready for implementation by the new school year in 2012-2013.

There were 18 recommendations made in the original report. The Operational Review team focused on eight of the recommendations in the follow-up review. The selected recommendations and the corresponding criteria are listed in Appendix A.

Overall, senior administration has either fully implemented or has made significant progress on most of the recommendations chosen for follow-up.

### 3. Governance and School Board Administration

#### #1 Succession Planning

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
To help build and sustain leadership capacity, the school board should establish its formal succession plan which includes plans for senior staff in non-academic functions.	Complete

#### #1 Succession Planning

The Human Resources department has developed a formal succession plan for all key positions across the school board including those for non-academic functions. The plan identifies leadership positions and the talent pools and skill development programs in place to support staff advancement to those positions.

This effort has also resulted in the creation of “Leading Today for Tomorrow”. This document is the Limestone DSB Leadership Development Strategy that will now guide the school board in developing leaders and supporting succession planning. The strategy leverages the concepts and framework used in the Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) to expand it for use in the non-academic or non-teaching functions. The strategy not only identifies the key steps in the leadership development process but it identifies the roles and responsibilities necessary to support recruitment and development of leaders. The development of the strategy was supported by a comprehensive consultation process that identified needs and incorporated leading practices from various functions across the school board, including plant.

Through this process the school board has developed customized programs through a partnership with St. Lawrence College to develop the skills of aspiring and experienced leaders.

The board also carefully considers how it can align the strategy to Ministry grants for professional development in the form of Education Program Other (EPO) grants.

## 4. Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocations

### #1 Trustees on Hiring Panels

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The Director should review the composition of the school board's interview panels, and develop formal hiring policies and procedures to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff. Trustees should provide strategic policies to govern staffing and recruitment, but should not sit on interview or hiring panels with the exception of hiring the Director.	Incomplete

### #2 Bargaining

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Trustees should continue to provide the school board with a policy and priority framework for bargaining. They should not directly participate in labour negotiations.	Completed

### #3 Professional Development for non-academic staff

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
HR management should establish and manage formal professional development guidelines for non-teaching staff, including annual learning plans for minimum training hours, and an in-depth supervisory training program for all managers of administrative functions. This will help ensure the school board is meeting the needs of its employees.	Completed

### #1 Trustees on Hiring Panels

At the request of the Board of Trustees, Senior Administration developed a report with respect to Trustee participation in hiring committees for school administrators and supervisory officers. The report provided various perspectives and legal opinions on the topic. The report recommended that the Board receive the report and that trustees consider it in making a decision regarding their participation in hiring processes prior to the next round of school administrators hiring, tentatively planned for February 2012.

Upon reviewing the report and having engaged in discussions, a motion was carried by the Board of Trustees that trustees continue to participate in the hiring process for Senior Staff and Principals, and that the Director review the composition of the Board's

interview panels and document the formal hiring procedures that will clarify the role of Trustees and school board staff.

## **#2 Bargaining**

At a Committee of the Whole meeting on board policy in January 2012, the Board of Trustees carried the motion to implement the Operational Review recommendation to continue to provide the school board with a policy and a priority framework for bargaining and that Trustees not directly participate in labour negotiations. The board is in the process of updating the relevant policies before the end of the 2011 – 2012 school year. In the meantime the board has put this decision into immediate practice for the current round of bargaining with all employee groups.

## **#3 Professional Development for non-academic staff**

As mentioned in the section for Succession Planning, the board has gone to great lengths to expand professional development opportunities for non-academic staff.

As part of the Limestone DSB Leadership Development Strategy, the board's Leadership Development Team has worked closely with other departments to develop a program for all non-academic leaders called Mentoring for School Leaders and Succession Planning for Non-Academic Leaders. This program formalizes the mentoring and career planning process for both aspiring and newly appointed leaders in non-academic functions.

