

Ministry of Education

**Renfrew County Catholic District
School Board
Follow-up Report to the Operational
Review**

June 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 Renfrew County Catholic District School Board Operational Review follow-up review took place on April 2, 2012, approximately 14 months after the release of the initial Operational Review Report. The PricewaterhouseCoopers Operational Review team conducted a teleconference with senior administrators of the school board. In advance of the teleconference, the PricewaterhouseCoopers team selected several key 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

The school board has made progress in implementing the recommendations since the completion of its original Operational Review in December 2010. Of particular note are the steps taken to conduct compliance audits of benefit plans, strengthening the audit function of the school board, and establishing a formal Environmental Education and Stewardship policy.

There were 32 recommendations made in the original report. The Operational Review team focused on 18 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 Operational Review sector reports as well as those that were of specific risk to the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board. The selected recommendations and the corresponding criteria are listed in Appendix A.

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

3. Governance and School Board Administration

1. Leadership Development and Succession Planning

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The school board should continue to align its leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry’s leadership initiatives. It should finalize the development of a formal leadership development and succession plan for key management positions in all academic and non-academic areas.	In Progress

#1 Leadership Development and Succession Planning

One of the school board’s superintendents has a dedicated focus on aligning the school board’s leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry’s leadership initiatives. This superintendent has been attending various Ministry events and workshops related to leadership development. Senior administrators reported that there is still a greater focus on the academic side and that more needs to be done on the business side regarding leadership development. The school board has made progress in defining its succession plan for management positions in key areas, including filling key positions that were previously vacant.

4. Human Resource Management and School Staffing/Allocations

1. Performance Appraisal

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The HR department should establish a formal employee performance appraisal process for the Director of Education, superintendents, management, and support staff. The formal process should be supported by documented policies and procedures.	In Progress

2. Attendance Management

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should implement a formal attendance support program which would use the available attendance data. Management should also continue to identify options for implementation of a human resources information management system which would enable the HR department to track and analyze staff attendance.	In Progress

3. Benefits Compliance Audits

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should periodically conduct independent compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier to ensure adherence to the benefit plans' terms and conditions.	Implemented

4. Staffing Plan and Allocation Process

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should document policies and procedures which govern the development of an annual staffing plan and allocation process.	Incomplete

1. Performance Appraisal

The school board has made progress in establishing a formal employee performance appraisal process for the Director of Education, superintendents and management staff. Over the past year, the school board has worked closely with legal counsel to provide appropriate contract language to enable performance appraisals to be conducted. The revised contracts for senior administrators have already been drafted and are scheduled

to be reviewed by the Board in the near future. The school board is also working on a performance appraisal program for other support staff.

2. Attendance Management

The school board has rolled out a formal Attendance Support Program after working with School Boards' Co-Operative Inc. The Attendance Support Program has already been introduced to school principals and union representatives. School board administrators gathered significant feedback from all stakeholders throughout the process.

The school board has also made plans to procure a new human resources information management system which would enable the HR department to track and analyze staff attendance more effectively. In the interim, the school board is relying on the existing HR database.

3. Benefits Compliance Audits

The school board completed a formal compliance audit of its benefits program. Senior administrators indicated that the audit took place during the Operational Review but the results were not made available until after the review. The audit provided useful information on the status of compliance for the school board's benefit programs.

4. Staffing Plan and Allocation Process

The school board has mapped out its current process for annual staffing and allocation, but has not made plans to formally document policies and procedures which govern the development of an annual staffing plan. Senior administrators indicated that they recognize the value in implementing this recommendation. However, given the priority to upgrade the school board's HR information management system, the decision was made to implement this recommendation at a later date.

