

**Ministry of Education**

**Bruce-Grey Catholic District School  
Board  
Follow-up Report to the Operational  
Review**

**June 2011**

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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 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.

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 fourth edition of the Operational Review Guide, released to the sector in September 2010. These were not part of the original review process.

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

### **Introduction**

The Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board (BGCDSB) Operational Review follow-up review took place on February 28, 2011, approximately 13 months after the release of the initial Operational Review report. The PricewaterhouseCoopers Operational Review team conducted a teleconference with a senior administrative official of the school board. In advance of the teleconference, the PricewaterhouseCoopers team selected several key 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 implementing the recommendations since the completion of its original Operational Review in January 2010. Of particular note are the steps taken to implement an attendance support program, a budget risk mitigation strategy, and several initiatives related to energy management and conservation.

Following the Operational Review, management reported the findings of the Operational Review report to the Board of Trustees.

There were 26 recommendations made in the original report. The Operational Review team focused on 14 of the recommendations in the follow-up review. The opportunities presented a cross section of strategic planning initiatives, some from 12 areas of opportunity identified in the sector reports as well as those that were of specific risks to the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board. The selected recommendations and the corresponding criteria are listed in Appendix A.

Overall, senior administration has made some progress on most of the recommendations chosen for follow-up. Also, the school board has adopted most of the new leading practices added in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Leading Practices Sector Guide released in September 2010.

### 3. Governance and School Board Administration

#### #1 Strategic Planning

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In progress

#### #2 Succession Planning

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In progress

#### #1 Strategic Planning

The school board has a multi-year strategic plan. The Board is currently reviewing the strategic plan and determining the requirements for the next version of the multi-year strategic plan. Once the strategic plan has been updated, senior administration will develop annual operating plans for both academic and non-academic departments that are aligned to the strategic plan. Senior administration also mentioned that the school board lacked the resources and capacity to develop the structure and framework of a new strategic plan from scratch themselves. The school board plans to research current plans and templates used by other school boards that have been successful and customize them to cater to their strategic focus and needs.

#### #2 Succession Planning

The school board has hired a retired principal to develop a draft Succession and Talent Plan. The plan, once completed, will be in line with the Ministry’s Ontario Leadership Strategy and to build and sustain leadership capacity. One of the first priorities for the school board is the development of a succession plan for senior administrators to address business continuity concerns at the senior management levels. Senior administration indicated that given the small size of the school board, there are very limited resources to dedicate to succession planning.

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

### #1 Annual Department Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In progress

### #2 Formal Disciplinary Procedures

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In progress

### #3 Attendance Support Program

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In progress

### #1 Annual Department Plan

A draft annual department plan is currently being developed and will provide direction and responsibilities for all staff in the department. Once completed, the plan should include performance measures and targets for its specific goals and priorities, and will support the annual reporting on achievements. The department should ensure that the department plan is also aligned to the goals and objectives of the board-wide operating plan and the overarching multi-year strategic plan.

### #2 Formal Disciplinary Procedures

The HR department has drafted formal disciplinary procedures for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Senior administration has indicated that the draft administrative procedures will be formalized and implemented within the school year.

### **#3 Attendance Support Program**

The Board has approved a formal attendance support policy. The HR department has developed an attendance support program to implement the Board's attendance support policy. The Attendance Support Program (ASP) is a comprehensive program aimed at positively supporting the health of employees and the organization. As a first step, HR has engaged an outside firm to develop a requirements plan to identify specific process, platform and other change management requirements. A number of procedures have already been implemented. Draft communications to staff are also in place. It is envisaged that once the attendance support program is fully in place, it will be supported by a Disability Management Program, Attendance Awareness Program and Wellness Programs and be consistent with various regulations and legislation.

The school board is encouraged to continue to develop a comprehensive attendance management program, and report on employee attendance in comparison with set targets and in relation to the effectiveness of key attendance support initiatives.

The school board should continue to expand on its new attendance management policy to include the formal documentation of processes and procedures. This will provide management and employee groups with a consistent and structured approach to improve attendance. A formalized attendance management program will also ensure that HR can periodically report on the effectiveness of the attendance management process to senior management and the Board. The Board is encouraged to look at the Leading Practices in Attendance Support for Ontario School Boards report released in 2008 by the COSBO Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) Committee. This report is available on the School Business Support Branch website at <https://sbsb.edu.gov.on.ca>.

