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Ministry of Education Effectiveness & Efficiency Review

Northwestern Ontario Student Services Cooperative

E&E Phase 3 Review

September 2009

Final Report

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Executive Summary

This report details the findings and recommendations of an Effectiveness and Efficiency Review ("E&E Review") of the Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium ("NWOSSC" or the "Consortium") conducted by a review team selected by the Ministry of Education (hereafter the "Ministry"). The E&E Review evaluates four areas of performance – consortium management, policies and practices, routing and technology use and contracting practices. This review will determine if current practices are reasonable and appropriate; identify whether any best practices have been implemented; and to provide recommendations on areas of improvement. The evaluation of each area is then used to determine an overall rating for the Consortium that will be used by the Ministry to determine any in-year funding adjustments that may be provided.

NWOSSC provides transportation services to four different school Boards, several First Nations communities and will soon be expanding its coverage area, with the amalgamation of four district school authorities into member school boards.

NWOSSC has an appropriate organizational structure, defined job descriptions and a process for employee performance evaluation. The primary area of improvement for the Consortium is in governance. NWOSSC is encouraged to implement an effective governance structure, ensure its cost sharing mechanisms are appropriate and fully reflect the costs of providing transportation service. The Consortium is also expected to undertake succession planning, development of a plan for declining enrolment and further enhancements to long term and short term planning as well as performance monitoring.

NWOSSC has established a strong policy and operational infrastructure that provides it with critical planning guidelines and operational procedures. Items such as inclement weather procedures and driver training encouragement, such as Safety Day sponsorship practices, are consistent with best practices. The most significant areas of improvement in this regard include the requirement to harmonize polices, formally establish ride time policies, understand costs for the transportation of special needs students and the requirement to complete full accident procedure reports.

It is necessary for NWOSSC to undertake significant work to improve their routing and technology. Specifically, an implementation plan for the full use of the *Edulog* program should be their top priority. User training must also be provided so that the staff can benefit from increased learning opportunities and maximize the transportation software package's full functionalities. In terms of digital mapping and student database management, NWOSSC must establish proper coding structures. A detailed organizational structure with responsibilities for geographic and functional area development would greatly assist the reporting of the system.

Contracting practices used by NWOSSC are in line with best practices seen in previous E&E Reviews. Contracts are in place with Operators prior to the start of the school year and contracts are substantially "complete". Parent driver contracts are also complete and maintained up to date with all relevant information. The primary areas for improvement are the use of competitive procurement processes and more regular and complete contract monitoring.

As a result of this review of current performance, the Consortium has been given a rating of **Moderate-Low**. None of the four member boards in this consortium; Northwestern Catholic District School Board (NWCDSB), Conseil Scolaire du district catholique des Aurores Boreales (CSDCAB), Kenora Catholic District School Board (KCDSB) and Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (KPDSB) have a transportation deficit in the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Based on Ministry policy, a funding adjustment is not required. Please refer to section 7 of this report for further discussion on the funding adjustment.

1   Introduction

1.1   Background

1.1.1   Funding for student transportation in Ontario

The Ministry provides funding to Ontario's 72 School Boards for student transportation. Under Section 190 of the *Education Act* (Act), School Boards "may" provide transportation for pupils. If a School Board decides to provide transportation for pupils, the Ministry will provide funding to enable the School Boards to deliver the service. Although the Act does not require School Boards to provide transportation service, all School Boards in Ontario provide service to eligible elementary students and most provide service to eligible secondary students. It is a School Board's responsibility to develop and maintain its own transportation policies, including safety provisions.

In 1998-1999, a new education funding model was introduced in the Province of Ontario outlining a comprehensive approach to funding school Boards. However, a decision was made to hold funding for student transportation steady, on an interim basis, while the Ministry worked to develop and implement a new approach. From 1998-1999 to 2008-2009, an increase of over $247 million in funding has been provided to address increasing costs for student transportation, such as fuel price increases, despite a general decline in student enrolment.

1.1.2   Transportation reform

In 2006-07, the government began implementing reforms for student transportation. The objectives of the reforms are to build capacity to deliver safe, effective, and efficient student transportation services, achieve an equitable approach to funding, and reduce the administrative burden of delivering transportation, thus allowing School Boards to focus on student learning and achievement.

The reforms include a requirement for Consortium delivery of student transportation services, effectiveness and efficiency reviews of transportation Consortia, and a study of the benchmark cost for a school bus incorporating standards for safe vehicles and trained drivers.

1.1.3   The formation of school transportation consortia

Ontario's 72 School Boards operate within four independent systems:

- English public;

- English separate;

- French public; and

- French separate.

As a result, a geographic area of the province can have as many as four coterminous School Boards (i.e. Boards that have overlapping geographic areas) operating schools and their respective transportation systems. Opportunities exist for coterminous School Boards to form consortia and therefore deliver transportation for two or more coterminous School Boards in a given region. The Ministry believes in the benefits of consortia as a viable business model to realize efficiencies. This belief was endorsed by the Education Improvement Commission in 2000 and has been proven by established consortia sites in the province. Currently, the majority of School Boards cooperate to some degree in delivering transportation services. Cooperation between Boards occurs in various ways, including:

- One School Board purchasing transportation service from another in all or part of its jurisdiction;

- Two or more coterminous School Boards sharing transportation services on some or all of their routes; and

- Creation of a Consortium to plan and deliver transportation service to students of all partner School Boards.

Approximately 99% of student transportation service in Ontario is provided through contracts between School Boards or transportation consortia and private transportation Operators. The remaining 1% of service is provided using Board-owned vehicles to complement services acquired through contracted private transportation Operators.

1.1.4   Effectiveness and Efficiency Review

According to the Ministry Consortium guidelines, once a Consortium has met the requirements outlined in memorandum SB: 13, dated July 11, 2006, it will be eligible for an E&E review. This review will be conducted by the E&E Review Team who will assist the Ministry in evaluating Consortium Management, policies and practices, routing and technology, and contracts. These reviews will identify best practices and opportunities for improvement, and provide valuable information that can be used to inform future funding decisions. The Ministry has established a multi-phase approach to review the performance of consortia (collectively the "E&E Reviews") across the province.

1.1.5   The E&E Review Team

To ensure that these reviews are conducted in an objective manner, the Ministry has formed a review team (see Figure 1) to perform the E&E Reviews. The E&E Review Team was designed to leverage the expertise of industry professionals and management consultants to evaluate specific aspects of each Consortium site. Management consultants were engaged to complete assessments on Consortium Management, and contracts. Routing consultants were engaged to focus specifically on the acquisition, implementation, and use of routing software and related technologies and on policies and practices.

Figure 1: E&E Review Team
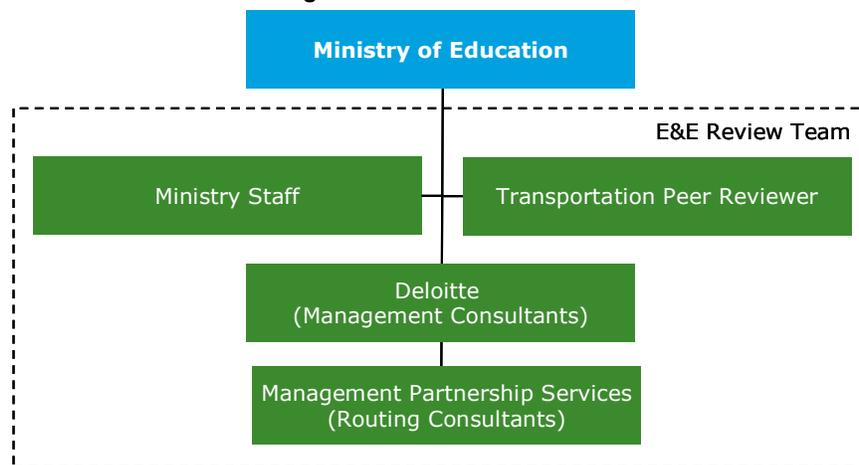
1.2   Scope of Deloitte Engagement

Deloitte was engaged to lead the Team and serve as the management consultants on the E&E Review Team. Deloitte's overall role is as follows:

- Lead the planning and execution of E&E Reviews for each of the 18 transportation consortia to be reviewed in Phases three and four (currently in phase 3B);

- At the beginning of each E&E Review, convene and moderate E&E Review Team planning meetings to determine data required and availability prior to the review;

- Review Consortium arrangement, governance structures and contracting procedures;

- Incorporate the results of the routing and technology and policies and practices reviews completed by MPS into the final report; and

- Prepare a report for each Consortium that has been subject to an E&E Review in Phases three and four. The target audience for the report will be the Ministry, the Consortium, and its Member Boards. Once finalized, each report will be released to the Consortium and its Member Boards.

1.3 Methodology Used to Complete E&E Review

The methodology for the E&E Review is based on the five step approach presented in Figure 2 and elaborated below:

Figure 2: E&E Review Methodology
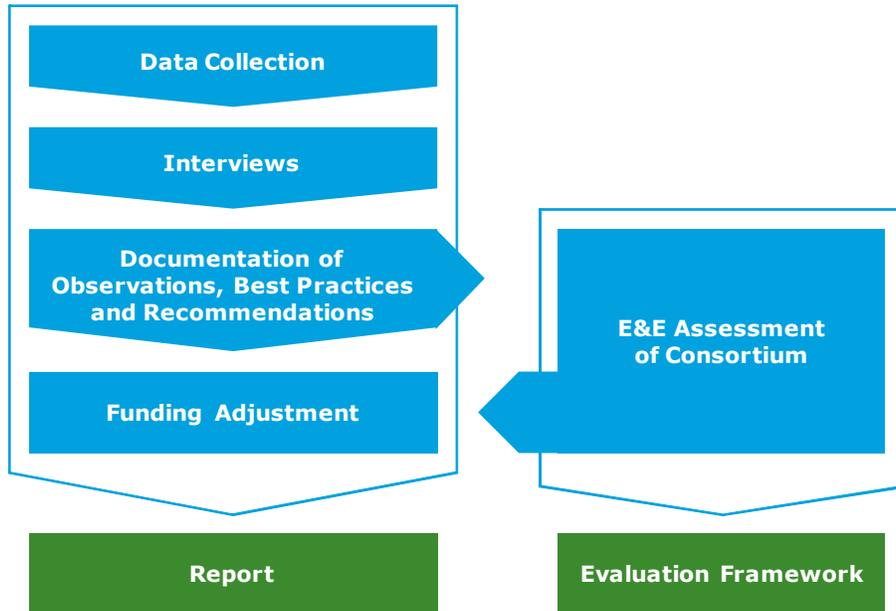
A site review report that documents the observations, assessments and recommendations is produced at the end of a site review. The Evaluation Framework has been developed to provide consistency and details on how the Assessment Guide was applied to reach an Overall Rating of each site.

1.3.1 Step 1 – Data collection

Each Consortium under review is provided with the E&E Guide from the Ministry of Education. This guide provides details on the information and data the E&E Review Team requires the Consortium to collect, organize and provide.

Data is collected in four main areas:

1. Consortium Management;
2. Policies and Practices;
3. Routing and Technology; and
4. Contracts.

1.3.2 Step 2 – Interviews

The E&E Review Team identifies key Consortium staff, outside stakeholders and key policy makers with whom interviews are conducted to further understand the operations and key issues impacting a Consortium's delivery of effective and efficient student transportation services.

1.3.3 Step 3 – Documentation of observations, Best Practices and Recommendations

Based on data collected and interviews conducted, the E&E Review Team documents their findings under three key areas:

- Observations that involve fact based findings of the review, including current practices and policies;

- Best Practices used by the Consortium under each area; and

- Recommendations for improvements based on the Assessment Guide. Figure 3 below provides a summary of the key criteria used in the Assessment Guide to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of each Consortium.

Figure 3: Criteria for an Effective and Efficient Consortium

	Consortium management	Policies and Practices	Routing and Technology	Contracts

Effectiveness	• Distinct entity focused on providing student transportation services for the partner boards
	• Well defined governance and organizational structure with clear roles and responsibilities
	• Oversight body exists with the mandate to provide strategic directions to the consortium management on the provision of safe, effective and efficient transportation service to support student learning
	• Management has communicated clear goals and objectives of the Consortium and these are reflected in the operational plan
	• Well established accountability framework reflected in the set up and operation of the consortium including documentation of terms in a Consortium Agreement
	• Operations are monitored for its performance and continuous improvement
	• Financial processes ensure accountability and equality to Partner Boards
	• A budgeting process is in place which ensures timely preparation and monitoring of expenses
	• Key business relationships are defined in contracts
		• Development of policies is based on well defined parameters as set by strategic and operational plans to provide safe, effective and efficient transportation service to students of the partner boards; and
		  o Policy decisions are made with due considerations to financial and service impacts to partner boards
		  o Communication between the consortium and partner boards facilitates informed decision making on issues directly affecting student transportation
		  o Consortium's policies and practices are adequate and in compliance with all relevant safety regulation and standards
		  o Practices on the ground follow policies
			• Advanced use of transportation management software to store student data, and create a routing solution.
			• Disaster recovery plans and back up procedures are in place and operating properly
			• Responsibility and accountability for student data management is clearly identified
			• Routing is reviewed regularly
			• Reporting tools are used effectively
			• Special needs routing is integrated with regular needs where reasonable
				• Competitive contracting practice is used
				• Contract negotiations are transparent, fair, and timely
				• Contracts are structured to ensure accountability and transparency between contracted parties
				• Contracts exist for all service providers
				• Ongoing compliance checks for safety, legal and service requirements are performed by the consortium

Efficiency	• Oversight committee focuses only on high level decisions • Organizational structure is efficient in utilization of staff • Streamlined financial and business processes • Cost sharing mechanism are well defined and implemented	• Harmonized transportation policies between partner boards enable efficient planning • Proper level of authority delegated to consortium to enable the realization of potential efficiencies e.g. bell times setting • Best practices in planning are adopted e.g. utilize tiered runs and combination runs to maximize the use of available capacity • Public transit usage is optimized where available and efficient • Service levels are reasonable and comparable to common practices	• System can be restored quickly if database fails • Student data is accurate, requires little post processing verification • System functionalities are used to identify efficiencies	• Contracts awarded are based on market prices and best value for money • Fair payment terms are included in contracts and implemented with clarity to both parties

1.3.4 Step 4 and 5 – E&E assessment of Consortium and site report

The Assessment Guide was developed to enable the E&E Review Team to provide each Consortium that undergoes an E&E Review with a consistent, fair, and transparent method of assessment. The Assessment Guide is broken down along the four main components of review (i.e. Consortium Management, Policies and Practices, Routing and Technology, and Contracts) and, for each, illustrates what constitutes a specific level of effectiveness and efficiency (refer to Figure 4 for diagram of process).

