

School District 35 – Langley (*Summary Report – Results of Completed Projects*)

As at: August 22, 2012

Released: 8 December 2010

1st Follow-up: October 2011

Discussed by the Public Accounts Committee: 9 February 2011

Self-assessment conducted by School District 35 - Langley

Comments:

In the 12 months since the Board’s last self-assessment much has been accomplished. A new Board of Education was elected in November 2011, which consists of two new trustees and five incumbents. A new superintendent is in place along with two new assistant superintendents. The Board has been actively engaged in the development of a Strategic Plan for its term and continues to work towards the goals of the District’s Achievement Contract and Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement. The Board has also engaged the community in several ways - consultation meetings on long term planning, partner group meetings and liaison meetings with local governments. Implementing the Recommendations made by the Auditor General in 2010 remains forefront in the Board’s mind. While the Board is pleased with the progress to date, we recognize that there is more to be done and are committed to continuing to work towards full implementation.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED IN PREVIOUS FOLLOW-UP REPORT(S):	SELF-ASSESSED STATUS
Recommendation 3: The Board require senior management to provide it with sufficient, appropriate and regular information.	Fully or substantially implemented
Recommendation 4: The Board require senior management to provide it with sufficient, appropriate and regular information.	Fully or substantially implemented

Outstanding Recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION AND SUMMARY OF PROGRESS	SELF-ASSESSED STATUS
Recommendation 1: Board trustees develop ways to work together to effectively discharge their responsibilities.	Partially implemented

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The newly elected Board is functioning reasonably well, with all trustees continuing to further their own perspective of governance. Having said that there is a perception of a lack of trust among trustees. We have gone back to the standard Chair/Vice-Chair concept for running meetings. Trustees have taken part in BCSTA Pro-D activities in December 2011 and April 2012, at which board governance was a topic. In June the Board took part in a House of Governance review by staff of the OAG, at which the Auditor General was in attendance. A half day governance session is planned for later in August which will be conducted by an experienced and well-respected Board Chair. Further governance sessions are planned along with more Board Orientation sessions.

Recommendations (Cont.)

Recommendation 2: Board trustees ensure that they understand, accept, and address their governance roles and responsibilities. **Partially implemented**

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The Board continues to make progress in implementing this recommendation but more inservice is required to ensure trustees fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Board meetings are functioning well, being managed well by the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Audit Committee continues to function well. The Board is also working on a communications plan in order to improve communication between itself and the community. Meetings with stakeholders and local governments have taken place and more are scheduled.

Recommendation 5: Senior management prepare and put to action a plan that includes responsibilities and timelines to address identified control weaknesses, including those outlined in our detailed management letter, and provide regular updates on progress to the Board. **Partially implemented**

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

Updates on the internal control points raised by the Auditor General in 2010 along with the management letter points from the 2011 and 2010 audits were shared with the Audit Committee in September 2011 and February 2012, with reports going to the Board, both at In-Camera and Regular Meetings. Although progress has been made in several areas, more work is required. Progress during this past year was hampered by staff shortages in the Finance Department but with the hiring of an Assistant Secretary Treasurer this fall the action plan previous developed will be updated and progress on implementing this recommendation will improve. Management continues to employ larger scale control and review procedures in the areas of purchasing and budget to mitigate the risks the District has been exposed to in the past. The board feels there is greater transparency when it comes to discussions on internal controls.

Recommendation 6: The Board ensure that it receives regular updates from senior management and that a strong system of controls is in place, working effectively and mitigating risk to an acceptable level. **Partially implemented**

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The area of internal controls is one which the Board together with Senior Management continues to work to strengthen and enhance. While many improvements have been made to date, and there is a growing feeling of confidence by the Board and community that the appropriate systems and cross checks are in place, there is still some important work to be done. Trustees receive regular updates on the progress that is being made at Planning meetings via the Audit Committee and information is shared publicly at Regular Board meetings. Significant allocation changes were made to the budget this year, and it will be important to continue monitoring this area to ensure that the control systems put into place to support these changes are working well. Receipt of the Auditor General's Management Letter for the 2011-12 year will be carefully reviewed and any recommendations carefully considered.

Recommendations (Cont.)

Recommendation 7: Senior management and the Board move to a longer-term period of at least five years for strategic planning, and that the District’s strategic plan include a link between its educational goals and financial resource planning.

Partially implemented

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The Board has had a long-standing practice of developing 3 year District Strategic Plans which focus on educational programming, facilities, human resources, operations & community engagement and has worked diligently to develop a Strategic Plan for its term. While it remains a 3-year plan there has been a focus on the longer term, particularly in areas of succession planning and facilities. Budget decisions continued to be based on the Board’s priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan. For the next three years, the Board’s priority will be on ensuring that the objectives of the Deficit Elimination Plan are adhered to and educational goals will continue to be guided by the District Strategic Plan and the Achievement Contract. In order to meet the requirements of the Deficit Elimination Plan, a complete review of the current DDM funding allocation system has taken place and a new system for allocating resources has been implemented. The Board recognizes the value of a longer term Strategic Plan. With the significant progress in eliminating the deficit, the Board has begun discussions on the purpose and utilization of a longer term plan with a goal of presenting a formal written document which links educational goals with District resources in ways that enhance educational opportunities for student success and improves equity among our schools.

Recommendation 8: Management provide more regular information to the Board on longer-term strategic and facilities planning and progress, including annual evaluation of its facilities planning and financial management.

Partially implemented

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

Management has provided the Board with updates on longer- term strategic and facilities planning and progress with respect to property disposals, new school construction, the annual facilities grant spending plan, property acquisitions and the status of our school facilities. More work is however required with respect to annual evaluation of facilities planning and financial management, which will be addressed in a more formal way in 2012-2013.

Recommendation 9: The District prepare a 10-year School District Facilities Plan.

Partially implemented

Actions taken, results and/or actions planned

The District has engaged a consultant to work with staff on the development of a long-term facilities plan. The Board has been involved in this process by taking part in the public consultation meetings that have taken place as well as meeting directly with the consultant. The plan will be presented to the Board this fall in time to inform the district’s next five-year capital plan submission. The last phase of this plan will be establishing procedures for annual reviews and update of the plan. At that point the Board would consider this recommendation to be fully or substantially implemented.