## 5. Financial Management

### #1 Annual Department Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
<p>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.</p>	<p>In progress</p>

### #2 Budget Risk Mitigation

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
<p>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.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

### #3 Interim Financial Reporting

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
<p>Management should consider implementing recommendations provided by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) regarding the format of interim financial reporting. In particular, management should consider including non-financial performance indicators in the report (e.g., enrolment and staffing) and explaining key variances with conclusions.</p> <p>Management should also consider using standard templates provided as part of IFRC report.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

### #4 Audit Committee

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
<p>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.</p>	<p>In progress</p>

## **#1 Annual Department Plan**

A draft annual department plan is currently being developed and will provide direction and responsibilities for all staff in the department. Once completed, the plan should include performance measures and targets for its specific goals and priorities, and will support the annual reporting on achievements. The department should ensure that the department plan is also aligned to the goals and objectives of the board-wide operating plan and the overarching multi-year strategic plan. Within the department, several individuals have already developed personal plans that align with the annual department plan.

## **#2 Budget Risk Mitigation**

The Finance department developed and implemented a formal budget risk mitigation process in the 2010 budget cycle. The process identifies and documents all significant risks during the budget planning process. Senior administration expects to continue to report on the progress of the budget risk mitigation plan throughout the school year and in upcoming years.

## **#3 Interim Financial Reporting**

The school board implemented a new financial information system (Microsoft NaVision). Through its new financial information system, the Finance department has gained enhanced capabilities to produce interim financial reports that follow the recommended format and templates of the IFRC. The new format is currently being implemented and will be issued four times each year in subsequent years.

## **#4 Audit Committee**

The Board has attended Ministry training regarding the establishment of an audit committee. The committee includes two external advisors who were recruited through advertising in the local community. The mandate of the audit committee has been drafted and is ready for official launch. The first meeting of the new audit committee was scheduled to take place in March 2011.

## 6. School Operations and Facilities Management

### #1 Annual Department Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In progress

### #2 Green Clean Program

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	Implemented

### #3 Multiyear Maintenance and Renewal Program

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In progress

### #4 Energy Management Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Using the results of the energy audits, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates quantifiable goals and targets.	In progress

## #5 Energy Consumption Tracking

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In progress

### #1 Annual Department Plan

A draft annual department plan is currently being developed and will provide direction and responsibilities for all staff in the department. Once completed, the plan should include performance measures and targets for its specific goals and priorities, and will support the annual reporting on achievements. The department should ensure that the department plan is also aligned to the goals and objectives of the board-wide operating plan and the overarching multi-year strategic plan.

### #2 Green Clean Program

The school board has adopted a green clean program based on a model similar as outlined in the Ministry’s *Green Clean Program Resource Guide*. The school board introduced changes to its cleaning product lines and has ensured that provisions are made within the procurement policies and procedures to support the Green Clean Program. The school board has also drafted an environmental stewardship policy to further support this initiative.

### #3 Multi-year Maintenance and Renewal Plan

The Facilities department is building upon the annual identification of major maintenance projects which were in place at the time of the school board’s Operational Review.

Currently, the Board of Trustees and senior administration are already involved in the planning process. The Facilities department plans to broaden the involvement of other staff groups and stakeholders and formalize the plan beyond the current one-year planning horizon.

### #4 Energy Management Plan

Management plans to develop a multi-year energy management plan that includes policies, guidelines, goals and priorities. The Facilities department has conducted a number of energy audits using Ministry funding to identify needs and facilities with opportunities for potential improvement, conservation and savings. Senior administration indicated that it is awaiting the release of an Energy Management Plan

template from the Ministry. Once the template is released, the school board will customize and draft its own energy management plan.

## **#5 Energy Consumption Tracking**

The Facilities department has expanded its existing tracking of facilities' utility consumption into the Ministry's Utility Consumption Database (UCD) for all school boards in Ontario. The reporting features will identify comparisons to similar schools and allow for open market electrical purchasing.

## 7. School Board Adoption of New Leading Practices

The following leading practices were added to the Fourth Edition of the Operational Review Guide that was released to the sector. Some of these leading practices are a result of the observations and learning from earlier waves of reviews.

School boards that were reviewed prior to September 2010 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 governance model reflects the roles and responsibilities mandated by the Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act, Bill 177.	Yes

The Board has attended training for Bill 177 and updated its policy to more clearly delineate the roles of the Chair and the Director of Education. The Board has also developed a Trustee Code of Conduct.

### HR Management and School Staffing/Allocation

New Leading Practice	Adopted?
Trustees do not sit on hiring panels (exception hiring the director of education) but provide policies to govern staffing and recruitment.	No
Processes are in place to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in staff recruitment, selection, hiring, mentoring, promotion and succession planning processes. The school board conducts employment system reviews and works towards broadening the diversity of recruitment pools.	Yes
Trustees provide the school board's policy and priority framework within which bargaining takes place.	Yes

Senior administration indicated that it is currently reviewing all of its HR policies. In the past, there have been occasions where individual trustees were involved in hiring decisions. The HR department is currently updating all policies and procedures to explicitly remove references to trustee involvement in matters related to staffing and recruitment other than providing the overall policy framework and direction.