Figure 4: Assessment of Consortium - Ratings Analysis and Assignment
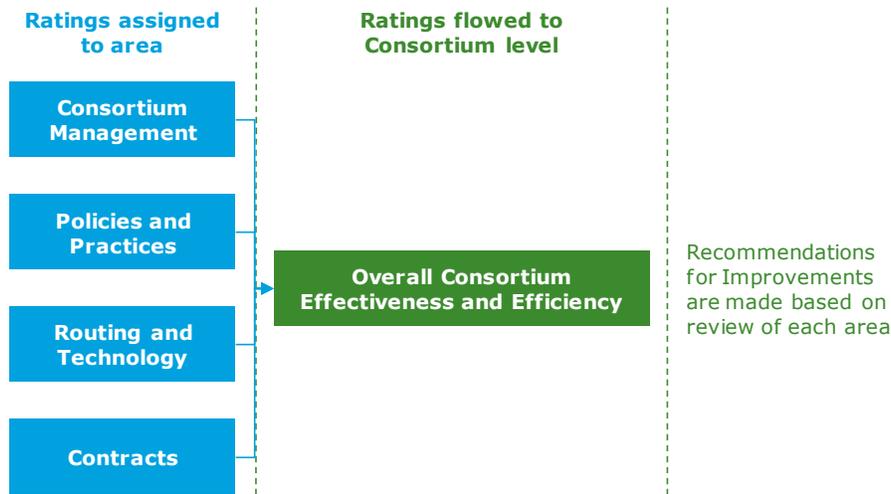
The Evaluation Framework provides details on how the Assessment Guide is to be applied, including the use of the Evaluation Work Sheets, to arrive at the final Overall Rating. The E&E Review Team then compiles all findings and recommendations into an E&E Review Report (i.e. this document).

1.3.5 Funding adjustment

The Ministry will use the results of the E&E Reviews and the cost benchmark study to inform any future funding adjustments. Only Boards that have undergone E&E Reviews are eligible for a funding adjustment. Table 1 below illustrates how the Overall Rating will affect a Board's transportation expenditure-allocation gap.

Table 1: Funding Adjustment Formula

Overall Rating	Effect on deficit Boards[1]	Effect on surplus Boards[1]
High	Reduce the gap by 100% (i.e. eliminate the gap)	No in-year funding impact; out-year changes are to be determined
Moderate-High	Reduce the gap by 90%	Same as above
Moderate	Reduce the gap by 60%	Same as above
Moderate-Low	Reduce the gap by 30%	Same as above
Low	No in-year funding impact	Same as above

The Ministry has announced, through memorandum 2009:B2 dated March 27, 2009, that effective from the 2009-10 school year, in addition to the funding adjustments made based on the overall E&E rating, for any consortium not achieving a high rating in Routing and Technology, a negative adjustment of one percent to a Board's transportation allocation will be made to recognize potential efficiencies through ongoing routing optimization and technology use. To acknowledge sites whose systems are already operating in an efficient manner, the adjustment will only apply to Boards that have not achieved a "high" rating in Routing and Technology from the Effectiveness and Efficiency reviews. Boards that achieve a "high" rating in the Routing and Technology area in future reviews will be exempt from the reduction in the subsequent year.

1.3.6 Purpose of report

This Report serves as the deliverable for the E&E Review conducted on the Consortium by the E&E Review Team during the week of July 6th, 2009.

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[1] This refers to Boards that have a deficit/surplus on student transportation (see Section 7 – Funding Adjustments)

1.3.7   Material relied upon

Refer to Appendix 3 for a list of documents that the E&E Review Team relied upon for their review. These documents were used in conjunction with interviews with key Consortium staff, outside stakeholders, and key policy makers to arrive at the assessment and rating of the Consortium.

1.3.8   Limitations on the use of this report

The purpose of this Report is to document the results of the E&E Review of the Consortium. The E&E Review is not of the nature or scope so as to constitute an audit made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Therefore, as part of this E&E Review, Deloitte has not expressed an opinion on any financial statements, elements, or accounts to be referred to when reporting any findings to the Ministry. Additionally, procedures used by the E&E Review Team are not intended to disclose defalcations, system deficiencies, or other irregularities.

2 Consortium Overview

2.1 Consortium Overview

The Northwestern Ontario Student Services Cooperative (hereafter "NWOSSC" or the Consortium) consists of four school Boards, including Northwestern Catholic District School Board ("NWCDSB"), Conseil Scolaire du district catholique des Aurores Boreales ("CSDCAB"), Kenora Catholic District School Board ("KCDSB") and Keewatin-Patricia District School Board ("KPDSB"). These Boards began sharing services 15 years ago. The Consortium also provides transportation services to several First Nations communities and will soon be supplying four school authorities with transportation. One of the school authorities (Red Lake Catholic) is already receiving service from the Consortium. Combined, the four participating school boards in the Northwestern Ontario Student Services Cooperative have a registered enrolment of approximately 7,937 students and provide daily transportation services to 3,796 students. Beginning with the 2009-10 school year the school authorities that are now part of NWOSSC's area of service include Pickle Lake, Savant Lake and Upsala. The Consortium serves 33 schools in a geographic area of approximately 80,000 square kilometers; however, with the addition of the four District School Authorities, this service area will be significantly larger. Student transportation is provided primarily through a combination of bus Operators, with a small number of special needs students being transported by parents and taxis.

The geographic area covered by NWOSSC is predominately rural and stretches 352 kilometers from East to West. The Consortium currently services the communities of Red Lake, Ear Falls, Kenora, Sioux Narrows, Sioux Lookout Vermilion Bay, Dryden and Ignace.

Table 2 and 3 provide a summary of key statistics and financial data of each Member Board:

Table 2: 2008-09 Transportation Data[2]

	NWCDSB	CSDCAB	KCDSB	KPDSB	Total[3]
Number of schools served	**2**	**1**	**4**	**22**	**30**
Total general transported students	370	28	1094	2790	**4361**
Total special needs transported students	<10	0	<10	43	**55**
Total wheelchair accessible transportation	<10	0	<10	14	**18**
Total specialized program transportation	104	0	n/a	24	**128**
Total courtesy riders	0	0	74	0	**74**
Total hazard riders	0	0	13	<10	**21**
Total students transported daily	**483**	**28**	**1184**	**2879**	**4657**
Total public transit riders	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total contracted full and mid-sized buses	0	0	11	60	**71**
Total contracted mini buses	0	0	0	9	**9**
Total contracted school purpose vehicles	0	0	0	1	**1**
Total contracted PDPV	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total contracted taxis	0	0	0	2	**2**
Total number of contracted vehicles	**0**	**0**	**11**	**72**	**83**

Table 3: 2008-09 Financial Data

	NWCDSB	CSDCAB	KCDSB	KPDSB
Allocation	$1,083,221	$711,433	$837,315	$4,281,618
Net expenditures	$1,013,953	$662,730	$812,603	$3,586,414
Transportation surplus (deficit)	$69,268	$48,703	$24,712	$695,204
Percentage of transportation expenses allocated to the Consortium	50.00%	9.45%	100.00%	100.00%

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[2] Data in Table 2 was provided directly by the Transportation Manager of NWOSSC, 2008-09 survey data was not available at the time this report was completed

[3] Total includes Red Lake Area Combined RCSSB

3 Consortium Management

3.1 Introduction

Consortium Management encompasses the management of the entire organization providing student transportation services. The analysis stems from a review of the four key components of Consortium Management:

- Governance;

- Organizational Structure;

- Consortium Management; and

- Financial Management.

Each component has been analyzed based on information provided by the Consortium, and from information collected during on site fieldwork. Analysis included an assessment of areas requiring improvement that were informed by a set of known best practices identified during previous E&E Reviews. These results are then used to develop an E&E assessment for each component. The E&E assessment of Consortium Management for the NWOSSC is as follows:

Consortium Management – E&E Rating:	Low

3.2 Governance

Governance refers to the way in which an organization is directed and controlled. Establishing administrative structures and processes that facilitate, monitor measure and improve effective business management are primary responsibilities of a governance structure. Three key principles for an effective governance structure are as follows: accountability, transparency, and the recognition of stakeholders. In order to respect these three principles, it is important that the governance body of the organization be independent of the team responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization.

3.2.1 Observations

3.2.1.1 Governance structure

The Northwestern Ontario Student Services Cooperative operates using a fee for service business structure. The Consortium has used the word Cooperative to describe itself but the term carries no legal or structural meaning. The "members" felt this was a more appropriate business structure as services were already being shared between Boards prior to the 1998 amalgamation. The KPDSB is largest school Board and as such, has assumed the role of transportation service provider to all members of NWOSSC. The KPDSB administers transportation to the member Boards through service agreements.

There is no formal Board of Directors or governance structure for the Consortium. All matters relating to student transportation services are administered through the Transportation Department of KPDSB, which consists of the Transportation Manager (permanent, full-time position), one temporary assistant and three Transportation Officers (1 full time and 2 term positions). The Transportation Manager facilitates meetings between the member Boards where the primary purpose is the communication of initiatives.

The organizational charts below outline the structure of the Consortium and the organization of the Transportation Department of the KPDSB respectively.

Figure 5 Organizational structure

Keewatin-Patricia District School Board
Transportation Department

Northwest Catholic DSB	Kenora Catholic DSB	Aurores Boreales Catholic DSB
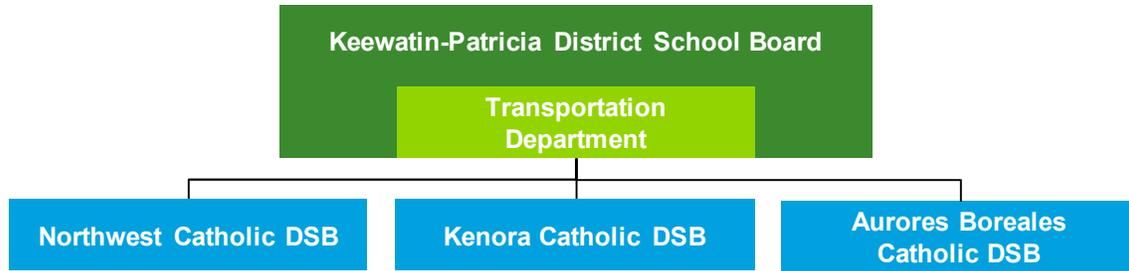
3.2.1.2 Board Level Arbitration Clause

As there is no Board level strategic/formation agreement, each transportation service agreement between the KPDSB and the respective member Board outlines the dispute resolution process.

3.2.2 Recommendations

3.2.2.1 Establish a governance structure

Governance refers to the way in which an organization is directed and controlled. Although the Consortium maintains positive working relationships with its service purchasing Boards, and already holds regular communication meetings, the establishment of formal administrative structures and processes would greatly enhance communications and provide direction through policy setting and oversight to the Consortium.

There are a number of different ways that the Consortium can set up the governance committee to meet their needs. Two such options include:

a. Internal governance committee: KPDSB, as the service provider, establishes a governance committee internal to KPDSB i.e. a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees plus the responsible SBO. The advantage of this structure is that all committee members are part of the KPDSB thereby limiting the amount of external stakeholder consultation and debate.

b. Alternatively, the Consortium could re-assess their structure of a lead board with service purchasing model to one of equal membership in a consortium where the purchasing boards are given the opportunity to remain as such or form part of new consortium entity in order to sit on the governance committee. The Transportation Manager would provide regular updates to this committee who would in turn be responsible for disseminating information to their respective Boards. The advantage of this structure is the ability of the Transportation Manager to benefit from the experience of other member boards on the committee.

As the roles and responsibilities of the governance committee are being reviewed, the following aspects of effective governance structures should be considered:

- The Committees have equal representation from all member Boards with a sufficient number of members to allow for effective decision making;

- Committee Members are independent of the daily operations and management of the Consortium. This allows the oversight function to operate objectively and in the best interest of the Consortium;

- The Consortium should have a governance policy that contains details on:
  - o Selection of oversight committee members;
  - o Term of oversight committee members;
  - o Roles and responsibilities of members and committee;
  - o Decision making (i.e. majority votes, consensus); and
  - o Dispute resolution among member Boards.

- The Consortium has a clearly stated strategic plan, goals and objectives will focus the Consortium on delivering its key services and guide operational planning and decision making.

A formalized governance structure would help to improve accountability, transparency, and the recognition of stakeholders.

3.3   Organizational Structure

An optimized organizational structure can promote effective communication and coordination which will enable operations to run more efficiently. The roles and responsibilities within the organization should be well defined. This will lead to operational efficiencies by ensuring tasks are not being duplicated and issues raised can be addressed effectively by Consortium management. Ideally, the organization is divided functionally (by department and/or area); all core business functions are identified; and there is an appropriate allocation of general management and operational responsibility.

### 3.3.1   Observations

3.3.1.1 Entity status

The Consortium has four member school Boards and was established in 2006 as a result of the mandate set by the Ministry's Transportation Reform plan. The Consortium is not a separate legal entity. The KPDSB acts as the legal entity through which transportation service and Operator agreements are signed. The Consortium's offices are co-located at the Dryden High School, in the same facility as the Dryden administrative office of KPDSB, which is located at 79 Casimir Avenue in Dryden, Ontario.

Currently, the Consortium (which is essentially the transportation department) is not physically or legally independent from the KPDSB. In most cases, it would be advised that the Consortium be both physically and legally separate from Partner/Member School Boards to ensure transparency and independence. While there are several advantages to being a separate entity, it may not be appropriate for this Consortium given the unique circumstances of this site. It appears to be appropriate to have the transportation department included within a KPDSB facility based on the current structure of the Consortium.

3.3.1.2 Organization of entity

The following figure outlines the organizational structure of the Consortium:

Figure 6: KPDSB Transportation Department Structure
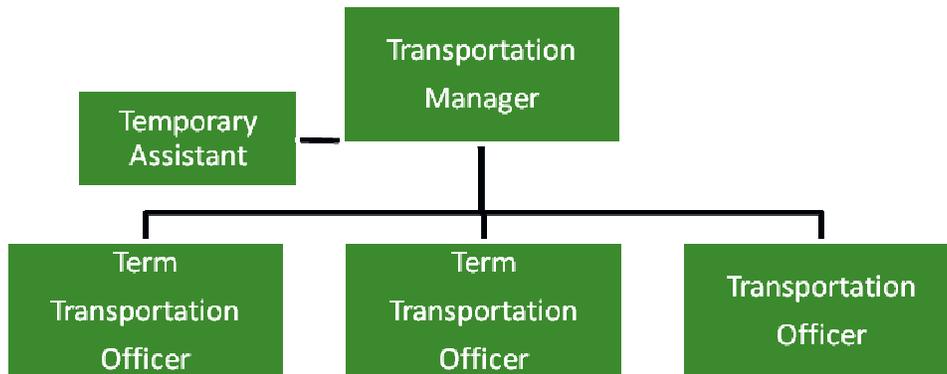
The figure shown above represents NWOSSC's organizational structure. Under the direction of the Transportation Manager, the Transportation Department works to ensure that the daily administrative needs of the Consortium such as the tracking of budgets, the preparation and distribution of information to relevant stakeholders and the development of safety initiatives are all undertaken. Management and administration of the Transportation Department is the responsibility of the KPDSB. As such, all staff members of the Transportation Department are employed by the KPDSB. Each Transportation Department staff member reports to the Transportation Manager who, in turn, reports to the Superintendent of Business of the KPDSB.

