

Ministry of Education

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

October 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 Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) Operational Review follow-up review took place on June 22, 2012, approximately 2 years and 5 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 school board to provide an implementation status along with any related supporting material.

Summary of Recommendation Status

While the school board is still in the process of implementing many of the recommendations from the Operational Review, most of these are scheduled for completion by September 2012. Of particular note is the school board's completion of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan as well as the ongoing efforts to complete the implementation of an attendance management program.

There were 25 recommendations made in the original report. The Operational Review team focused on 9 of the recommendations in the follow-up review. The selected recommendations and the corresponding criteria are listed in Appendix A.

3. Governance and School Board Administration

#1 Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The Board of Trustees, using a consultative process, should develop and communicate a multi-year strategic plan that provides a framework for annual planning. This will provide direction to all staff on the Board's goals, and clear steps towards achieving them.	Complete

#2 Annual Operating Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Once this overarching plan is developed, the school board should develop a formal annual operational plan aligned with the Board's multi-year strategic goals. This will also enable all departments to track and report progress on their defined priorities and goals throughout the year.	In Progress

#3 Establish Formal Succession Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The school board should establish a formal succession plan to manage retirements and resignations of key managers and administrators, with a particular focus on the non-academic operations of the school board	In Progress

#1 Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Since its original Operational Review, BWDSB has completed its Multi-Year Strategic Plan. The process started in 2011 with the Director of Education leading a direction setting planning session with Senior Administration and Trustees. The process included subsequent consultations with both internal and external stakeholders such as Parent Involvement Committees (PIC) during the month of October 2011. Once consultations were completed, Senior Administration under the leadership of the Director of Education, conducted a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses/Limitations, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis across all functional areas of school board operations.

As a result of the SWOT and through consultation with Trustees, Senior Administration developed the three main priority areas of the Multi-year Plan: well-being of students, providing quality instruction and encouraging parent engagement. Once these main points of focus were developed, BWDSB then developed multi-year SMART (Specific,

Measurable, Actionable, Realistic & Relevant, Time Limited) targets in order to achieve and support the three priority areas. These SMART targets represent long term strategic goals for BWDSB.

The final Multi-Year Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2012.

BWDSB has noted that the process undertaken to complete the Multi-Year Strategic Plan has provided an excellent framework to further develop annual operating plans for the school board as well as individual departmental plans.

#2 Annual Operating Plan

BWDSB has plans to develop its Annual Operating Plan at the beginning of the 2012–13 school year. The intention was to ensure that the Multi-Year Strategic Plan was completed and approved by the Board of Trustees before moving forward with the development and alignment of the school board operating plan. The school board is encouraged to finalized its annual board-wide operating plan.

#3 Establish Formal Succession Plan

Management has indicated that efforts to establish a formal Succession plan are currently in progress and being led by the Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) Steering Committee for all leadership roles.

Management reports that the majority of current efforts to support recruitment are led by Human Resources (HR). This is reflected by the representation of the HR Department in the long term strategic goal of providing leadership training, which could be found in BWDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan. The HR department provides information sessions on potential future roles for aspiring leaders. Leadership training is also provided for upward mobility and coordination into leadership roles.

However, at the time of this Follow-up Review, BWDSB did not have a formal tracking plan for upcoming retirements. The school board has not identified potential pools of candidates nor is there a plan for training.

BWDSB is encouraged to continue to formalize a succession plan leveraging current recruiting practices and planned retirements. The school board is also encouraged to expand its succession planning to include non-academic positions as well.

4. Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocations

#1 Annual Department Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The Human Resources department should consider developing an annual department plan aligned with the school board's operating plan and overall strategic direction. This will enable the department to track and report on the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.	In Progress

#2 Develop Attendance Support Program

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The department should develop a comprehensive attendance support program, including policies and procedures to address specific categories of absenteeism. This will provide management with a consistent and structured approach to improve attendance, including positive reinforcement for employees and standardized practices across all employee groups.	In Progress

#1 Annual Department Plan

Although the Human Resources Department has contributed to the development of the Multi-year Strategic Plan, the department has not yet developed a formal Annual Departmental Plan. BWDSB reports that the department plans to complete its Annual Department Plan in the 2012-13 school year. In this regard, the department is encouraged to develop a plan that is aligned both with the system-wide annual operating plan once it is finalized as well as the school board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

#2 Develop Attendance Support Program

BWDSB reports that a comprehensive attendance support program has been developed to include: disability support, organizational health and wellness, and attendance support. The first two pillars (disability support, organizational health and wellness) have already been implemented for the 2011-12 school year. BWDSB has also hired a dedicated resource for disability tracking of both occupational and non-occupational disabilities. The final pillar of the program specific to attendance support will be fully implemented in the 2012-13 school year. Policies and procedures have been updated to support the implementation of all attendance management initiatives.

The attendance support call-out system will be used to will track the attendance of teaching staff. Once the teachers have been successfully added to the system, the

expectation is that other employee groups will be added over time. BWDSB expects the system to help with overall data tracking as the program will feed data into a larger HR attendance system known as 'Parklane'. By having an updated system, this will allow for timely and accurate reporting. BWDSB will now be in a better position to identify, manage and make data driven decisions on how best to improve their attendance management system. The school board is encouraged to finalize the implementation of its attendance management system. The HR Department should report periodically to Senior Administration on attendance issues and regarding the effectiveness of the school board's attendance management programs. Senior Administration should provide formal reports or periodic updates on the attendance management program to the Board of Trustees. This will help the Board understand any board-wide attendance issues and success or opportunities of improvement for the program.