The school board has developed employment equity policies that have been in place for a long time at the school board. The school board has tried to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in staff recruitment, selection, hiring,

mentoring, promotion and succession planning processes. The school board also works towards broadening the diversity of recruitment pools.

In the past, the Board of Trustees has provided the school board with a policy and priority framework for negotiations. Before the next round of labour negotiations, it is recommended that the Director of Education review the role of staff and trustees in the collective bargaining process. In line with the new Bill 177, trustees should not have a direct role in labour negotiations. Trustees should continue to provide the school board's policy and priority framework within which bargaining takes place and should not play a direct role in future negotiations.

### Financial Management

New Leading Practice	Adopted?
The established policies and procedures that govern all aspects of supply chain management, including both planned (recurring) and unplanned (non-recurring/emergency purchases, comply with the Supply Chain Guideline (SCG) v.1.1.0.	Yes
In line with the SCG, purchasing authorization levels are commensurate to job roles and responsibilities, and are monitored for compliance by a supervisor or department head.	Yes

The school board is currently in compliance with the mandatory elements of the SCG v1.0 and is prepared to make further amendments to its supply chain policies, procedures and processes to ensure compliance with the new Broader Public Sector (BPS) Procurement Directive, released in April 2011.

Senior administration reported that all purchasing authorization levels are commensurate to job roles and responsibilities, and are monitored for compliance by a supervisor or department head.

### Operations and Facilities Management

New Leading Practice	Adopted?
The school board has an approved facility partnership policy.	Yes
A Project Manager is appointed to oversee all aspects of the project including monitoring the budget and project timelines and ensuring management processes are in place for issues such as change orders and other internal approvals. This includes periodic project status updates and post-construction project evaluation.	Yes
An independent Cost Consultant is retained by the school board to review the design, provide objective costing analysis and advice, and report to the school board on options to ensure that the proposed capital expenditure is within the approved budget, prior to tendering a project.	No

The school board has a Facility Partnership Policy under Policy BP-524, which addresses facility partnerships at the school board. The school board believes it is in the best interest of both itself and the community to encourage the sharing of its facilities that are not being utilized during the evenings or being used for educational purposes.

The school board indicates that through sharing of facilities, it can reduce costs and provide efficient space to support other community partners and improve services to the wider community.

Under the policy, the school board will consider partnerships for the use of facilities if the following criteria are met:

- if the use of the facility is appropriate for a school setting;
- if the use of the facility does not compromise the safety of students and staff;
- if the use of the facility does not compromise the Board's student achievement strategy and;
- if all costs associated with the partner's use is recovered through fees or rental.

The Facilities department has a dedicated project manager to oversee major construction and maintenance projects. Senior administration believes that this role is useful in helping the school board oversee project expenditure. Senior administration will consider the use of dedicated project managers in the future depending on the size and complexity of future projects.

The school board indicated that to date, they have not required the services of an independent cost consultant for school construction projects due to the relatively small size of projects the board undertakes. If the school board undertakes large and relatively costly projects in the future, they will consider the services of an independent cost consultant.

## 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)
- **NLP** – New leading practices introduced in Wave 5 through the Fourth Edition of the Operational Review Guide.

### Governance and School Board Administration (Bruce, Suzanne, Cathy)

Presented the report to the Board of Trustees. Communications officer also reported on it. Posted on the web, reported in the press.

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
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.	Yes	SP
2.	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.	Yes	TAO

## HR Management and School Staffing/Allocation

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
3.	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.	Yes	SP
4.	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.	Yes	TAO
5.	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.	Yes	TAO

## Financial Management

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
6.	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.	Yes	SP
7.	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.	Yes	NLP
8.	Management should consider implementing recommendations provided by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) regarding the format of interim financial reporting. 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.	Yes	TAO
9.	In accordance with the Ministry's internal audit and audit committee strategy, the school board could consider establishing	Yes	TAO

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
	an audit committee that includes external advisors, who would contribute to the committee's effectiveness.		

### School Operations and Facilities Management

Ref.	Recommendation	Follow-up Yes/No	Criteria
10.	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.	Yes	SP
11.	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.	Yes	NLP
12.	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.	Yes	TAO
13.	Using the results of the energy audits, the school board should establish a multi-year energy management plan that incorporates quantifiable goals and targets.	Yes	TAO
14.	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.	Yes	TAO