It is important to note that the Consortium mandates all employees to sign a mandatory confidentiality clause when first beginning employment at NWOSSC. Photocopies were provided to the E&E review

Team and it was noted that these confidentiality agreements have been signed, although inconsistently, since 2004.

3.3.1.3 Staffing requirements

It is the Transportation Manager's opinion that the Consortium would be adequately staffed if the temporary staff positions were changed to full time permanent positions. The Transportation Department has faced high employee turnover throughout the last few years. This has challenged the Consortium in its ability to reach its full potential. The Transportation Manager has stated that additional mapping and technology skills could positively contribute to the overall effectiveness and productivity of the Transportation Department.

Team members are currently cross-functionally trained on basic performance requirements.   In the opinion of the Transportation Manager, all Transportation Department staff could benefit from increased cross functional training.

3.3.1.4 Job descriptions

Clear, detailed and updated job descriptions are defined for all positions within the Transportation Department.

The primary responsibilities and duties of the Transportation Manager include:

- Administering day to day operations of the Consortium;

- Reporting to the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board;

- Budgeting, accounting job skills and financial tracking;

- Managing Operator negotiations and contracts;

- Reviewing staffing and performance management cycles;

- Resolving transportation issues including inclement weather management, revisions of transportation routes, and accident management, among other things;

- Ensuring adherence to safety standards; and

- Ministry of Education and Ministry of Transportation reporting.

In addition to the above mentioned responsibilities, the Manager is also required to develop and maintain the content for the Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium website and serve as the primary contact for the Consortium when emergency situations arise.

3.3.1.5 Training and Learning

Staff training is encouraged and often times provided by the Consortium. Employees are required to have completed the following training either prior to, or within six months of joining the Consortium.

- Emergency First Aid/Epi-Pen Training;

- *Edulog* Training (Pupil Transportation Software) - approximately five to nine days training;

- Introduction to Trillium;

- Route Audits;

- E-Requisition/EpiCor Accounting Software;

- Safety Day training with the Bus Operators on Regional Safety Day; and

- Attendance at one or more Ministry of Education Transportation Workshops.

There were no individual staff development initiatives or training plans beyond these entry learning requirements. The Transportation Manager has stated that these individual development plans will be established once the staffing compliment becomes stable. There is no record keeping of courses being completed by each employee.

3.3.1.6 Succession planning

No formal succession plan exists that would ensure the continued smooth operation of the Consortium should the Transportation Manager or any of the staff members depart from the NWOSSC..

3.3.2 Best Practices

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

Organization of entity

The organizational structure reflects clear lines of reporting. This is essential to achieving efficiencies for the organization's day to day business operations.

Confidentiality Agreements

The Consortium requires its employees to sign a Confidentiality agreement once they begin work with the organization. This ensures that personal information as well as business and financial matters remain confidential. We encourage the Consortium to continue to require this sign off from employees.

Job descriptions

Clear and detailed job descriptions are defined for all positions within the Consortium, ensuring that staff can efficiently execute their daily duties and ensure a smooth transition should staff turn-over. Job descriptions provide a formalized manner through which operational goals and responsibilities can be met by individuals at various levels.

3.3.3 Recommendations

3.3.3.1 Develop a formal succession plan

We encourage the Consortium to develop a formal succession plan which will ensure the continued operation of the organization should the Transportation Manager or any of the staff be absent or unable to execute their daily responsibilities. Creating a succession plan is of the utmost importance as this Consortium has experienced high turnover and staff absence that has directly impacted the day to day operations of the department.

3.3.3.2 Roll-out a staff develop plan and track training provided

On the job training as well as off site learning is encouraged by the Consortium for all employees. We recognize that the Consortium is proactively creating a development plan for each position in the Transportation Department. This ensures that each member of the Consortium staff increases his/her levels of productivity and job performance. Individual goals, objectives and responsibilities should be matched to the business goals and objectives. Also, the Consortium has expressed an interest in sponsoring a staff member to attend a Transportation Certificate course through Guelph University when there is increased stability in the staffing of the department. This serves as a means of encouraging skill enhancement and qualifications. However, a record of all training courses completed by staff should be maintained. As such, there will be an up-to-date record of staff training initiatives and completed courses, should there be a need to use updated information for validation of training certificates, for example.

3.3.3.3 Establish current staff positions

For the current time, it is imperative that the Consortium solidify the staff positions that are in place to ensure the Consortium can move forward with training, development and the achievement of objectives. The Consortium is currently operating in a state of flux which is hindering the development of necessary HR and Operational practices that will allow the Consortium and its staff to develop and grow. Once the Consortium has provided the necessary training to staff and fully completed its transition to *Edulog*, the Consortium will be in a better position to re-evaluate its overall staff compliment and need.

3.3.3.4 Modify use of the term Cooperative

The Consortium should reconsider its name as the use of the word Cooperative can be misleading given that it is usually used to refer to organizations that are owned by all members.

3.4 Consortium Management

Consortium Management focuses on the operational aspects of the organization. This includes ensuring accountability of staff, focusing on continual improvement through operational planning, and risk management by having appropriate contracts and agreements in place to clearly define business relationships.

3.4.1 Observations

3.4.1.1 Transportation service agreements

The Transportation Service Agreements (TSA's), signed by representatives of the KPDSB, Consortium member Boards and the First Nations (regulated through a broader education agreement between the First Nations group), include:

- Roles and Responsibilities of NWOSSC, the KPDSB and member Boards, Transportation Department management and staff;

- Roles and Responsibilities of the Joint Resolution Council;

- Administrative and operating cost sharing arrangements;

- Rider Safety, Administration and Overhead Costs;

- Existing Board Policies;

- Insurance;

- Term and Assignment of the Contract;

- Mediation and Arbitration clauses; and

- Confidentiality, Relationship, severability.

As confirmed in the TSA's, amendments that would result in significant changes in bus transportation services rendered to students (such as school bell time changes) will be discussed by the Boards. The Transportation Manager will determine the impact on the transportation system subsequent to facilitating discussions with senior school administrators.

3.4.1.2 Cost sharing

The Transportation Service Agreements outline the cost sharing arrangements for each Board. The TSAs stipulate that all costs are based on the number of students on a given route. The KPDSB invoices each service purchasing Board based on the prorated weighted share of operating costs. Each student from Junior Kindergarten to Grade six will be deemed as 1.0 person and that every student registered in Grade seven to Grade 12 classes as well as Special Needs Students will be deemed as 1.5 persons (as calculated on October 31st of each year). The pro-rata cost is calculated as being the actual annual cost of the route plus an additional fee amounting to 4.25% of transportation costs.

All member Boards contribute to the administration and overhead costs incurred by the Transportation Department. The administrative fee is calculated to equal 4.25% and is to be paid by member Boards to the KPDSB as a means to recover overhead expenses. There is no process in place to reconcile the 4.25% with actual expenditures.

Interim and/or final invoices can and will be sent to the Boards when requested.

If additional routes for supplementary services are requested, the respective Board shall pay for all additional costs. Lastly, if a Board does not share the same school day calendar as KPDSB they will have to pay any additional costs associated with differing calendar days.

Every Board entering into agreement with the KPDSB agrees to pay the KPDSB all costs associated with the rider safety, software and training program costs. Examples of some of these costs may include, but are not limited to, Regional Safety Day expenses, First Aid/Epi-Pen/CPR training proportionate to number of students, (KPDSB enrolment versus member Board enrolment), JK Wristband Program, communication and advertising costs as well as other costs.

3.4.1.3 Banking

The Consortium does not have separate bank accounts. All banking for the Consortium is completed through the KPDSB.

3.4.1.4 Insurance

The KPDSB has obtained insurance coverage and the sufficiency of the coverage is periodically reviewed. The Consortium has attained coverage for liability and crime from March 1, 2009 until January 1, 2010.

3.4.1.5 Staff performance evaluation and management

Staff performance reviews are conducted on an annual basis as per KPDSB policy. Staff performance reviews are completed on an annual basis for each staff member with the exception of newly hired employees. Newly hired employees have a six month probationary period and have performance reviews at three and six months. Documentation is maintained in the employee personnel file.

The annual review process consists of the identification of performance targets, long term professional goals and requests for additional training needs and/or wants. Staff is routinely asked to identify training as opportunities become available, e.g. upgrade Office Suite, Accounting software skills and more.

3.4.1.6 Long term and short term planning

The Consortium has communicated long and short term planning objectives.

Short term objectives include a technology implementation program in order to fully benefit from the usage the *Edulog* program and a recruitment initiative in order to staff the Transportation Department with the appropriate type and number of employees required to achieve operational excellence in the Transportation Department. Other examples of short term objectives include the harmonization of policies and operational practices through a complete transition of all Boards to a Consortium and the implementation of a standardized contract for all bus Operators. The Consortium's objectives are a mix of policy, strategy and operational practice optimization.

Objectives are developed by the Transportation Manager and approved by the KPDSB's Superintendent of Business.

3.4.1.7 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are statistics used to evaluate the Consortium's operations. They are practical indicators utilized to identify areas for improvement. This is one method that an organization can use to monitor operations for performance and continuous improvement.

NWOSSC makes use of some of the available data as a tool for operational efficiency assessments. The table below provides a list of the KPIs and reports used to monitor the Consortium's performance:

Table 4 Key Performance Indicators

Item	Reviewed By	Details
Bus time	Officers/Manager (Team)	This indicator measures whether busses are running on time.
Bus service levels	Manager	Are service levels being met appropriately? Are the services provided by the bus Operators up to the levels stipulated in the contracts?
Contract Administration	Manager	Ensuring contract terms and conditions are upheld by the bus Operator on an ongoing basis.
Contractual fines	Manager	Tracking and monitoring of all events that resulted in a need to fine Operators for minor breaches of their contracts.
Route Audits	Officers	Tracking of routes and random audits provides the opportunity for Transportation Department to verify that bus Operators are properly implementing all contract terms, such as safety of stops/run.
Complaints Monitoring	Team approach, Officer will escalate to Manager	Tracking the number of complaints in addition to the type of complaints being received as well as the frequency of complaints and originating area.
Use of Website	Manager	KPDSB I/T department monitor the number of hits on specific pages the website receives and provides statistics.
Operator Performance	Manager	Comprehensive files on each Operator with every driver/service complaint documented and the resulting action. Files are regularly reviewed. This also includes comprehensive information on any accidents or incidents.
Individual Driver Performance	Manager	Every concern/complaint or infraction documented within bus Operator file. Files reviewed annually, at a minimum. Driver file moves with driver between Operators. This includes semi-annually tracking of driver's abstracts as well as confirmation of Criminal Background Checks- vulnerable sector screening.

3.4.1.8 Strategies for declining enrolment

The Consortium does not currently have a formal strategy for dealing with the expected decline in funding due to declining enrolment. It was acknowledged that the Northwestern Ontario area has been experiencing declining enrolment for many years. While NWOSSC does not have a formalized strategy, the Transportation Manager has been examining opportunities for efficiencies in daily business operations by, for example, using smaller buses instead of 72 passenger buses.

3.4.2   Best Practices

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

Documented cost sharing agreements

The Consortium outlines the cost sharing mechanism with each board with which it has a transportation service agreement. A documented methodology for cost sharing is a best practice to ensure accountability of costs and appropriate operational cash flow for the financial obligations of the Consortium.

Insurance

The Consortium has obtained insurance coverage and the sufficiency of coverage has been periodically reviewed. Sufficient insurance coverage for both the Consortium and school Boards is essential to ensure each body is suitably protected from potential liabilities.

Long term and short term planning

The Consortium's planning process allows it to remain focused on improving service levels and operational procedures. The Superintendent of Business of the KPDSB approves the objectives. The practice of strategic planning is commended and it is encouraged that NWOSSC continue to expand upon and further develop the goals already established in order to ensure that the Consortium continues to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

Staff performance evaluation and management

The proactive performance evaluations undertaken by the Consortium ensures that serious steps towards staff professional development are undertaken. The performance evaluations that are undertaken by the Consortium demonstrate a commitment towards continuous improvement.

3.4.3   Recommendations

3.4.3.1 Formalize a strategy for declining enrolment

While we recognize that NWOSSC acknowledges and is attempting to cope with the problem of declining enrolment, it is recommended that a strategic plan be developed for dealing with reduced funding tied to enrolment.

3.4.3.2 Assess the cost sharing formula and the allocation of costs

The 4.25% administration fee charged to member Boards is based on historical costs. The amount was calculated when the TSAs were executed and has remained unchanged since. We encourage the Consortium to review this aspect of its cost sharing arrangement in order to avoid potential disputes about cost sharing for administrative costs as the costs as outlined in the agreement may not accurately reflect current costs or cost allocations.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Consortium develop appropriate mechanisms to ensure that all costs associated with transportation are allocated to "transportation." Accounting for direct and associated costs for transportation should fairly and completely capture the administrative and operational cost of providing student transportation. In particular, expenses would include accounting, payroll administrative costs, IT support, HR support, insurance and the time of those individuals working at each of the schools and School Boards on transportation matters. By not allocating a cost for these services to the transportation administrative budget, the true cost of providing transportation services is being understated. Additionally, these actual expenses are not being charged to Partner Boards and therefore, true administrative costs may not be fully recovered.

3.4.3.3 Enhance the use of KPIs

It is acknowledged that the Consortium is tracking some key performance indicators; however the Consortium is encouraged to continue to develop and refine the list of KPIs that are tracked and monitored as indicators of the Consortium's performance. A suite of appropriate and formally tracked and monitored KPIs helps to ensure the Consortium knows how to continuously improve and can communicate performance to all relevant stakeholders.

3.5   Financial Management

Sound financial management ensures the optimal use of public funds and also ensures the integrity and accuracy of financial information. This includes appropriate internal controls and a robust budgeting process that has a clearly defined planning and review calendar that promotes accountability and sound decision making.