In order to support the development of non-academic leadership skills, the board has also developed comprehensive curriculum through a partnership with St. Lawrence College. As a result, 12 modules have been developed by the St. Lawrence College Centre for Corporate Learning and Performance Improvement. Courses have been customized to meet the needs of the Limestone District School Board and are being offered to interested Administrative Staff, Supervisors, and System Support Leaders.

The curriculum is based on instructor-led presentations and participant-driven exercises intended to provide an opportunity for participants to apply the concepts learned. Over the coming years and through ongoing collaboration with the College, the board will create a customized and contextualized curriculum to enhance the courses offered. This will help to ensure alignment between training and the strategic direction of the Board.

The board is also exploring the various options for expanding their ability to manage professional development (PD) posting and tracking for all employee groups. The board is investigating the potential to leverage either the functionality that is already part of their enterprise financial and HR/Pay system or an alternative stand-alone system. With either option the board anticipates being able to post PD session information to an



internal web-site where employees could sign up on-line and reports could be available indicating what training has been selected and what courses have been completed.

Although there are technical options available, the board feels that the selection of the right system will depend on the staff capacity required to maintain PD data for all employees.

## 5. Financial Management

### #1 Develop Budget Risk Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should consider enhancing the process of reporting on the school board's budget risks. A formal risk management plan/report, which is reviewed and updated periodically, would include strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond budgeted levels.	Complete

### #2 Review of Payment Cycle

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should perform a detailed review of the school board's purchase-to-payment cycle and implement three-way matching..	In Progress

### #1 Develop Budget Risk Plan

As noted during the Operational Review, the school board identified and planned for in-year budget risks but did not formally capture those plans in a document. However, during the 2011-2012 budget development process, staff developed a template for identifying and mitigating budget risks. The template provided several key elements for tracking and reporting including: the Budget Risk Factor, the potential impact, the likelihood of occurring as well as the mitigation strategy. The board also added an additional budget risk factor as part of their budget deliberations.

### #2 Review of Payment Cycle

As noted during the Operational Review, the school board conducts off-line three-way matching for high dollar spend in the area of facilities and capital expenditures. The board has also implemented PCards through which there is a high volume of low dollar spend and a high level of supervisor and Accounts Payable (AP) clerk oversight before vendors are paid.

The school board is still, however, in the process exploring the feasibility of implementing three-way matching within their existing integrated financial software. In the spring of 2012, school board staff received a comprehensive presentation by the software provider to better understand the functional and technical implications of activating the matching module. Board financial staff have also been in contact with several other school boards throughout the province that currently do three-way matching in order to assess their success with implementing the process and systems.

In order to investigate the potential cost benefits of three-way matching the school board is also conducting a spend analysis of purchase orders (POs). The study may result in an increase in the minimum threshold for POs that could reduce the volume of transactions handled by purchasing staff. Any additional capacity could then be made available to support online three-way matching. If the results of the feasibility study are favorable, the school board will look to implement the process and system capabilities in the 2012-2013 school year.

## 6. School Operations and Facilities Management

### #1 Develop a formal green clean program

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The school board should review the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide and use it to develop a formal green clean program as part of its overarching Education Environmental Policy.	In Progress

### #2 Develop a Multi-Year Energy Management Plan

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

### #1 Develop a formal green clean program

The school board has implemented a Green Clean Program in all of its schools and Green Clean procedures are posted in every school, visible to students and staff. However, the school board is still working to finalize its formal Green Clean Operating Procedures Manual. The draft manual will be ready for distribution to staff in 2012-2013 and will incorporate principles from the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide.

The school board feels that the completion of such a comprehensive green cleaning guide will be a great resource for staff and support the environmental sustainability of the Board's cleaning operations and facilities.

### #2 Develop a Multi-Year Energy Management Plan

The Facilities department has completed a draft energy management plan that is scheduled for implementation in 2012-2013. The development of the plan was led by a dedicated expert who was hired for a full-time position with the school board from an energy management program at a local college. The Energy Management Plan is

currently being finalized through a consultation process with various groups within the department.