5. Financial Management

1. Budget Risk Management

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	Implemented

2. Budget Planning Process

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should consider providing a budget process presentation containing an outline of budget timelines and stages to the Board each year. This would help ensure that the budget development process is clearly communicated and understood by all trustees. Throughout the budget development process, management should provide information to trustees on key stages in the budget development process.	Implemented

3. Interim Financial Reporting

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should take into account the recommendations made by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) on frequency (a minimum of three reports) and format of interim financial reporting to the Board. Management should continue to discuss with trustees how the existing format of interim financial reports can be enhanced to align with IFRC recommendations.	In Progress

4. Internal Audit

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
Management should continue working with the regional audit team on the development of a risk assessment to determine priority areas for internal audit activities.	Implemented

5. Internal Audit Plans

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
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.	In Progress

6. Audit Committee

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The Board should establish an Audit Committee and recruit external advisors to sit on the Audit Committee in accordance with the new Audit Committee regulation.	Implemented

1. Budget Risk Management Allocation Process

The finance department has implemented the recommended risk management plan and report. The Board adopted the risk assessment plan as part of the budget document on June 27, 2011. The risk assessment plan is to be reviewed periodically and updated as new information becomes available. The finance department intends to use a similar format again for the upcoming budget cycle. The current format of the risk assessment report is a succinct, one-page summary of key budget risks. Senior administrators elaborate on the risks during the oral presentation of the budget to the Board.

2. Budget Planning Process

The finance department has implemented the recommendation to provide a budget process presentation containing an outline of budget timelines and stages to the Board. The last such presentation for the previous budget cycle was conducted on April 11, 2011. The finance department intends to repeat this practice again for the next budget cycle, and finds it useful to keep the Board informed of key budget dates and timelines.

3. Interim Financial Reporting

The finance department presents monthly interim financial statements to the Board. In addition, the finance department presents a budget variance analysis three times a year to the Board. The finance department has tried to adopt the recommended interim financial report, but found that a key aspect – staffing information – was not available from the current HR information system. The finance department indicated that once the

new HR information system has been implemented, a priority will be placed to update the format of the interim financial report to be fully aligned with the recommendation.

4. Internal Audit

The school board is part of the Eastern Region Internal Audit Team. The regional internal audit team was established in early 2011 and has since conducted a risk assessment for the Board. A formal presentation was made to the Board's Audit Committee on September 20, 2011.

5. Internal Audit Plans

The finance department has adopted this recommendation and has established a schedule to conduct audits on various areas throughout the year. The most recent audit was conducted on the payroll system. The next scheduled audit is for the benefits management area. The audit plans have been communicated to the Board, and the finance department plans to report formally to the Audit Committee in May 2012.

6. Audit Committee

The Board established an Audit Committee on March 9, 2011. The Board encountered some initial challenges in recruiting qualified and interested candidates, mainly due to the smaller population in the region. After a period of time of advertising and reaching out to professional associations, the Board was able to identify suitable candidates to serve on the Audit Committee as external advisory members. The Audit Committee is now fully functioning and the process has worked well so far.

6. School Operations and Facilities Management

1. Multi-year Maintenance Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
<p>Using a consultative process, management should develop and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The Plan should address the board’s preventative and deferred maintenance priorities and optimize the use of available funding. The plan should be approved by the Board, communicated to school administrators and accessible to the public.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>

2. Green Clean Program

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
<p>The school board should finalize the development of formal green procurement guidelines aligned with the Ministry’s Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The development of formal green procurement guidelines along with the overarching Education Environmental Policy should be the first step in implementing a formal green clean program.</p>	<p>Implemented</p>

3. Work Order Management

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
<p>Management should examine options for implementing an automated work order system.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>

4. Multi-Year Energy Management Plan

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
<p>Using the data available through the energy management system, 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.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>

5. Energy Consumption Tracking and Reporting

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
As part of the energy management planning, the school board should establish a comprehensive system to budget expenditures, track and regulate consumption, and identify opportunities for further savings.	In Progress

6. Environmental Policy

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The school board should establish an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices, including energy conservation.	Implemented

7. Facility Partnership Policy

Operational Review Recommendation	Implementation Update
The school board should finalize the Facility Partnership Policy.	Implemented

1. Multi-year Maintenance Plan

The Plant department has a one-year plan that outlines the school board’s plans for major maintenance. This plan was developed after consulting school principals and other stakeholders. At present, the Plant department is focused on the migration from ReCAPP to TCPS™, and plans to broaden the planning horizon of the maintenance plan to three to five years once the relevant data is available from TCPS™.