Financial management policies capture roles and responsibilities, authorization levels, and reporting requirements to ensure that a proper internal financial control system is in place for the Consortium. They also clearly define the financial processes of the Consortium in a way that ensures appropriate oversight without impinging on efficiency.

3.5.1   Observations

3.5.1.1 Budget planning and monitoring

The budgeting process for the Consortium is defined by KPDSB policy. The budgeting year runs from September 1st and ends on August 31st of each year. In February, the Transportation Manager collects the relevant information required for the completion of the following year's budget. The information that is collected and utilized in the budget includes such variables as the contract rates, enrolment/ridership data, cost recoveries from other member Boards and so forth. In March, the Transportation Manager submits a draft budget to the Finance Department as well as the Superintendent of Business. Revisions to the budget are made by the Superintendent of Business, who then submits the newly modified budget to the Senior Administration of KPDSB. The Senior Administration is comprised of the Director of Education, the Superintendents of Education and Business and other senior academic officials. The Senior Administration then completes all revisions as required. During the month of April, the budget is submitted to the Finance Committee (Trustees) for recommendation to the Board. In May and June, the budget is reviewed by the Board and final revisions are made. Lastly, the trustees of the KPDSB approve the final version of the budget.

Budget to actual reconciliations are completed and reviewed in order to monitor variances. Evidence of this review is kept in the following two manners. Firstly, a monthly report is generated by the Finance Department and emailed to the Manager where balances can be analyzed, specific transactions/expenditures can be investigated and vendor and general ledger information can be obtained. This is a permanent department of finance record which is kept electronically by the Transportation Department and which can be viewed at any time. Secondly, an additional weekly (or as needed towards the end of the budget year) report is generated using the Epicor Accounting Program; this document examines cumulative transactions for each transportation general ledger code and depicts budget allocation and expenditures to date. NWOSSC also tracks accruals/commitments in this same manner. These are kept on file in hard copy format.

All transportation related invoices are approved and signed by the Transportation Manager. Every invoice is then sent to the KPDSB for processing. The finance manager at the KPDSB keeps copies of transactions. The Transportation Manager has online access to the general ledger and generates an expense report on a monthly basis, or as needed.

There are set practices completed on a monthly basis in order to reconcile each member Board's expenses. For example, the Transportation Manager will invoice the Boards on a pro-rata basis for all differences in calendar days, resources used for transportation and other expenses related to software licenses.

All employees who have credit cards must conform to the KPDSB's purchasing policies. The Transportation Manager approves expenses for all full time staff member that have access to and utilize

their credit cards. The Superintendent of Business approves all expenses that the Transportation Manager incurs.

The Transportation Manager will alert the Superintendent of Business if there are any surpluses or deficits once the forecasting of the budget is completed as well as on a quarterly basis.

There is no allocation of KPDSB overhead to the transportation department, i.e. no costs are allocated for rent, electricity, phones etc.

3.5.1.2 Accounting practices and management

Accounting and payroll services are provided by the finance department of the KPDSB.

The Transportation Manager is responsible for the review and approval of all purchases as well as any other financial obligations for which the Consortium might be responsible.

Responsibilities for each Transportation Department staff member with regard to financial management is clearly outlined and will differ from employee to employee depending on the type of position each staff member holds (i.e. term or full time positions). Specifically, the Full Time Transportation Officer will be responsible for:

- Coding and processing invoices after the Transportation Manager has approved them;

- Maintaining expenditure binders and producing regular budget reports;

- Processing monthly payments; and

- Ensuring that credit card use is in compliance with the purchasing requirements and in accordance with KPDSB purchasing and accounts payable policies.

The Term Transportation Officer and Term Transportation Assistant are not responsible for any financial management related duties with the exception of the generation of requisitions and purchase orders through EpiCor. KPDSB's purchasing policies on the use of credit cards are also applicable to the Term Transportation Officer and Term Transportation Assistant positions.

The Transportation Manager is responsible for:

- The development, management and reporting of the annual budget;

- Ensuring the compliance of credit card use with respect to the purchasing requirements, in accordance with KPDSB purchasing and accounts payable policies.

- Balancing actual expenditures with budgeted amounts through a budget to actual reconciliation; and

- The approval of Board expenses.

Invoices, related to transportation expenses, do not get paid by the Board unless the Transportation Manager approves them.

3.5.1.3 Audit

The KPDSB Board is audited by an independent auditor.

3.5.2 Best Practices

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

Accounting practices and management

Budget planning and monitoring initiatives are in line with best practices. Financial management policies are in place to guide financial control, review and approval, and communications with member school Boards and operators.

The financial management system implemented by the Consortium also demonstrates sufficient internal controls and timely reporting. Checks and reconciliations are conducted by the Transportation Manager, protecting the Consortium against accounting errors.

3.5.3   Recommendations

3.5.3.1 Centralize budget planning and monitoring practices

One of the primary goals of establishing consortia is the reduction of administration at the school Board level as it pertains to transportation. With the existing Consortium structure, interviews revealed that a fair amount of transportation administration, such as budgeting, is undertaken and duplicated by member Boards. The Consortium is encouraged to work with member Boards to centralize budgeting and administration that takes place at each Board and centralize these processes at the Consortium. This practice should free up resources at the member Boards to focus on education and not transportation. It will also help to ensure that all costs associated with transportation can be accurately captured and reported.

3.6   Results of E&E Review

This Consortium has been assessed as **Low** in Consortium Management. The Consortium has an appropriate organizational structure, defined job descriptions and a process for employee performance evaluation. The Consortium does do some long and short term strategic planning and some monitoring of key performance indicators. The Consortium is encouraged to implement an effective governance structure, ensure its cost sharing mechanisms are appropriate and fully reflect the costs of providing transportation service. The Consortium is further encouraged to develop a succession plan, develop a plan for declining enrolment and further enhance its long term and short term planning as well as performance monitoring to ensure that it continues to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. The Consortium has struggled with employee turnover in recent years – we encourage the Consortium to define its staffing structure so as to allow for the appropriate staffing, training and division of responsibilities within the Consortium.

4   Policies and Practices

4.1   Introduction

Policies and practices examine and evaluate the established policies, operational procedures, and the documented daily practices that determine the standards of student transportation services. The analysis for this area focused on the following three key areas:

- General Transportation Policies & Practices;

- Special Needs and Specialized Programs; and

- Safety and Training Programs.

The observations, findings and recommendations found in this section of the report are based on onsite interviews with the Manager of Transportation and Associates, an analysis of presented documents, extracted data and information available on the Consortium's website. Best practices, as established by the E&E process, provided the source of comparison for each of these key areas. The results were used to develop an E&E assessment for each of the key components and to determine the overall effectiveness of the Consortium's Policies and Practices as shown below:

Policies and Practices – E&E Rating:	Moderate

4.2   Transportation Policies & Practices

Documented policies, procedures, and consistent daily practices are essential to any transportation system supporting effective and efficient operations. Polices establish and define the overall level of service that will be provided while procedures and practices determine how service will be delivered within the guidelines of each of the policies. Policy harmonization between the Member Boards and the consistent application of all guiding policies and procedures helps to ensure that service is delivered safely and equitably to each of the member and service purchasing Boards. This section will evaluate the established policies and practices and their impact on the effective and efficient operation of the Consortium.

4.2.1   Observations

4.2.1.1 General policy guidance

As a Consortium, NWOSSC receives primary guidance on service delivery from the KPDSB policies regarding constraints and requirements of service delivery. Policies that have been established are not harmonized as there is no explicit way through either the documentation or the cost structure to differentiate the impact that greater or lesser service requirements have on either management or costs. Given that all administrative costs are recovered through the same administrative fee, this does not provide a mechanism to recognize any additional costs of differentiated policies. However, the transportation service agreements explicitly identify the Boards as responsible for this cost. The TSAs give the service providing Board the opportunity to revisit the administrative cost structure if it does not adequately reflect the level of effort required.

The transportation service agreements between the KPDSB and the purchasing Boards recognize the value of a single policy but at the time of the review, the documents had not been consolidated into a single guiding document. Planners maintain a matrix of the different requirements and *Edulog* has been implemented to assign specific Board policies for its designated student groups.

NWOSSC has established a procedures manual that details a number of key elements of transportation planning and procedural requirements associated with providing services. The manual is a mix of both authorizations to provide service and details on the manner in which the policies will be implemented. The specific procedures detailed in the manual provide clear direction to participating stakeholders regarding NWOSSC operations. The manual addresses specific concerns such as the approach taken to address

transportation requests, inclement weather procedures and safety programs. The service agreements with the participating Boards establish an appeal process to ensure that confusion or disagreement with an established policy or procedure can be addressed systematically.

Of particular note are polices regarding bus stop placement and inclement weather procedures. NWOSSC has established a bus stop placement procedure that establishes minimum criteria including visibility requirements, distance between stops, roadway criteria, traffic volume, and a safe waiting area. This procedure assists both parents and officers in understanding the rationale for stop placements. Board policies and NWOSSC allow for one consistent pickup and drop off location (they do not need to be the same) for each student. In the event an alternative is to be used, it must be along an existing run and not result in any additional costs. The inclement weather procedures address a variety of potential concerns including precipitation, temperature and fog. Increased detail regarding these procedures is provided below in section 4.2.1.2.

NWOSSC has not established specific guidelines for student ride times. Interviews suggested that the geographic area and the limited student density could limit the routing techniques used, should stringent ride time restrictions be established. However, when planning bus runs, efforts are made to limit ride time to 60 minutes or less. Analysis of bus run information indicates that 28 percent of the total morning and afternoon runs exceed 60 minutes in length. While this is not a direct indication of how many student rides are longer than 60 minutes, it is an indication of the constraints imposed by geography and distance.

Policy management is facilitated by establishing the date when the procedure becomes effective and when it is next scheduled for a review. The use of this management approach ensures that operating procedures receive a regular review in order to reflect current operating conditions.

4.2.1.2 Hazardous transportation criteria

Board policies offer the opportunity to transport students for safety reasons. Determinants of specific information relating to the presence of hazards are not explicitly defined with the exception of the bus stop review conditions established. Additionally, previously defined hazard areas are being posted to *Edulog* but no process has been established to document the rationale for the placement of a hazard or to establish a cyclical review process to validate the ongoing efficacy of the hazards.

4.2.1.3 School times

As long time participants in joint transportation programs, the participating Boards understand the need for both run integration and bell time coordination. The transportation service agreements among the Boards establish a requirement that any Board considering bell time changes must consult NWOSSC to determine the extent of the impact of the changes on both the routing network and costs. The agreements provide a mechanism that requires the Board making a change and having material impacts on cost, to bear the full burden of that cost. Establishing a consultative approach, whereby the fiscal impact of bell time changes is evaluated and costs allocated to their respective cost centers are properly completed, is consistent with best practices of the E&E Reviews.

4.2.1.4 Alternative transportation

Service for students who are not eligible by policy is provided on a limited basis within a set of established constraints. Each of the Board policies allows for transportation of otherwise ineligible students to ride a bus if an existing stop is available and no additional cost is added. NWOSSC has established a procedure related to the Consortium, community involvement and experiential learning that offers the opportunity for service under the same constraints. There is no specific designation of these students within the *Edulog* coding structure or within the spreadsheet run database.

Additionally, parent transportation is provided as an option for service. However, the procedure statement expressly dictates that parent transport is a last option for service delivery. Additional procedures have been established to verify that any parent transport meets the licensing and insurance requirements established by NWOSSC and that appropriate documentation has been collected.

4.2.1.5 Inclement weather procedures

NWOSSC has developed a cancellation policy (used for inclement weather and other needs) that addresses school closures, delays, and cancellations. The procedure divides the region into specific service areas that allow for regional cancellations. The procedure also expressly places responsibility for

cancelling bus service on the Consortium and the Operators. To arrive at a decision on closures, Operators are responsible for reviewing road conditions. Decisions on closures and cancellations are communicated to parents via radio stations and through the Board websites.

The cancellation procedure, supplemented by a cold weather practice, establishes temperature thresholds for the points at which services will be cancelled. The cancellations are again regionalized and the process establishes a reasonable approach to recognizing climatic conditions that result in the coldest temperatures occurring just prior to the start of the school day.

An Early Dismissal procedure has also been established. The procedure recognizes the different geographic regions serviced by NOSCCO, but establishes a common practice for all areas. The procedure establishes both time constraints and notification responsibilities for each party.

Recognizing a number of the unique characteristics of the area, NWOSSC has also established a regionalized fog procedure that vests authority with the driver, in stopping or not for students. The procedure informs parents that it is their responsibility to be aware when weather conditions may impact service and establishes notification procedures for both the Operator and the Consortium. This procedure is a good representation of customizing operating practices to local conditions.

4.2.1.6 Route auditing

Processes and criteria for route auditing have been established. The auditing method establishes a follow up course of action with the Operators to ensure there is clarity on the findings and recommendations made as part of the overall route audit process. Staff volatility has generally limited the number of procedures that NWOSSC has been able to perform. While the already existing process is generally sound, NWOSSC provides Operators with advance notice of some of the route audits which may limit the effectiveness of the reviews, as it renders the process of identifying regular actions that will not be performed on the day of the review increasingly difficult. While advance notice can address concerns regarding unauthorized individuals following a bus or being around bus stops, it is possible to address this concern procedurally through advance notice of dispatch only, as opposed to alerting the Operator that a random route audit would occur.

4.2.2 Best Practices

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

School times

NWOSSC has established a procedure that appropriately allocates authority and fiscal responsibility for bell time changes to the individual Boards through its policy statements and the transportation service agreements. While mechanisms still must be established to ensure that NWOSSC can accurately conduct these analyses, the established procedure properly designates authority and responsibility for decision making.

Inclement weather procedures

NWOSSC has created a detailed procedure for the management of cancellations and delays in response to inclement weather. The establishment of cold weather and fog procedures supplements the established delay and cancellations procedures to provide needed guidance to Operators and the Boards on service provision under these circumstances. In addition, appropriate mechanisms for parental and community notification have been established to ensure wide distribution of decisions regarding the delivery of service in these conditions.

4.2.3 Recommendations

4.2.3.1 Analyse routing schemes and assess the impact of reducing ride times

NWOSSC has not established formal ride time requirements due to the vast geographic area that must be addressed. Given that the time a student spends on the bus is wholly dependent on the location of their residence and school of attendance, it may not be possible to address concerns regarding long rides. However, efforts should continue to be made by the Transportation Officers to ensure that all routing scheme options, including the use of transfer, relay, and combination runs, have been considered to ensure that the 28 percent of rides that are greater than 60 minutes are addressed. Options should be presented to the service purchasing Boards that quantify what, if any, additional costs would be

associated with shortening run lengths in order for Boards to balance their own effectiveness and efficiency requirements. While in many instances there is likely to be little that can be done to address the long rides, a regular process of review will ensure that service purchasing Boards are aware of the service considerations NWOSSC planners use to design the bus runs.

