

## School District 35 – Langley

As at February 8, 2013

Released: [8 December 2010](#)

First Follow-up: [October 2011](#)

Second Follow-up: [October 2012](#)

Discussed by the Public Accounts Committee: [9 February 2011](#)

### Self-assessment conducted by the Board of School District 35 - Langley

#### Comments:

“In the six months since the Board’s last self-assessment (August 2012) much has been accomplished. The Board of Education continues to work well with the District Leadership Team. The Board has completed the development of a Strategic Plan for its three-year 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. A 10-year facilities plan has been approved and work is progressing on implementing the recommendations of that plan. The Board also is pleased with the progress it has made in the governance area and has recently made changes to the way it conducts its business. Implementing the remaining recommendations made by the Auditor General in 2010, particularly those focused on internal controls, 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 ADDRESSED IN PREVIOUS FOLLOW-UP REPORT(S):	SELF-ASSESSED STATUS
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<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Board require senior management to provide it with sufficient, appropriate and regular information.	Fully or substantially implemented
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<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Board engage in a healthy level of questioning and hold senior management accountable, in a respectful, professional and appropriate manner.	Fully or substantially implemented
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OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF PROGRESS	SELF-ASSESSED STATUS
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<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Board trustees develop ways to work together to effectively discharge their responsibilities.	Fully or substantially implemented
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#### Actions taken, results and/or actions planned:

“The Board of Education is functioning reasonably well and trustees continue to further their individual and collective knowledge and understanding of governance. The perception of a lack of trust among trustees, identified at the House of Governance Session last June, was addressed at a special restorative action session in the fall of 2012. While the session may not have completely resolved the trust issue, it did provide trustees with a greater understanding of issues that exist among them and there has been a demonstrated willingness to move forward with that understanding. Trustees have also started a team-building process based on recognizing each other’s strengths and contributions to the Board (StrenghtsFinder exercise). The Board has also completed three governance sessions with a well-respected Board Chair and trustees now have a much greater awareness of how they should be discharging their responsibilities.”

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

**Actions taken, results and/or actions planned:**

“The Board has made significant progress in implementing this recommendation. As a result of the governance and in-service sessions the Board has had, our Planning Meetings are now conducted as Committees of the Whole and the minutes of those meetings are presented at the monthly Regular Meeting. In addition, the minutes of committees and agencies that trustees are appointed to are now also included in the Regular Meeting agenda under a section of the agenda titled “Committee Reports”. The organization of the agenda for the Regular Meeting has also changed in that there are now separate sections for the Superintendent’s Report and the Secretary Treasurer’s Report, both with separate action and information items.

Regular and Planning meetings of the Board are therefore functioning well, being managed well by the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Audit Committee continues to function well. The Board has also approved 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. A further update on these points as well as the points raised in the 2012 audit were shared verbally with the Audit Committee in December but will be presented more formally at the February 12, 2013 meeting of the committee. Although progress has been made in several areas, more work is still required. Now that the Finance Department has a full complement of staff with the hiring of an Assistant Secretary Treasurer in November the action plan previous developed will be updated and progress on implementing this recommendation will improve. As stated, it is planned that an updated action plan will be reviewed by the Audit Committee on February 12, 2013. In the meantime, 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 the District Leadership Team 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 has been carefully reviewed and the recommendations have been incorporated into the updated action plan referred to above.”

**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:**

“While the Board recognizes the value of a longer term Strategic Plan, it 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 recently completed the development of 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. The Board has received presentations on succession planning initiatives, including a leadership review conducted by an outside consultant, and the long term facilities plan is moving ahead with a focus on a ten year horizon. Budget decisions continued to be based on the Board’s priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan. The Board anticipates that the operating fund deficit will be completely retired by the end of the current school year and priority now will be on ensuring our educational goals will continue to be guided by the District Strategic Plan and the Achievement Contract. The new system for allocating resources to our schools has been implemented and with the elimination of the operating fund deficit the Board will continue 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 continues to provide 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. At the February 5, 2013 Planning Meeting the Board received a presentation on the work being done in the district on energy management, including a review of planned projects for the next few years. More work is however required with respect to annual evaluations of facilities planning and financial management, which will be addressed in a more formal way in the last quarter of 2012-2013 and in the 2013-2014 school year.”

**Recommendation 9:** The District prepare a 10-year School District Facilities Plan. Fully or substantially implemented

**Actions taken, results and/or actions planned:**

“The District approved its 10-year facilities plan at a public meeting on October 19, 2012. The plan contains sixteen recommendations, several of which informed the district’s five-year capital plan submission to the Ministry of Education at the end of October 2012. Staff has developed a process to prioritize the remaining recommendations and the Board approved, at its January 29, 2013 Regular Meeting, moving forward in two specific areas: (1) an assessment of a middle school delivery model in areas of the district that currently do not have that model; and, (2) gathering information on the District’s alternate, career and district programs to determine the most appropriate locations and delivery method for these programs.”

All information has been provided by the organization and has not been audited.