2. Green Clean Program

The Plant department has developed procurement guidelines aligned with the Ministry’s Green Clean Program Resource Guide. Many of the school board’s cleaning products and equipment are already green certified. The Board has also established a formal Environmental Education and Stewardship Policy (effective November 28, 2011), which states that the Board is “committed to environmental stewardship in all areas of the board”, and “extends into all areas of the Board’s operational practices and will be an important consideration in decision-making”.

3. Work Order Management

The Plant department has been taking a “wait and see” approach to implementing an automated work order system, as there is a potential for a shared service solution which will remove the need for a stand-alone system for the school board. So far, the Plant department has made presentations to senior administration regarding the benefits of such a system, and has contacted other school boards to gather information. However, the Plant department has not made any plans to actively procure such a system.

4. Multi-year Energy Management Plan

The Plant department reported that it lacks the capacity to fully implement this recommendation, but has taken initial steps to address certain aspects. Specifically, the Plant department has started gathering data on energy costs. There is also a multi-year plan that lists all projects related to energy management. However, the Plant department has not been able to analyze all the data collected and use the information to develop an energy management plan that includes baselines and targets.

5. Energy Consumption Tracking and Reporting

The Plant department has started tracking energy costs but lacks the capacity to collect and analyze data related to energy consumption. The Plant department uses the Ministry’s Utility Consumption Database to download relevant data, but has not been able to conduct any analysis to inform decision making or establish targets.

6. Environmental Policy

As mentioned previously, the Board established a formal Environmental Education and Stewardship Policy (effective November 28, 2011), which states that the Board is “committed to environmental stewardship in all areas of the board”, and “extends into all areas of the Board’s operational practices and will be an important consideration in decision-making”. There are five procedures supporting the Environmental Education and Stewardship Policy including student engagement, environmental leadership, waste reduction/elimination, energy and conservation, and purchasing.

7. Facility Partnership Policy

The Board has approved a Facility Partnership Policy (effective September 26, 2011), which commits the school board to “work with its community partners in order to share facilities to the benefit of the Board, students and the community, and to optimize the use of public assets owned by the Board”. The policy outlines the guiding principles of sharing facilities, and provides a framework for:

- Determination of Non Surplus & Unused Space in Board Facilities;

- Notification of Community Partners;
- Selection of Community Partners; and
- Co-Building with Community Partners.

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

No.	Recommendation	Follow-up Y/N	Criteria
1.	The school board should continue to align its leadership development programs and activities with the Ministry’s leadership initiatives. It should finalize the development of a formal leadership development and succession plan for key management positions in all academic and non-academic areas.	Y	TAO

Human Resources Management and School Staffing/Allocation

No.	Recommendation	Follow-up Y/N	Criteria
2.	The school board should review its hiring policies and procedures, including the composition of hiring panels, to clarify the roles of trustees and school board staff in the hiring process. Trustees should provide strategic policies to govern staffing and recruitment, but should not sit on hiring panels with the exception of hiring the Director.	N	
3.	The HR department should establish a formal employee performance appraisal process for the Director of Education, superintendents, management, and support staff. The formal	Y	TAO