4.3   Special Needs Transportation

Route planning for special needs students and students in specialized programs is challenging to provide without placing undo pressure on the entire system. Special needs transportation in particular must consider a student's individual physical and or emotional needs, time or distance constraints, mobility assistance including lifts and restraints, medical condition awareness and medication administration, and student management for students with behavioural issues. Given the complexity of providing both safe and effective special needs transportation, it is imperative that clear and concise policies and documented practices are established and followed to ensure that the unique needs of the students are met without unduly impacting the entire routing network.

4.3.1   Observations

4.3.1.1 Special needs planning guidelines

Special needs data is generally received via a transportation planning form that provides the necessary student and mode data. The form documents the rationale for the mode of transport and provides the opportunity for the bus Operators to provide input on the approach. Integration of both special needs students on regular education runs and vice versa is used whenever both student exceptionality and vehicle availability will allow.

NWOSSC has established a special needs transportation procedure that provides a hierarchy of transportation modes for students. The purpose of this procedure is to exhaust all other possibilities before a student is assigned to a single occupant vehicle. This procedure is designed as a method to help control the costs of special needs services.

Procedures have been established to address students with specific conditions. This protocol is designed to ensure all stakeholders are informed of both the condition and the emergency response requirements. Additionally, proper methods of notification transmission to both schools and Operators of student health issues have been created and implemented. Furthermore, management of the spreadsheet run database is updated to identify a health issue so that Operators are aware that they must refer to the supplemental life threatening condition form. While these procedures are labor intensive, they do provide for the appropriate management and oversight of special needs run planning.

NWOSSC and Board policies allow for monitors and escorts to ride on buses. Transportation of the support person is explicitly one way and NWOSSC is not responsible for either the cost or coordination of the support person. Established procedure and Board policies state the requirement for background checks as needed. In the event that booster seats or harnesses are required, no protocols have been established that detail requirements for their use that are beyond existing regulatory requirements.

4.3.1.2 Driver training

General training policies are established by the individual Operators. However, NWOSSC has taken an active role in providing first aid/CPR and Epi-pen training and sponsoring an annual Safety Day training event that offers training on multiple topics to all drivers. This day is scheduled concurrent with a Board professional development day to facilitate attendance.

4.3.2   Best Practices

It is recognized that NWOSSC has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

Safety Day sponsorship

NWOSSC has recognized that regular safety training through a structured program will promote consistency in service delivery across the large service area. The idea of providing a normalized curriculum to all drivers reinforces the expectations of the Consortium and ensures that drivers for small Operators with more limited resources receive a diversity of training.

4.3.3 Recommendations

4.3.3.1 Enhance the informal costing process

NWOSSC should enhance its informal costing process and work with Board staff to structure a formal costing process for special needs assignments. This costing process would ensure that all parties are aware of the full cost of providing special needs services.

4.4 Safety policy

Clear and concise safety policies, practices, procedures, and training are all essential to ensure safe student transportation. Given the Consortiums' responsibility for managing services over a large geographical area with multiple Operators, it is paramount that safety related initiatives are well defined and documented to ensure system wide compliance. Equally important is an understanding of the responsibilities for safety that is shared by parents, students, bus drivers, and each community in the provision of safe transportation.

4.4.1 Observations

Clear and concise safety policies, practices, procedures, and training are all essential to ensure safe student transportation. Given the Consortium's responsibility for managing services over a large geographical area with multiple Operators, it is paramount that safety related initiatives are well defined and documented to ensure system wide compliance. Equally important is an understanding of the responsibilities for safety that is shared by parents, students, bus drivers, and each community in the provision of safe transportation.

4.4.1.1 Student training

NWOSSC has established a focus on student safety through a variety of educational and training programs. A particular focus has been on establishing operational procedures to address the needs of students with life threatening conditions. The Life Threatening Conditions program includes a process to document and distribute information on allergies and other specific concerns to the required stakeholders including schools and Operators.

The Consortium has instilled a program to identify young students using a wristband. The program is innovative in that it establishes that it is the parents' responsibility to determine what information is entered on the wristband. This approach assists in addressing privacy concerns while also offering an opportunity to ensure that young students can be properly directed in the event they become confused about which school bus they should be riding.

NWOSSC also plays a key role in coordinating other safety programs. While the bus evacuation program is performed at schools, NWOSSC coordinates the programs to ensure that the schools are serviced in a timely manner. In addition, the First Rider program offered for new and younger students is coordinated by NWOSSC. Finally, a visible parent program has been established that requires junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten students to be met at their stop by an adult or older student. These efforts are indicative of the safety focus established within NWOSSC.

4.4.1.2 Accident and incident procedures

NWOSSC has established its own accident management procedures that identify critical elements such as driver notification requirements and on site responsibilities, bus Operator communication and reporting requirements NWOSSC notification and follow up requirements. The procedure reiterates contractual requirements regarding notification to reinforce NWOSSC's and its participating Boards' expectations in the event of an incident or accident.

A very detailed missing or unaccounted for student procedure has also been established by NWOSSC. The procedure clearly establishes the search and communications protocols that are critical in resolving these incidents.

4.4.2 Best Practices

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

Safety training

NWOSSC has taken an active role in ensuring consistency in the provision of training among all Operators through its implementation of a directed professional development day. The establishment of a common curriculum promotes service equality across the very large service area.

4.4.3 Recommendations

4.4.3.1 Establish a formal accident review process

While NWOSSC has implemented a solid accident management procedure, this procedure could be enhanced through the establishment of formal post accident review process. As part of this process, each contributing factor to the accident or incident could be formally reviewed by a combination of NWOSSC and Operator staff. The findings of these reviews could then be shared with all stakeholders in an effort to prevent similar incidents.

4.5 Results of E&E Review

Policies and practices have been rated as **Moderate.** NWOSSC has established policies and operational infrastructure that recognize important baseline planning guidelines and operating procedures. Specific items such as the stop placement procedure, inclement weather decision making and school time change processes are consistent with best practices that have been identified throughout the E&E process.

However, in order to achieve a high rating, NWOSSC would need to both expand and refine their existing policies and practices. Establishment of a structured special needs costing process and enhancing the accident management procedures would increase the effectiveness of the established procedures. In addition, NWOSSC should document staff training plans and system coding structures (described in more detail in the Routing and Technology section of this report) as part of its procedure manual.

5   Routing and Technology

5.1   Introduction

Routing and Technology encompasses the management, administration, and use of technology for student transportation management. The following analysis stems from a review of the four key components of:

- Software and Technology Setup and Use;

- Digital Map and Student Database Management;

- System Reporting; and

- Regular and Special Needs Transportation Planning and Routing.

Each component has been analyzed based on observations from fact (including interviews) together with an assessment of best practices leading to a set of recommendations. These results are then used to develop an E&E assessment for each component, which is then summarized to determine an E&E assessment of Routing and Technical efficiency as shown below:

Routing and Technology – E&E Rating:	Moderate-Low

5.2   Software and technology setup and use

Modern student transportation routing systems allow transportation managers to make more effective use of the resources at their disposal. These systems allow for improvements in the management and administration of large volumes of student and route data. However, the systems must be fully implemented with well designed coding structures and effective mechanisms to extract and report data to all stakeholder groups. This section of the evaluation was designed to evaluate the baseline acquisition, setup, installation, and management of transportation related software.

5.2.1   Observations

5.2.1.1 Routing & related software

Edulog transportation management software and *WebQuery* for remote data access have been purchased by NWOSSC. Originally purchased in 2003, *Edulog* was installed and implemented but *WebQuery* was not generally available at the time of the review. NWOSSC has been focused on improving the overall quantity, accuracy and completeness of data in *Edulog* prior to rendering the *WebQuery* module accessible.

The most complete and accurate source for bus run information is contained within a collection of spreadsheets maintained by the Transportation Officers. These spreadsheets include bus stop assignments, student names, Operator information, run length information and school assignments. At the time of the review, an effort was being made to maintain both the spreadsheet database and *Edulog* concurrently. However, spot checks demonstrated that this was not fully occurring.

NWOSSC had developed an implementation plan for the transition from the spreadsheet database to the use of *Edulog*. The narrative establishes the tasks that must occur and identifies timeframes for the tasks to be completed within. However, the structure of the plan does not provide any detail on task sequencing, critical path items, or dependant tasks. This lack of detail makes it difficult for NWOSSC management and staff to adequately evaluate progress or assign necessary resources.

At the time of this review, NWOSSC was also in the process of developing a branded website intended to be a major component of the communications management strategy. The primary source of NWOSSC service information is currently maintained on the KPDSB website through a related transportation link.

5.2.1.2 Maintenance and service agreements

The agreement with *Edulog* provides for training, all annual updates, attendance at the user conference and other standard patches and updates that become available as part of the base licensing and annual maintenance fees. The licensing also provides for unlimited workstation access in the event that individual Board offices wanted to have access to the software. Given the large geographic areas NWOSSC manages, this was a prudent decision. However, consideration of the available web tools (*WebQuery* and *School Assistant*) may offer a more user friendly substitute to use of the application.

NWOSSC has detailed the service expectations related to system backup and restoration with the KPDSB. No formal agreement detailing the requirements has been established with the Board but the service requirements are well understood and documented.

5.2.1.3 Staff training

Significant volatility in staff assignments have led to varying degrees of training on the product. NWOSSC has entered into contract with *Edulog* for the provision of additional onsite training. Supplementary learning opportunities have included detailed sessions at the annual user conference and information gathered from the provincial user group forums has been used to increase the knowledge and education regarding this software. Given the uncertainty of the staff complement, NWOSSC has established an internal training process that offers significant value and is appropriate for smaller organizations.

5.2.1.4 Systems management

The KPDSB is responsible for server maintenance. A backup routine consisting of nightly backups with offsite storage has been established for both the transportation management software and related system files. This routine provides for some mirroring through the use of virtual servers, which would minimize downtime in the event of a catastrophic event. *Edulog* maintenance routines are managed by the Transportation Officer based on an established nightly batch file. These routines are designed to update all related database tables based on changes made throughout the day.

5.2.2   Best Practices

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

Systems management

NWOSSC established a clear program of system management that recognizes the key value of data and system availability. NWOSSC established a clear program of system management that recognizes the key value of data and system availability. As per agreement with the KPDSB, NWOSSC has implemented effective internal processes that keep software programs working efficiently, thereby ensuring data and application available over the network are reasonably solid. The backup and maintenance procedures are well defined and should limit any potential system downtime from a catastrophic event. The backup and maintenance procedures are well defined and should limit any potential system downtime from a catastrophic event.

5.2.3   Recommendations

5.2.3.1 Restructure the Edulog implementation plan

NWOSSC should restructure the *Edulog* implementation plan to ensure that the transition to full use of the system can occur as soon as is practical. Given the long period of system ownership, *Edulog* should have already been serving the Consortium as the primary means of evaluating system performance. Additionally, the transition from spreadsheet management of the system should have occurred before now. Completion of the transition through the use of an implementation plan is likely to require reconsideration of designated tasks, tasks sequences and staff assignments. This evaluation will be important if the established transition date of October 2009 is to be met.

5.2.3.2 Expedite the use of related technologies

NWOSSC currently uses a significant amount of manual effort to maintain two distinct systems for run management and to distribute the necessary data to individual stakeholders. Upon completion of the transition to universal use of *Edulog* for transportation management, immediate attention should be given to speeding the adoption of data distribution tools such as *WebQuery* and *School Assistant*. These tools will provide increased access to key stakeholders, particularly all member schools and Operators, to basic

lists and student reports. Improving access to these reports will allow Transportation Officers to transition from a data management focus to an analytical and operational focus. This allows for increased attention to identifying efficiencies and service improvements throughout the route network.

5.2.3.3 Provide additional user training

Increased training on the use of *Edulog* will be critical to ensure this speedy transition from the use of the spreadsheet database as the trusted run data source to the *Edulog* software. This training will require both application specific training (e.g., how to find items and manipulate data in *Edulog*) and more general training in transportation system design that is targeted to each position in the organization. Given that each position will require some use of the routing software, there is likely to be continued benefit to furthering the train-the-trainer model that NWOSSC has previously adopted. While employee volatility has limited some benefits of previous training endeavours, NWOSSC should continue its efforts to increase staff competency in working with the transportation management system.

5.3 Digital map and student database management

This aspect of the E&E Review was designed to evaluate the processes and procedures in place to update and maintain the student data and map data that forms the foundation of any student transportation routing system.

5.3.1 Observations

5.3.1.1 Digital map

The nature of the service area that was presented to the E&E review team posed a significant challenge in finding a complete and current map. Several of the areas continue to lack 911 addressing which has resulted in a collection of students that still must be digitized to the map rather than matched through the traditional geocoding process. The addition of the school authorities has increased map complexity and required additional effort to verify its completeness and accuracy.

5.3.1.2 Map accuracy

Map accuracy continues to pose a challenge for NWOSSC given the limited population and student density of the service area. This challenge has been intensified with the recent addition of the school authorities to the Consortium portfolio of responsibilities. Recent efforts to improve both core map data and student data have led to significant increases in student match rates; specifically, these rates have totaled to numbers greater than 98 percent in the most recent downloads.

Accuracy of run and route information is unpredictable due to inconsistencies in default values that negatively impact run timing in particular. Map revisions are processed as new information is received through a combination of efforts by NWOSSC staff and *Edulog* support. Operator input is being solicited for a targeted pilot area to validate stop times, student counts and stop locations. However, this has not occurred generally across the system. Information is collected annually from Operators and used to validate student counts, times and kilometers but this information has traditionally been used to update the spreadsheet database of run and route information rather than the *Edulog* system.

5.3.1.3 Default values

Default values were set during the initial implementation and still require evaluation to ensure that road conditions are reasonably reflected within the software. The values will be established by the Transportation Officer responsible for *Edulog* in consultation with planners and Operators.

5.3.1.4 Student data management

One student database is used to manage student information from the five different student information systems used by the participating Boards. Updates are performed electronically on a biweekly schedule with two smaller Boards requiring manual maintenance. The updates include all students from each participating Board. Maintenance routines, managed by the *Edulog* Transportation Officer, are used to identify records where changes have occurred. Continuing efforts are made to improve the quality of student data entered by the schools, including site visits by NWOSSC to educate school staff on the manner in which data is issued and why complete and accurate entry is necessary.

There is also a second manual process, used to update the spreadsheet database of runs and student assignments that includes the completion of a transportation request form, review and validation of the

changes to assignment by the Transportation Officers, completion of a run update form to the Operator and a revision to the spreadsheet for the particular run. This second process is the predominant process that is used during the school year due to the limited use of *Edulog* for daily run management at the time of the review.