In addition to the site specific plans and targets for consumption reduction, the department has developed guidelines for all facilities staff responsible for managing thermostats and HVAC settings. The supporting guides are: Seasonal Energy Management Guidelines and an Operational Guidelines for Building Systems. The department has also developed an Energy Conservation Guideline for Students and Staff.

These are stand-alone resources that may be expanded as desired and incorporated into site-specific plans as appropriate. The school board feels that the guidelines are a critical support that will contribute to comfortable classrooms and staff work spaces, while greatly contributing to stewardship of financial resources.

## Appendix A – Selection of Recommendations

- **SP** - Strategic Planning (SP)
- **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
- **TAO** - Twelve Areas of Opportunity from 2008 sector report (seven) and the 2009 sector report (five)

### Governance and School Board Administration

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
1.	To help build and sustain leadership capacity, the school board should expand its formal succession plan which includes plans for senior staff in non-academic functions.	Yes	TAO

### HR Management and School Staffing/Allocation

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
2.	The Director should review the composition of the school board’s interview panels, and develop formal hiring policies and procedures to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff. Trustees should provide strategic policies to govern staffing and recruitment, but should not sit on interview or hiring panels with the exception of hiring the Director.	Yes	AR2
3.	Trustees should continue to provide the school board with a policy and priority framework for bargaining. They should not directly participate in labour negotiations.	Yes	AR2
4.	HR management should establish and manage formal professional development guidelines for non-teaching staff, including annual learning plans for minimum training hours, and an in-depth supervisory training program for all managers of	Yes	AR1

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
	administrative functions. This will help ensure the school board is meeting the needs of its employees.		
5.	Management should consider conducting exit interviews with all staff exiting the school board to obtain input on HR policy, as well as process and program improvement.	No	

## Financial Management

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
6.	Management should consider enhancing the process of reporting on the school board's budget risks using the format suggested in section 4.2 of this report. A formal risk management plan/report, which is reviewed and updated periodically, would include strategies to mitigate the risks of spending beyond budgeted levels.	Yes	ROI
7.	Management should continue working with the regional audit team on the development of a risk assessment to determine priority areas for internal audit activities.	No	
8.	Management should work with the regional audit team to ensure annual audit plans are clearly documented. Audit report recommendations should be followed up and acted upon by management. Where management chooses not to implement an audit recommendation and to accept the risks associated with an audit finding, the justification should be clearly documented and agreed to by the audit committee.	No	
9.	The Board should use existing supply chain and procurement documents to develop a procurement policy to complement the existing comprehensive procurement administrative procedure ensuring alignment to the BPS Procurement Directive which has replaced the Supply Chain Guideline 1.0.	No	
10.	Management should perform a detailed review of the school board's purchase-to-payment cycle and implement three-way matching.	Yes	TAO/ROI

## School Operations and Facilities Management

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
11.	The school board should review the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide and use it to develop a formal green	Yes	TAO/ROI

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
	clean program as part of its overarching Education Environmental Policy.		
12.	Using energy consumption data, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates quantifiable measures and the tools to monitor and manage the plan. In line with the Green Energy Act, 2009, energy management planning should include the development of policies, guidelines, goals (conservation targets), and priorities for energy management and resource conservation. The plan should include short-term and long-term opportunities, with milestones, roles, responsibilities and budgets with a process for ensuring community support.	Yes	TAO / ROI
13.	The school board should enhance its procurement policy to support energy management goals.	No	
14.	Management should provide formal annual reporting to the Board on the energy conservation savings achieved against the plan once it has been developed.	No	
15.	The school board should develop a system to track consumption, budget expenditures, and identify opportunities for further energy management savings.	No	
16.	The school board should develop an overarching environmental policy that complements existing Administrative Procedure - Environmental Education, addressing both environmental education and responsible management.	No	
17.	The school board should consider establishing an integrated health plan/strategy that would reflect the existing policies and procedures regarding the health of both students and employee groups and aim to promote health and wellness across the school board. Management should also consider coordinating the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan centrally.	No	
18.	The school board should develop an approved annual and multi-year capital plan that includes the related funding plan.	No	