No.	Recommendation	Follow-up Y/N	Criteria
	process should be supported by documented policies and procedures.		
4.	Trustees should provide the school board with a policy and priority framework for bargaining and not directly participate in negotiations.	N	
5.	The HR department should finalize the process of adopting formal disciplinary guidelines and communicate the guidelines to principals and staff in supervisory roles.	N	
6.	Management should implement a formal attendance support program which would use the available attendance data. Management should also continue to identify options for implementation of a human resources information management system which would enable the HR department to track and analyze staff attendance.	Y	TAO
7.	Management should develop a way to assess and report on the effectiveness of the attendance support process/programs to senior administration and the Board.	N	
8.	Management should periodically conduct independent compliance audits of the school board's insurance carrier to ensure adherence to the benefit plans' terms and conditions.	Y	AR3
9.	Management should conduct periodic and confidential staff surveys to improve communication with staff and provide input for professional development plans and HR policy.	N	
10.	Management should also conduct exit interviews with all staff leaving the school board to obtain input for HR policy, as well as process and program improvement. Management should consider developing formal policies and/or procedures for conducting exit interviews.	N	
11.	Management should document policies and procedures which govern the development of an annual staffing plan and allocation process.	Y	TAO

Financial Management

No.	Recommendation	Follow-up Y/N	Criteria
12.	Management should consider enhancing the process of reporting on the school board's budget risks using the format suggested in section	Y	AR3

No.	Recommendation	Follow-up Y/N	Criteria
	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.		
13.	Management should consider providing a budget process presentation containing an outline of budget timelines and stages to the Board each year. This would help ensure that the budget development process is clearly communicated and understood by all trustees. Throughout the budget development process, management should provide information to trustees on key stages in the budget development process.	Y	TAO
14.	Management should take into account the recommendations made by the Interim Financial Reporting Committee (IFRC) on frequency (a minimum of three reports) and format of interim financial reporting to the Board. Management should continue to discuss with trustees how the existing format of interim financial reports can be enhanced to align with IFRC recommendations.	Y	TAO
15.	The school board should establish approval procedures for interim financial statements, and implement a formal sign-off process of these statements by senior management.	N	
16.	Management should continue working with the regional audit team on the development of a risk assessment to determine priority areas for internal audit activities.	Y	TAO
17.	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.	Y	AR3
18.	The Board should establish an Audit Committee and recruit external advisors to sit on the Audit Committee in accordance with the new Audit Committee regulation.	Y	TAO
19.	The school board should expand its use of a central three-way matching process for all orders before invoices are paid. To this end, management should examine options within the existing purchasing system to automate all or some elements of the process.	N	
20.	Management should continue identifying opportunities for implementation of the electronic supplier interface and catalogues for ordering, processing and payment.	N	
21.	The school board should continue working with its bank to establish EFTs for its vendors.	N	

School Operations and Facilities Management

No.	Recommendation	Follow-up Y/N	Criteria
22.	Using a consultative process, management should develop and communicate a multi-year (three to five years) plan for major maintenance and renewal projects. The Plan should address the board's preventative and deferred maintenance priorities and optimize the use of available funding. The plan should be approved by the Board, communicated to school administrators and accessible to the public.	Y	TAO
23.	The school board should finalize the development of formal green procurement guidelines aligned with the Ministry's Green Clean Program Resource Guide. The development of formal green procurement guidelines along with the overarching Education Environmental Policy should be the first step in implementing a formal green clean program.	Y	ROI
24.	Management should examine options for implementing an automated work order system.	Y	ROI
25.	Management should finalize the development of inventory of major custodial and maintenance equipment.	N	
26.	Using the data available through the energy management system, 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.	Y	TAO
27.	Once the formal energy management plan is established, the school board should ensure that its procurement policies and practices support the objectives and targets of the plan. Management should also consider documenting the energy efficiency requirements in procurement policies and procedures and/or the environmental policy.	N	
28.	As part of the energy management planning, the school board should establish a comprehensive system to budget expenditures, track and regulate consumption, and identify opportunities for further savings.	Y	TAO
29.	The school board should establish an overarching environmental policy that addresses both environmental education and responsible management practices, including energy conservation.	Y	AR2

No.	Recommendation	Follow-up Y/N	Criteria
30.	Management should provide formal annual reporting on the conservation savings achieved against the multi-year energy management plan.	N	
31.	<p>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.</p> <p>Management should also consider coordinating the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan centrally.</p>	N	
32.	The school board should finalize the Facility Partnership Policy.	Y	AR2