5.3.1.5 Coding structure

Effective coding allows for the extraction of specific data records within the system enabling ready access to pertinent reporting data and the conduct of targeted analyses. A well designed, hierarchical coding structure allows for the easy identification of service types such as, students with special needs and special requirements, hazardous transportation, and other specific route, run, and student information. The structure should be designed to provide the information regularly needed by the Consortium for both reporting and analysis and need not be overly complex. The design and implementation of an effective coding structure is of utmost importance to achieve maximum benefit from the ready availability of system data.

The existing coding structure is limited in that it focuses on two primary elements, eligibility and error checking. Additional user fields have been established to identify specific sub groups of students, such as non-resident students, through the use of text entry. Additional user codes describing mode or rationale for transport have not been established. As currently structured, the coding system limits the analytical and reporting capabilities of the system due to the difficulties in identifying discrete subgroups of students. Additionally, the need for text entry into specific fields for each individual unique record makes it more likely that inconsistencies or lapses can occur.

5.3.2 Recommendations

5.3.2.1 Ensure that default values are reviewed early in the implementation process

For any transportation management system to be deemed a useful management tool, it is essential that two underlying data elements are complete and accurate. The first is the student data. NWOSSC has been working diligently to increase the completeness and accuracy of both the map and baseline student data. This has resulted in significant improvements in overall match rates.

The second critical element is the default system values. Of particular importance are the road speed values that calculate the speed at which a bus will travel on the road. These form the foundation of all run timing in the system. To the extent that these times are inaccurate, the system offers very little utility in terms of evaluating alternative routing strategies that would increase effectiveness or efficiency. As part of its implementation plan, NWOSSC should ensure that a complete review of these data elements is scheduled very early in the process. It is only through a combination of the student data and improvements to the accuracy of these values, that material knowledge, from the use the transportation management system, can be gained.

5.3.2.2 Establish a detailed coding structure

As part of the implementation plan mentioned in Section 5.2.3.1, NWOSSC should establish a detailed coding structure that will greatly enhance the analytical usefulness of *Edulog*. A coding structure that readily identifies discrete sub groupings of students is logically structured such that it remains relevant in the event of staff turnover. Additionally, this coding structure offers planners the opportunity to understand the rationale for a transportation decision based solely on the students' classification and that should be the ultimate goal.

The goal of the student coding structure should be to provide a progressively more detailed indication of whether a student can ride the bus, why the student rides, where the student goes, and what is required to deliver them to their program. Therefore, a hierarchal structure that looks at eligibility for service, the type of service provided (i.e., regular or special education), the nature of the service (i.e., hazard, courtesy, or a specific program), and the equipment that may be required (i.e., wheelchair, monitor, etc) would allow Consortium staff to more fully and readily analyze the types of service being provided. This further allows more detailed reporting on the impact of various routing strategies would have on student populations under different routing scenarios.

The run and route coding structure should allow planners to immediately recognize critical information regarding the route. Some of these aspects are addressed in the existing structure that allows for a

destination school and morning or afternoon panel to be identified. Establishing additional significant digits to identify items such as transfer runs, contractor assignments, or special equipment availability would enhance the usefulness of the run identification number.

5.4 System reporting

Adequate reporting allows for the early identification of trends that may be detrimental to operations, improves the analytical capacity of the organization, and allows for internal and external stakeholders to be more adequately informed about operations. The purpose of this aspect of the review was to evaluate what reports are typically generated, who receives these reports, and what capabilities exist to develop ad hoc reports.

5.4.1 Observations

5.4.1.1 Reporting and data analysis

The major reports used by NWOSSC are focused on the functional lists necessary to run the system including run reports and student listings. These reports generally are not focused on overall system analysis as *Edulog* does not serve as the primary source of run and route data for either NWOSSC, member schools, or the Operators. The spreadsheet database serves as the primary data source with *Edulog* operating as a secondary source for more specialized analyses.

As the transition to full use of *Edulog* progresses, additional analyses on student match rates, capacity use and ride times are occurring with greater frequency. This is due to the efforts of both the Manager of Transportation recently establishing performance indicators that will serve as future management indicators for use in evaluating system performance.

5.4.2 Recommendations

5.4.2.1 Develop a systemic reporting and data validation process

NWOSSC should develop a systematic approach to data extraction and performance assessment as part of their regular system management activities. Identifying and collecting data elements conducive for performance analysis helps ensure data integrity by providing clear indications of incomplete, inaccurate, or improperly categorized data. Even a limited measurement process that focuses on the number of resources being consumed and at what cost, would provide the opportunity to regularly evaluate system data and identify targeted opportunities for future analyses.

A regular schedule of external reporting to each of the member Boards, even under the existing service purchasing arrangements, would offer NWOSSC the opportunity to regularly ensure the completeness and accuracy of all student, stop, bus run and map data. These routines can be of great benefit in smaller organizations with more limited resources because they immediately identify key data concerns that can be triaged and addressed in time and resource-sensitive manners.

5.5 Regular and special needs transportation planning and routing

Transportation route planning is the key activity undertaken by any Department. This portion of the review was designed to evaluate the strategies, tactics, and processes used to provide transportation to regular and special education students and the approaches used to minimize the cost and operational disruption associated with both types of transportation.

5.5.1 Observations

5.5.1.1 Planning cycle

NWOSSC has established a detailed planning calendar that is broken down by major topic. The plan includes a monthly breakdown of tasks and assignments for each staff member that is primarily focused on summer planning. There is an additional, more generalized plan that identifies the major tasks to be completed during a given month throughout the school year. Given the scope of the organization, the established planning calendar is an appropriate management tool for identifying required activities and monitoring progress.

5.5.1.2 Management of bus routes

NWOSSC's structure does not establish specific assignments for bus run management based on geographic area. Each of the transportation staff are expected to answer questions of any school or

Operator throughout the entire service area. Special needs' planning has been designated to one Transportation Officer to ensure that all procedures and documentation are properly completed. Recent expansions of the service area have also required that one Transportation Officer be designated to evaluate opportunities for efficiencies and standardize documentation of run lists.

The current structure is the result of two primary factors: an effort to be customer focused and volatility in the staffing complement. Promoting the idea that each staff member (regardless of their position) must be prepared to answer any/all customer questions is a laudable goal. However, this effort at being responsive may be adversely impacting NWOSSC's ability to assign responsibility for ensuring efficient system design. This approach does not provide assurances that changes made by one planner to address a specific concern are not being undone by another planner addressing a different concern.

The development of bus runs is not constrained by any specific policy or historical practice that would limit overall system efficiency. Through their policies and operating practices, NWOSSC and its member Boards have identified efficiency as a key consideration in the route planning process. Students can, and are, integrated across Boards. Where appropriate, special needs mainstreaming and regular education students riding special needs buses is used. Supervision time is a significant constraint in route planning. Efforts are made to ensure that established supervision periods are not violated; however, the significant geographic area complicates these efforts.

Given the limited density of the service area, providing opportunities to maximize seating capacity use through Board integration and special needs mainstreaming is the key focus of route planning. Contractual considerations regarding run length are also considered in an effort to ensure that runs meet minimum distances. This flexibility is a key component of efficiently serving an area of limited density. Significant coordination between the purchasing Boards, NWOSSC and the Operators has transpired so that services to all students, with a particular focus on providing appropriate vehicle types for students with special needs, can be provided.

The summer planning period is the primary opportunity for Transportation Officers to evaluate system performance and make changes to enhance efficiency and/or effectiveness. Given the scope of the system and the specific local knowledge of the Transportation Manager and Officers, the annual review has generally focused on geographic clusters of students and schools. During the route reconciliation process following the start of school year, Operators provide marked up versions of bus routes that are designed to validate stop times, student counts and distances. In addition, planners use the route auditing process to verify stop times, counts, and distances as part of standard audit procedures. Historically, there has been limited use of *Edulog* to conduct route analyses; traditionally, the program has been employed to evaluate run distances or times. Any route changes have been generally managed through manual revisions to the spreadsheet database of runs.

Recently, NWOSSC has made a significant effort to increase the use of *Edulog* for run planning through two endeavours. A pilot project was established in the Sioux Lookout area that has centered on the use of *Edulog* as the primary routing resource; however, this had not been fully completed at the time of the review. Additionally, the incorporation of the KCDSB runs has resulted in increased use of *Edulog* for evaluating integration and efficiency opportunities. These efforts represent the frequently expressed desire for NWOSSC staff and management to increase the use of *Edulog*. However, the extended time frame for the pilot project in particular is an indication that additional effort and planning will be required if the full transition to *Edulog* is to be completed in a timely manner.

5.5.1.3 Analysis of system effectiveness[4]

NWOSSC services a very large and diverse area that represents approximately 70,000 square kilometers. Within this service area there are 33 schools among all participating Boards and nearly 4,000 students receiving transportation services. These services are provided using a variety of routing techniques including combination runs, tiering and transfers. The dispersion of both the student population and the communities has necessitated a reliance on combination runs where a single bus services multiple schools. The following table summarizes the number of schools serviced by individual runs in both the morning and afternoon time frames.

Table 5: Count of School Serviced

Area	Number of Runs Servicing Each Count of Schools							Grand Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Dryden	14	6	9	33	5	1		**68**
Kenora	2	7	19	11	10	6	13	**68**
Red Lake/Ear Falls	14	6	4					**24**
Sioux Lookout	3		15					**18**
Sioux Narrows	2							**2**
Grand Totals	**35**	**19**	**47**	**44**	**15**	**7**	**13**	**180**

As the table illustrates, 79 of the 180 runs (44 percent) service four or more schools through either direct service or transfers.

This approach to using combination runs in response to the geographic constraints of the area has been supplemented by other targeted routing techniques. At the time of this review, 45 transfer runs had been established that transferred 368 students during the day. These transfers were instituted to take advantage of available bell time separation that was too limited for tiering but provided enough flexibility of some reuse of assets. In addition, limited tiering is used in the Kenora and Red Lake areas due to a somewhat greater population density and more compact service area. These are excellent examples of customizing the routing scheme to address the geographic and demographic challenges of a specific service area.

The use of these various techniques has resulted in capacity use rates of nearly 70 percent across the service area. The following chart illustrates the rates of capacity use across the service area based on student load and student count.

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[4] All data reported in this section of the report refers to data collected while the E&E team was on site. There may be inconsistencies with some previously reported Ministry data due to the different timing of the data collection.

Figure 7: Capacity Use
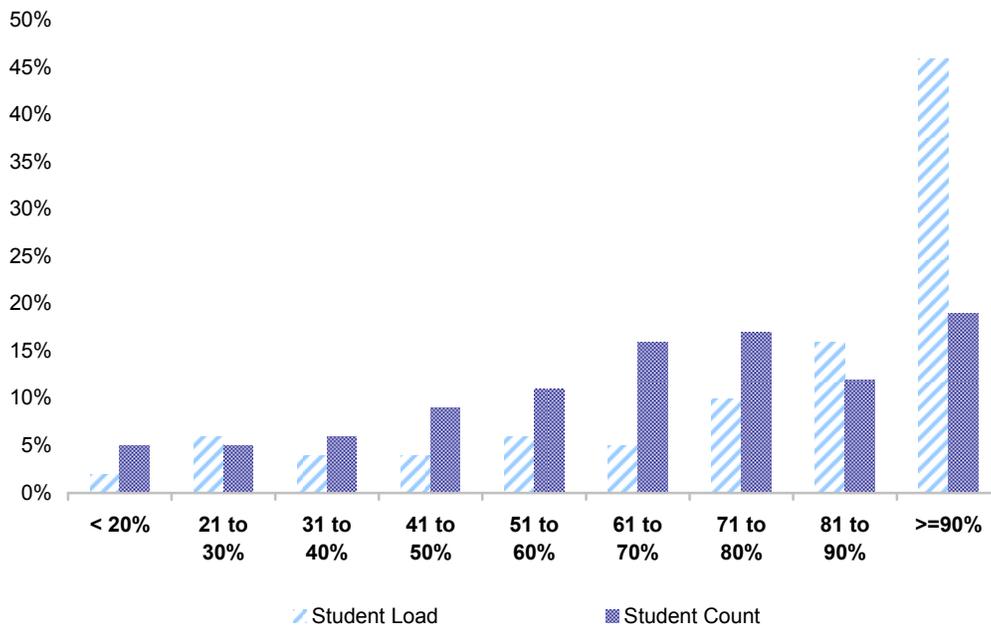
As can be seen, the significant portion of the runs that have rates of student loading greater than 90 percent are generally runs with some aspect of a secondary school combination. This recognizes that a substantial proportion of secondary school students are not riding the bus and therefore buses are overloaded. This is reasonable provided there is a contingency available in the event that historic rates of non-participation change.

In evaluating service effectiveness, the key consideration is student ride time. This measure is generally calculated by subtracting the time of the pick up to the time of the final drop off. Given the differences in data availability and data quality between the spreadsheet database and the student data in *Edulog*, it was determined that calculating student ride time was not feasible. Therefore, we have relied on run time values as a proxy for actual student ride times. Run time calculations determine the difference between the first pickup and last drop off on a run and evaluate the students on each run as a group rather than individually. While this approach generally over emphasizes the influence of the longer rides it still provides valuable insight into service quality. The following table summarizes, by service area, the count of the total runs within the individual time intervals.