5. Financial Management

#1 Annual Department Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The finance department should consider developing an annual department plan aligned with the school board's annual operating plan and overall strategic direction. This will enable the department to track and report the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.	In Progress

#2 Align Budgetary Planning to Strategic Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The school board should formally add a step in the budget planning process to ensure alignment between specific budget goals and the school board's annual district goals and the objectives outlines in the Board's multi-year strategic plan.	Completed

#3 Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The department should consider consolidating key risks and mitigation strategies into a single risk plan.	In Progress

#1 Annual Department Plan

BWDSB reports that the Finance Department plans to complete its Annual Departmental Plan in the 2012-13 school year. In this regard, the department is encouraged to develop a plan that is aligned both with the system-wide annual operating plan as well as the school board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

#2 Align Budgetary Planning to Strategic Plan

BWDSB has created a budgetary reporting template which requires departments to complete a business case component. This template has ensured that all new funding is aligned to the priorities outlined in the school board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan. In addition, BWDSB has created a step-by-step process and implementation Gantt chart for their budget planning process to ensure alignment between all budgetary goals and the school board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

#3 Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The school board ensures ongoing management of finances and associated risks through the completion of a multi-year internal audit plan. Potential risks are highlighted and brought to the attention of the Board through a heat map created through the completion of the internal audit plan process. However, the school board has not developed a formal risk plan. Management has indicated that measures to enhance the reporting process for budget development will be added to the next school year's work plan.

The school board is encouraged to finalize implementing this recommendation as it will provide trustees, senior administration and other stakeholders with a better understanding of the nature and impact of any budget risks and what mitigation strategies could be put in place.

6. School Operations and Facilities Management

#1 Develop Annual Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The department should consider developing an annual departmental plan aligned with the operating plan and overall strategic plan. This will enable the department to track and report the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.	In Progress

#1 Develop Annual Plan

BWDSB reports that the department plans to complete its Annual Departmental Plan in the 2012-13 school year. In this regard, the department is encouraged to develop a plan that is aligned both with the system-wide annual operating plan as well as the school board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

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.	The Board of Trustees, using a consultative process, should develop and communicate a multi-year strategic plan that provides a framework for annual planning. This will provide direction to all staff on the Board’s goals, and clear steps towards achieving them.	Yes	TAO / SP
2.	Once this overarching strategic plan is developed, the school board should develop a formal annual operating plan aligned with the Board’s multi-year strategic goals. This will also enable all departments to track and report progress on their defined priorities and goals throughout the year.	Yes	TAO / SP
3.	Senior administration should report to the Board of Trustees annually on the status and outcomes of the school board’s strategic plan and the annual operating plan, once it is developed.	No	
4.	The school board should establish a formal succession plan to manage retirements and resignations of key managers and administrators. This should include senior staff in both academic and non-academic functions and would help build and sustain leadership capacity.	Yes	TAO

HR Management and School Staffing/Allocation

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
5.	The HR department should consider developing an annual department plan aligned with the school board's operating plan and overall strategic direction. This will enable the department to track and report on the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.	Yes	TAO / SP
6.	Management should develop recruitment policies and procedures and ensure they are reviewed annually to align staff planning with student achievement.	No	
7.	The school board is encouraged to put in place a segregation of duties between payroll and employee information to maintain the integrity of data.	No	
8.	Management should consider developing a formal plan for conducting exit interviews. These interviews would provide input for HR policy as well as process and program improvement.	No	
9.	The department should develop a comprehensive attendance management program, including policies and procedures to address specific categories of absenteeism. This will provide management with a consistent and structured approach to improve attendance, including positive reinforcement for employees and standardized practices across all employee groups.	Yes	TAO

Financial Management

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
10.	The finance department should consider developing an annual department plan aligned with the school board's annual operating plan and overall strategic direction. This will enable the department to track and report the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.	Yes	TAO / SP
11.	The school board should examine the organizational structure of the finance department to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency.	No	
12.	The school board is encouraged to compare staffing costs with similar school boards in the budget planning and development process, to ensure efficient use of resources.	No	
13.	The school board should formally add a step in the budget planning process to ensure alignment between specific budget goals and the school board's annual district goals and the objectives outlines in the Board's multi-year strategic plan.	Yes	ROI / AR3

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
14.	The department should consider consolidating key risks and mitigation strategies into a single risk plan.	Yes	ROI / AR3
15.	Management and the Board of Trustees should add external advisors to the Audit Committee to contribute to the committee's effectiveness.	No	
16.	Management is encouraged to implement an electronic supplier interface for ordering, processing, and payment. This is an opportunity for increased process efficiencies.	No	
17.	Management is encouraged to continue to explore additional Electronic Fund Transfers (EFT) opportunities with suppliers, for greater efficiency and security.	No	

School Operations and Facilities Management

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
18.	The department should consider developing an annual departmental plan aligned with the operating plan and overall strategic plan. This will enable the department to track and report the progress of its defined priorities and goals throughout the year.	Yes	TAO / SP
19.	The school board is encouraged to develop an annual training plan for staff that addresses ongoing skills development and emerging regulatory issues. This will help to ensure that the professional development of all custodial and maintenance staff is being met and tracked.	No	
20.	The school board should continue developing an inventory system to track and control major cleaning and maintenance equipment.	No	
21.	The school board is encouraged to develop an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management. The Board is encouraged to finalize its draft environmental policy.	No	
22.	The school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan with measures to be implemented and the tools to monitor and manage the plan.	No	
23.	Successful conservation techniques currently used by the board should be communicated across all schools and with other school boards, to enhance recognition of energy management across the system.	No	
24.	The school board should develop an occupational health and safety plan, to ensure compliance with associated health and safety statutory requirements.	No	

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
25.	Management should complete the planned update of its current capital commitments and future requirements. This would include an assessment of the funding to support the existing debt service costs, and a projection of funding sources to support the Board's future capital and facility renewal requirements.	No	