Figure 8: Run Times
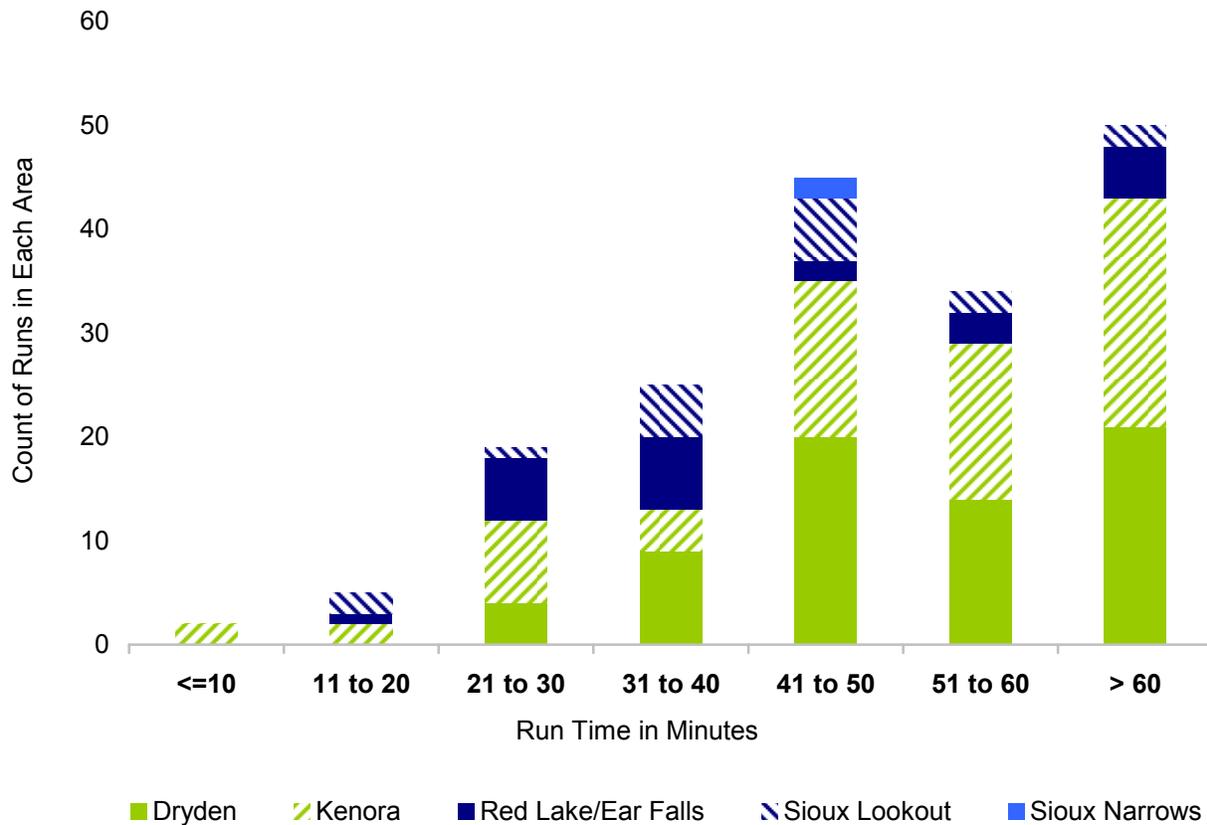
The figure demonstrates that, not surprisingly, the predominance of longer runs is related to schools in the Dryden and Kenora areas. This is expected because most of the population is predominantly located in this area. Of note is that only 50 of the 180 total morning and afternoon runs exceed the desired ride length of 60 minutes. This may be unavoidable due to the size of the service area, however, it would be a worthwhile statistic to track and monitor. These values are consistent with established ride time expectations and represent reasonable results given the challenge of the service area.

5.5.2   Best Practices

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

Service flexibility

NWOSSC and its participating Boards have created a policy and procedural infrastructure that significantly enhance their ability to promote efficiency. The ability to integrate students and the use of a variety of routing techniques has allowed for high rates of seating capacity despite the large, sparse service area.

5.5.3   Recommendations

5.5.3.1 Clearly assign responsibility for data changes

NWOSSC should assign individual staff members the responsibility of managing changes within either a geographic or functional area in order to ensure clears lines of authority and accountability for service effectiveness and efficiency. Transitioning to this approach should not limit the staff's ability to be responsive to questions because of the universal availability of *Edulog* as the primary data source; rather, this new tactic should demonstrate proof of accountability for system efficiency by specifically designating an individual or individuals for overall system design.

However, in order for this strategy to be effective, it will be necessary to minimize the volatility in the staffing complement. As previously mentioned in this report, the E&E review team has been made aware and acknowledges that retention of qualified staff is a challenge. We do, however, recommend that once the Consortium's workforce appears to be somewhat stable, NWOSSC should revise position descriptions

to establish the responsibility for run planning within the job descriptions as required. It is also critical that the implementation of *Edulog* and the provision of user training be completed (as recommended in Section 5.2.3 above) as part of this reallocation of responsibility process.

5.6 Results of E&E Review

Routing and Technology use has been rated as **Moderate - Low**. The use of a variety of alternative routing techniques and the efforts to integrate the system has resulted in high rates of seating capacity use. In addition, significant efforts have been made to improve the timeliness and accuracy of student downloads from the five participating Boards.

Substantial efforts are still required to integrate *Edulog* into daily transportation management practices. The observations highlight the specific areas of concern that must be address include coding structures, map management and the setting of default values, and staff training. The continued use of the spreadsheet databases as the primary data source indicates a lack of confidence with the transportation management software that should be remedied as soon as possible. The remedy will require the development of a more detailed and aggressive implementation plan that transitions NWOSSC from the current spreadsheet database to the full use of *Edulog* by all staff in a timelier manner that has occurred to date.

6   Contracts

6.1   Introduction

The Contracts section refers to the processes and practices by which the Consortium enters into and manages its transportation and other service contracts. The analysis stems from a review of the following three key components of Contracting Practices:

- Contract structure;

- Contract negotiations; and

- Contract management.

Each component has been analyzed based on observations from information provided by the Consortium, including interviews with Consortium management and select Operators. The analysis included an assessment of areas requiring improvement that were informed by a set of known best practices identified during previous E&E Reviews. These results are then used to develop an E&E assessment for each component. The E&E assessment of contracting practices for NWOSSC is as follows:

Contacts – E&E Rating:	Moderate

6.2   Contract Structure

An effective contract[5] establishes a clear point of reference that defines the roles, requirements, and expectations of each party involved and details the compensation for providing the designated service. Effective contracts also provide penalties for failure to meet established service parameters and may provide incentives for exceeding service requirements. Contract analysis includes a review of the clauses contained in the contract to ensure that the terms are clearly articulated, and a review of the fee structure is conducted to enable comparison of its components to best practice.

6.2.1   Observations

The Consortium currently has contracts with three Operators. The group of three Operators formed an association called the Dryden Bus Operators Association. This Association is not a legal entity and acts exclusively for the purpose of negotiating contracts with the Consortium.

6.2.1.1 Bus Operator contract clauses

NWOSSC Operators have executed contracts valid until August 2010. All Operator contracts are signed with the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board as the Consortium is not a separate legal entity. Individual Operator contracts were signed with the KPDSB on November 29th, 2007 during the 2007-2008 school year. Contracts and Operator rates are valid for three years. NWOSSC reviews the rates on an annual basis and will amend them as required . The rates set in 2007 when the contract was established have not been altered.

The Operator contracts outline licensing requirements, criminal record check requirements, insurance requirements, and clauses related to student safety/communication, email communication, radio equipment communication, termination and other general provisions.

The Operators' contract includes a maximum vehicle age clause of ten years. It is stated in the Operator contracts that all drivers should have current Emergency first aid, CPR and Epi-pen training. Additionally, there is a supplementary schedule to the agreement that mandates that all drivers and Operators take part

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[5] The word Contract in this context refers to detailed documents outlining the scope of services, rates and expected service levels. The phrase Purchase of Service agreement is used in this report to describe a less detailed document that only outlines the services to be provided and the rates at which they are to be provided.

in a Regional Training Day which is held on an annual basis. The KPDSB also encourages and will provide training if the Operators are unable to provide it for their drivers.

There are no specific training requirements for drivers that may have to transport special needs students.

The Operator contracts state that the maximum permissible number of transportation routes under the control of a single Operator, whether directly or indirectly, shall not exceed 49% of the total routes available.

6.2.1.2 Dispute policy

There is no stated clause in the Operator contract that defines a dispute resolution policy.

6.2.1.3 Bus Operator compensation

Operators' compensation is based on ten months of work and is paid at the end of each month. This amount is reconciled on a monthly basis. If there is insufficient information for the month, the payment will be adjusted accordingly. Should the Operator not effectively carry out its contract and students not be transported (for reasons other than inclement weather), the Operator will not receive payment for the fuel expense and variable maintenance components of the formula for the mileage not operated. Should there be a cancellation for any reason and the Operator is told ahead of time (within 24 hours), the Operator will not be paid for the fuel expenses, variable maintenance or wage component of the formula for the mileage/time not operated.

During inclement weather situations, bus Operators are paid the fixed costs including wages but are not paid fuel and variable costs.

6.2.1.4 Bus Operator contract management

Information, such as make and model of the vehicle; model number; vehicle age; driver license; name of driver; insurance; CVOR; Emergency first aid and Epi-Pen training; and criminal record checks are required to be provided to the Consortium on a yearly basis. All drivers are also required to submit proof of a negative tuberculin test.

6.2.1.5 Parent drivers

The Consortium currently contracts with five parents to provide transportation for their special needs students. Signed agreements stipulating payment terms, the length of service and the name of the student to be transported are in place. The contracts are re-assessed on an annual basis and it is then decided whether the parent arrangement should continue or if special transportation should be used. The parents' signatures are evident, the amount of insurance coverage is clearly stated and the Transportation Manager's signature is also evident. In addition to these contract requirements, insurance policy and license records are collected annually by the Consortium.

6.2.1.6 Taxi contracts

At the time of this first E&E review, there was only one taxi run and it had just recently been cancelled. The existing taxi contract includes taxi Operator payment rates, clauses related to insurance verification and proof, provisions in the event of accidents and other contractual stipulations. The contract does not specify a vehicle age policy or mandate first aid/CPR/Epi-Pen training for taxi drivers.

6.2.2   Best Practices

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practice in the following areas:

Bus Operator Contracts

Operator agreements are signed between individual Operators and the KPDSB; they are, for the most part, complete. The contracts are valid until August 2010 unless otherwise terminated prior to that date by mutual agreement. The Consortium has also recognized that, due to the business structure of this organization, a legal agreement can only be enforced if it officially signed by the KPDSB. As such, the contractual relationship between Operators and the KPDSB is clearly defined.

Parent driver contracts

The current transportation agreement for parent drivers is signed between individual parents and the Transportation Manager. The contract is an agreement where daily payment is stipulated and the names of the parents and child to be transported are included. The parent driver contract has a stipulation regarding insurance requirements. This contract also has proof of a driver's license and insurance policy coverage. Additionally, it is mandated that the vehicle must be kept in a safe condition. Each mandatory requirement stated in the contract ensures that both the parent and the Consortium have attempted to alleviate any concerns regarding future liability issues by completing a thorough parent driver contract.

6.2.3   Recommendations

6.2.3.1 Revise the Bus Operator Compensation formula

The Operator contracts stated that if an Operator fails to operate a vehicle on a scheduled school day, the Operator will not receive payment for the fuel and the variable maintenance components of the formula. It is recommended that this clause be revisited and that payment of driver wages also be held back for non-service. Payment of driver wages despite a service failure could lead to inefficiencies in NWOSSC's financial management capabilities; as such, it is recommended that changes to the Operator compensation clause be considered.

6.2.3.2 Revise the taxi operator contract

While it has been acknowledged that Operator's contracts are, for the most part, complete, it is recommended that the Consortium include certain clauses in its agreements. A confidentiality clause should be inserted in all Operator contracts. It is of the utmost importance to include any special training requirements needed for drivers transporting special needs students. Also, it is recommended that, should taxi contracts be required, a clause regarding mandatory safety requirements such as driver first aid, CPR and Epi-Pen certificate be implemented. A contract dispute policy should also be implemented so that issues could be managed and resolved, should a dispute arise.

6.2.3.3 Modify the contract compliance monitoring procedure

The Consortium has not consistently collected proof of requirements listed in the Operator Agreements (i.e. CVOR, make and model of vehicle and so forth). The Consortium should create a system whereby driver and/or vehicle contract requirements can be more effectively and consistently monitored. We acknowledge that staff turnover has posed a tremendous challenge to the Consortium, however, it is important that the Consortium attempt to create and continue to maintain a system whereby driver and/or vehicle requirements are continuously checked for completeness and compliance.

6.3   Contract Negotiations

Contract negotiations are intended to provide an avenue by which the Consortium, as a purchaser of services, can ultimately obtain the best value for money. The goal of the Consortium is to obtain high quality service at fair market prices.

6.3.1   Observations

6.3.1.1 Bus Operator contract negotiation process

Rates are reviewed/negotiated annually between the KPDSB and the Operators. The negotiating process commences six months prior to the contract's expiration date. The Transportation Manager is the chief negotiator for this process and maintains final signing authority for all final rate authorizations within the constraints set during the KPDSB budgeting process. The Transportation Manager presents the final decision regarding the rate negotiations to the Board of Trustees of the KPDSB.

The negotiating teams consist of representatives of the Consortium including the Manager of Transportation, the Superintendent of Business from Northwest Catholic District School Board and one other representative. This last representative is determined just prior to the start of negotiations. The Dryden Bus Operators Association will be represented by three members, of which no two shall represent the same Operator.

The Consortium previously undertook a competitive procurement initiative for school bus transportation services. This process was held in May 2005 (as well in May 2003) following the unexpected insolvency of a bus Operator in April 2003 and 2005. This led to a need to find an Operator to provide school bus

transportation services for nine routes in Kenora and nine school bus routes in Red Lake/ Ear Falls. The RFP process was not advertised in the local newspapers advertising process was limited to existing Operators. The Consortium does not currently have plans to competitively procure transportation services again.

6.3.2   Recommendations

6.3.2.1 Implement a competitive procurement process for bus Operators

Contracts for school bus transportation services are currently not competitively awarded. By not engaging in a competitive process, the Consortium will not know whether it is paying best rates for services provided. If a competitive process is used to procure contracted services, the Consortium can clearly state all service requirements in the procurement document. In addition, the Consortium can be sure that it will obtain the best value for its money as Operators will compete to provide the required service levels at prices that ensure they earn an appropriate return on investment. This may not mean that rates will decline; however, the concern for the Consortium should be to obtain best value for money expended.

A competitive process can be used with certain safeguards in place to protect the standards of service. The Consortium should continue to enforce limits placed on the amount of business any one Operator can hold to avoid a monopoly situation. Additionally, in evaluating the successful proponents, cost should not be the overriding factor as that will encourage low cost proponents to enter the market while not necessarily ensuring that the same or improved levels of service are being provided. Local market conditions should be considered at all points in the development and evaluation of any service proposal.

As the *Contracting Practices Resource Package* has been released and pilot projects completed, the Consortium should start developing an implementation plan for competitive procurement. A plan should include a review of existing procurement policies, an analysis of the local supplier markets, strategies to help determine the RFP scope, processes, criteria and timeline to reasonably phase-in competitive procurement. The plan should also utilize the best practices and lessons learned that are available from the pilot Consortia and those that have already engaged in competitive procurement.

6.4   Contract Management

Contracting practices do not end after a contract is signed. Ongoing monitoring of compliance and performance of contracted service is an important and valuable practice to enhance service levels and ensure that contractors are providing the level of service that was previously agreed upon. Monitoring should be performed proactively and on a regular and ongoing basis in order to be effective.

6.4.1   Observations

6.4.1.1 Monitoring

A formal monitoring procedure is in place. The Transportation Manager or one of the Consortium's staff members will conduct a route audit by riding either a morning or afternoon bus in order to examine several variables including the safety of stops, roads and turnarounds, students' disembarking, safe behavior, adherence to transportation policy and verification of student ridership. Distance between stops will also be examined, in addition to, the length and time of routes, and verification of stop times as well as other variables. During the route audit, the Transportation Manager will encourage the driver to express any concerns regarding the route.

Audits are conducted both on a random basis as well as with Operator notification; however, this depends on the nature of the audit. For example, there will be notification provided to the Operator prior to an audit if the audit concerns reconnaissance of the geography and stops. If there are route issues and concerns regarding non-compliance, the audit will be random and no prior notification will be granted to the Operator. Five main geographic areas are serviced and an attempt has been made to conduct the same number of audits per area per school year. However, due to the staffing challenges, a set schedule has not yet been identified but will be once there is employee stability, according to the Transportation Manager.

Audits are fully documented in a field audit book which contains a checklist for items of compliance as well as notes on the audit. Following the audit, a follow up letter is sent to the bus Operator with feedback on items that were properly completed as well as with comments on services which were not performed to the highest possible service standards. The option to fine the Operator as per the contract will appear in this

letter as well. A formal procedure detailing operator fines is defined in the procedure manual, in the section titled "Route Audits". The Transportation Manager indicated that, as a result of the auditing process, there will be changes made to a route resulting in the modifications being communicated with the appropriate schools and to the impacted parents. According to the Transportation Manager, approximately 15 -20% of routes are currently audited annually, with future plans to increase the number of routes audited in proportion to staff increases.

Driver information and data regarding company performance for each Operator are kept on file. Evidence of issues such as driver complaints, follow up discussions, accidents/incidents, route amendments, extensions and other issues are also maintained on file.

6.4.2 Recommendations

6.4.2.1 Modify the performance auditing process

Audits are a key component of contract management. They measure whether the Operators and drivers are complying with stated contract clauses and ultimately if they are providing safe and reliable service. The Consortium performs periodic audits of Operators and drivers to ensure they are providing adequate service levels and are complying with contract requirements. The Consortium has recognized the need for a formalized monitoring process; this goal has been identified as a priority in the development of key performance indicators as found in the Consortium's Operational Objectives document.

Similarly, the tracking of the number of complaints received by the students and/or their parents is understood to be for record keeping purposes as well as for future liability issues. Nevertheless, being proactive in minimizing the number of incidents could be further accomplished by positively reinforcing good actions. Operators are currently implementing and further developing negative repercussions for those with poor actions. Subscribing to the idea that it is best to monitor and reinforce positive changes, encouraging consistent positive Operator performance and keeping record of these efforts (both good and poor) will not only document points of improvement but will also highlight all positive contributions made by Operators. It is recommended that this practice be implemented in order to enhance business operations and the delivery of service.

6.4.2.2 Formalize a dispute resolution process

The Consortium and the Operators currently do not have a standing agreement with regards to a dispute policy. In the event that a disagreement should arise between the Operators and the Consortium, a formalized process determining the steps required to resolve a situation, must be instituted. Implementation of a dispute resolution policy will ensure that disputes can be settled without a need for reduction in service levels and/or litigation. This process should be neutral and transparent.

6.5 Results of E&E Review

The process by which the Consortium negotiates, structures, and manages its contracts for transportation services has been assessed as **Moderate**. Contracts are in place with Operators prior to the start of the school year and contracts are substantially "complete". Parent driver contracts are also complete and maintained up to date with all relevant information. The primary areas for improvement are the use of competitive procurement processes and more regular and complete contract monitoring.

7 Funding Adjustment

The Ministry has asked the E&E Review Team to apply their Funding Adjustment Formula to each Board that was subject to an E&E Review in Phase 3B. Note that where Boards are incurring transportation expenses in multiple Consortium sites, the Board's adjustment will be prorated for the portion attributed to the Consortium under review. For example, if 90% of Board A's expenditures are attributed to Consortium A, and 10% of expenditures are attributed to Consortium B, the funding adjustment resulting from Consortium A's review will be applied to 90% of Board A's deficit or surplus position.

The Ministry's funding formula is as follows:

Table 6 Funding Adjustment Formula

Overall Rating	Effect on deficit Boards[6]	Effect on surplus Boards[6]
High	Reduce the gap by 100% (i.e. eliminate the gap)	No in-year funding impact; out-year changes are to be determined
Moderate-High	Reduce the gap by 90%	Same as above
Moderate	Reduce the gap by 60%	Same as above
Moderate-Low	Reduce the gap by 30%	Same as above
Low	No in-year funding impact	Same as above

Based on the Ministry's funding formula, in conjunction with our E&E assessment of the Consortium, it is anticipated that the following funding adjustments will be made for each Board:

Northwestern Catholic District School Board

Item	
2008-09 Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	$69,268
% of Surplus (Deficit) attributed to the Consortium (rounded)	50.00%
Revised amount to be assessed under the Consortium	$34,634
E&E Rating	Moderate-Low
Funding Adjustment based on Ministry's Funding Adjustment Formula	No adjustment
Total Funding adjustment	Nil

Keewatin-Patricia District School Board

Item	
2008-09 Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	$695,204
% of Surplus (Deficit) attributed to the Consortium (rounded)	100.00%
Revised amount to be assessed under the Consortium	$695,204
E&E Rating	Moderate-Low
Funding Adjustment based on Ministry's Funding Adjustment Formula	No adjustment
Total Funding adjustment	Nil

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[6] This refers to Boards that have a deficit/surplus on student transportation

Kenora Catholic District School Board

Item	
2008-09 Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	$24,712
% of Surplus (Deficit) attributed to the Consortium (rounded)	100.00%
Revised amount to be assessed under the Consortium	$24,712
E&E Rating	Moderate-Low
Funding Adjustment based on Ministry's Funding Adjustment Formula	No adjustment
Total Funding adjustment	Nil

Conseil scolaire du district catholique des Aurores Boréales

Item	
2008-09 Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	$48,703
% of Surplus (Deficit) attributed to the Consortium (rounded)	9.45%
Revised amount to be assessed under the Consortium	$4,602
E&E Rating	Moderate-Low
Funding Adjustment based on Ministry's Funding Adjustment Formula	No adjustment
Total Funding adjustment	Nil

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Act	Education Act
Assessment Guide	The guide prepared by the E&E Review Team and the Ministry of Education which will be used as the basis for determining the overall effectiveness and efficiency of each Consortium
Board Organization	According to the Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange Document, Effective January 1, 2002, a "Board Organization" is one which "means any organization which is subject to the control or direction of any Board which is a Subscriber or by two or more Boards of which 50% or more are Subscribers and which has objectives and operations which are for the advancement or support of education or the operations of a Board or Boards"
CSDCAB	Conseil Scolaire du district catholique des Aurores Boreales
Common Practice	Refers to a set of planning parameters that have been reported by Ontario school Boards as the most commonly adopted planning policies and practices. These are used as references in the assessment of the relative level of service and efficiency.
"NWOSSC" or the "Consortium"	The Northwestern Ontario Student Services Cooperative
Deloitte	Deloitte & Touche LLP (Canada)
Driver	Refers to bus Drivers, see also Operators
E&E	Effectiveness and Efficiency
E&E Review Team	As defined in Section 1.1.5
E&E Reviews	As defined in Section 1.1.4
Effective	Having an intended or expected effect; the ability to deliver intended service
Efficient	Performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort; the ability to achieve cost savings without compromising safety
Evaluation Framework	The document, titled "Evaluation Framework for the NWOSSC" which supports the E&E Review Team's Assessment; this document is not a public document
Funding Adjustment Formula	As described in Section 1.3.5
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
JK/SK	Junior Kindergarten/Senior Kindergarten
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
KCDSB	Kenora Catholic District School Board
KPDSB	Keewatin-Patricia District School Board

Management Consultants	As defined in Section 1.1.5
Memo	Memorandum 2006: SB13, dated July 11 issued by the Ministry
Ministry	The Ministry of Education of Ontario
MPS	Management Partnership Services Inc., the routing consultant, as defined in Section 1.1.5
MTO	The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario
NWCDSB	Northwestern Catholic District School Board
Operators	Refers to companies that operate school buses, boats or taxis and the individuals who run those companies. In some instances, an Operator may also be a Driver.
Overall Rating	As Defined in Section 3.2 of the Evaluation Framework
Partner Boards, Member Boards or Boards	The school Boards that have participated as full partners or members in the Consortium
Rating	The E&E Assessment score on a scale of High to Low, see Section 1.3.4
Report	The report prepared by the E&E Review Team for each Consortium and/or Board Organization that has undergone an E&E Review (i.e. this document)
Separate Legal Entity	Incorporation

Appendix 2: Financial Review – by School Board

Keewatin-Patricia District School Board

Item	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Allocation[7]	$4,168,713	$4,063,567	$4,144,838	$4,281,618
Expenditure[8]	$3,849,659	$3,509,396	$3,381,280	$3,586,414
Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	$319,054	$554,171	$763,558	$695,204
Total Expenditures paid to the Consortium	$3,849,659	$3,509,396	$3,381,280	$3,586,414
As % of total Expenditures of Board	100%	100%	100%	100%

Kenora Catholic District School Board

Item	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Allocation	$768,644	$777,134	$808,220	$837,315
Expenditure	$808,330	$806,135	$773,573	$812,603
Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	$(39,686)	$(29,001)	34,647	$24,712
Total Expenditures paid to the Consortium	$808,330	$806,135	$773,573	$812,603
As % of total Expenditures of Board	100%	100%	100%	100%

Conseil Scolaire du district catholique des Aurores Boréales

Item	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Allocation	$629,523	$635,231	$686,048	$711,433
Expenditure	$525,595	$548,200	$622,285	$662,730
Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	$103,928	$87,031	$63,763	$48,703
Total Expenditures paid to the Consortium	N/A	N/A	$58,771	$62,628
As % of total Expenditures of Board	N/A	N/A	9.44%	9.45%

Northwestern Catholic District School Board

Item	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Allocation	$994,449	$1,028,055	$1,048,616	$1,083,221
Expenditure	$933,716	$1,002,443	$974,108	$1,013,953
Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	$60,733	$25,612	$74,508	$69,268
Total Expenditures paid to the Consortium	N/A	N/A	$487,054	$506,977
As % of total Expenditures of Board	N/A	N/A	50.00%	50.00%

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[7] Allocation based on Ministry data – includes all grant allocations for transportation (Section 9 00008C, Section 13 00006C, Section 13 00012C)

[8] Expenditure based on Ministry data – taken from Data Form D: 730C (Adjusted expenditures for compliance) – 212C (Other Revenues) + 798C (Capital expenditures funded from operating)

Appendix 3: Document List

1   2008 NWOSSC Capacity Building Report – Final

2   NWOSSC Amended Consortia Plan – June 13

3   Ministry of Education Financial Records

4   First Nations Tuition Agreement Sample

5   RLCCSSB Agreement

6   CSDC Aurores Boreales Agreement

7   KCDSB Agreement

8   NWCDSB Agreement

9   Proof Of Insurance

10   Operational Objectives

11   Transportation Procedures

12   Job Descriptions

13   Probationary Report

14   Staff Training Program Requirements

15   Organization Chart

16   2008-09 Budget Sheet Amounts

17   2009-2010 Transportation Budget

18   Budget Tracking

19   Budgeting Process

20   Sample Billing for Service Purchasing Board

21   2009 Bus Contract Payment Invoices

22   Management Meetings Minutes

23   Kenora Catholic Management Meeting Minutes

24   Bus Operator Contract Negotiations

25   Sample Taxi Contract

26   Sample Bus Operator Contract

27   Operators Contact Information

28   Inventory of School Bus Fleet

29   Maximum Age of Vehicles

30   Parent Transportation Sample

31	Route Audit Procedures
32	Number of Audits Completed
33	Evidence of Record Keeping of driver-company performance
34	Edulog Contract
35	Policies and Procedures for each board
36	Transportation Planning Schedule
37	2009 Summer Planning Checklist
38	Special Needs Transportation Planning
39	Specialized Transportation Request Form
40	Bus Safety Programs Form
41	Accident Reporting Protocol
42	Fog Procedure
43	Co-operative Transportation Guide
44	New arrangement for busing students
45	Transportation Guide – Web Site Information
46	Performance Indicators 2007-08 – initial June 2009
47	Specialized Transportation Procedure
48	Missing or Unaccounted for Student Protocol
49	Specialized Programs Procedure
50	Edulog Implementation Plan
51	Summary Disaster Recovery Plan
52	Edulog Maintenance Schedule

Appendix 4: Common practices

			Elementary	Secondary
Home to School Distance		**JK/SK**	**Gr. 1 - 8**	**GR. 9 - 12**
	Common Practice	0.8 km	1.2 km	3.2 km
Policy -	KPDSB	1	1.0 (Gr 1 - 3) 2.0 (Gr. 4 - 8)	3.2
Policy -	KCDSB		1.0 (Gr. 1 - 3 1.6 (Gr. 4 – 6) 2.0 (Gr. 7 – 8)	3.2
Policy -	NWCDSB	1	1.0 (Gr. 1- 3) 1.5 (Gr. 1-8)	
Policy -	CSDCAB	1	1.0 (Gr. 1- 3) 1.5 (Gr. 1-8)	3.2
Home to Bus Stop Distance				
	Common Practice	0.8 km	1.2 km	3.2 km
Policy -	KPDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	KCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	NWCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	CSDCAB	-	-	-
Arrival Window				
	Common Practice	18	18	25
Policy -	KPDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	KCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	NWCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	CSDCAB	-	-	-
	Approximate guidelines are 15 minutes			
Departure Window				
	Common Practice	16	16	18
Policy -	KPDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	KCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	NWCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	CSDCAB	-	-	-
	Approximate guidelines are 15 minutes			
Earliest Pick Up Time				
	Common Practice	6:30	6:30	6:00
Policy -	KPDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	KCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	NWCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	CSDCAB	-	-	-
	System wide earliest pickup is 6:30			

Latest Drop Off Time				
Common Practice		5:30	5:30	6:00
Policy -	KPDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	KCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	NWCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	CSDCAB	-	-	-
System wide latest drop off is 5:25				
Maximum Ride Time				
Common Practice		75	75	90
Policy -	KPDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	KCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	NWCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	CSDCAB	-	-	-
Average ride time system wide is 51 minutes				
Seated Students Per Vehicle		**JK/SK**	**Gr. 1 - 6**	**GR. 9 - 12**
Common Practice		69	69	52
Policy -	KPDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	KCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	NWCDSB	-	-	-
Policy -	CSDCAB	-	-	-

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