

Governance Structures and Processes

SD 68 (Nanaimo – Ladysmith)

M. J. McAvoy, Consultant

October 26, 2011

Contents

Executive Summary..... 3

Introduction..... 6

Interviews..... 6

Current Committee Structure 7

Findings 7

Committees..... 8

Motions 9

Relationships..... 10

Roles and Responsibilities..... 10

Long term plan 11

Policy 11

Committees and Role of Trustees and Senior Administrators..... 11

Recommendations and Comments 12

Governance Models..... 12

Board Governance Model 14

Recommendation 1..... 14

Board Superintendent/CEO Relationship..... 14

Recommendation 2..... 14

Committee Structure 15

Recommendation 3..... 16

Recommendation 4..... 17

Recommendation 5..... 17

Strategic Directions 18

Recommendation 6..... 18

Conclusion 18

Appendix 1. Board Procedure No. 1001(C)P..... 20

Appendix 2. Board Members and Standing Committee Assignments..... 21

Appendix 3 Organizational Review of SD 68 – March 29 2003..... 22

Appendix 4. Board Procedure No. 1430 - Aboriginal Education 23

Appendix 5. Board Procedure No. 1427P - Facilities Planning Committee 24

Executive Summary

The consultant was commissioned by School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) to review the committee structures as outlined in Board Procedure No. 1001(C)P. During the review an examination of the current governance structures and processes took place including:

- the multitude of committees and related staff time currently in place
- committee membership and partnership involvement
- the structure for reporting committee decisions and the perception of maximum discussion and minimum action
- the level of committee involvement in management decisions and operational matters
- issues of trust between and among trustees, management and partner representatives

In order to examine this matter thoroughly, the consultant conducted twenty-four individual one hour interviews with key individuals in the district. This included all trustees, most senior staff and district administrators and representatives from CUPE, NDTA, DPAC and NSAA. The interviews took place between September 12 and September 15, 2011 at the School District offices.

Currently, the Board has three standing committees, thirteen subcommittees and representation on nine other committees involving community, regional, and provincial agencies. One, two, or three, trustees are assigned to represent the Board on each committee, subcommittee, or community agency. Only these assigned trustees have voting privileges at the committee level. Partner groups have a voice at the committee meetings but not a vote. As a matter of course, motions and recommendations from subcommittees are most often referred to a standing committee. Motions from the standing committee are referred to the Board. Senior members of the district staff attend all standing committee meetings and the majority of subcommittee meetings.

The individuals interviewed said repeatedly that they believed the district had far too many committees and subcommittees which consumed a significant amount of time for both trustees and staff. While partner group representatives appreciated the opportunity for consultation, some believed the time commitment was disproportionate to the value of their input. Others felt they did not receive adequate opportunity to express their opinions. A great deal of frustration stemmed from the fact that many trustees attended standing committee and subcommittee meetings even though they were not formally assigned to do so. This frustration was most pronounced when trustees dominated the discussion at the committee level among themselves and then repeated the same discussion/debate when the issue was referred to a regular Board meeting.

Trustees were reported to spend, on average, 15-20 hours per month involved in Board meetings and committee meetings. This time commitment increased significantly with their necessary involvement in key duties such as setting the district's annual budget or dealing with special issues. Senior staff members spent an inordinate amount of time preparing for meetings, attending meetings and conducting follow up work that arose from the meetings. Conservatively, the time required of senior staff members to service the overall committee work is estimated to be the equivalent of two months time per person. Much of this time must be taken at the expense of their regular leadership and managerial duties in the district.

The Board is seen to be conscientious and deliberate in dealing with issues during their regular meetings. A great deal of effort is made to ensure the final motion accurately and completely reflects the Board's intentions. This is manifested in the substantial number of notice of motions, motions, amendments and procedural wrangling that occurs. While this is commendable on the one hand, it is often viewed by attendees as time consuming disparate

rhetoric. Many of those interviewed suggested the Board should strive for a reasonable balance between procedural correctness and meeting efficiency.

Trustees and staff members alike, consistently reported that the corporate Board was investing an increasing amount of its time and energy in dealing with managerial tasks. Most trustees stated a desire to be more involved in the setting of policy and to leave the implementation itself to their senior management. There was optimism that the recently completed new and revised policies/procedures on the roles and responsibilities for the Board of Education, Board Chair, Trustees, Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer would assist in this regard.

Virtually every person interviewed referred to a history of stressful professional working relationships between trustees and senior staff. Many stated there has been a lack of mutual trust and confidence between the groups for some time. Some trustees reported being wary on occasion of information received from senior staff. Senior staff reported they were often treated as another employee group rather than a partner responsible for advising the Board. Without exception, every person interviewed shared the belief that this was an area in need of serious improvement. There was also unanimous praise for the current positive and respectful professional working relationship between the Human Resources Department and both the unionized and non-unionized employee groups.

A key factor in determining the future directions for SD68 lies in the need for a long term plan which focuses upon addressing the educational needs of students. This plan should be used to guide decision making throughout the district. Those interviewed were anxious for this plan to be developed and most expressed a keen desire to work collaboratively toward this end. The newly appointed Superintendent has accepted this responsibility. There also must be a short term plan developed in order to prioritize the issues which need to be addressed immediately.

The following six recommendations are made with the intent of assisting the district in improving its governance structure and practices.

Recommendation 1

... that the Board adopt a more Policy Model approach to governance in which trustees focus more upon creating enabling policy and less on operational management.

Recommendation 2

... that the Board and Superintendent commit to the development of a mutually supportive professional working relationship and endeavour by discussion and practice to delineate and operationalize their respective roles in policy development and policy implementation.

Recommendation 3

... that the Board consider temporarily (4-6 months) adopting two Committees of the Whole to replace the Education, Business and Human Resources Standing Committees, and the Audit, Policy, Communications, Facilities Planning, and Management Personnel subcommittees.

Recommendation 4

... that where feasible and practical, the Board allow their administrative staff to represent the district on each of the Community LINK Advisory Committee, Anti-Vandalism Committee, Multicultural and Race Relations Committee, and Advisory Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

Recommendation 5

... that the Board consult with the Aboriginal Communities in order to ensure the current Aboriginal - SD 68 Joint Advisory Committee is meeting the needs of both the Aboriginal communities and the Board.

Recommendation 6

... that the short term plan to be developed by the Superintendent be used to review the current status of outstanding Board motions, establish a priority of importance for each and develop a work schedule with timelines for their completion

The Board has recently approved the hiring of a Board Development Consultant to assist with ongoing issues including Board governance, long term planning, district oversight and CEO evaluation. This process is scheduled to commence in December 2011 following the election of a new Board of Education. I commend the Board for taking this initiative and trust that the substance of this report will positively contribute their long term development plans.

There is a great deal of capacity amongst the employees of SD 68. Based upon my interviews, there is a desire to create a new and improved culture in the district which is respectful of employees, fiscally responsible, listens to the needs of all partners, and makes informed decisions on behalf of all students.

I wish to thank all those interviewed for sharing their objective, considerate and discerning observations with me and extend my sincere best wishes to the district as it embarks upon this vital and important journey.

Introduction

In May 2011, the Board of Education in School District 68 passed the following motion:

“...that the Board of Education of School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) invite BCSTA to do a review of our committee structure as outlined in Procedure No. 1001 (C) (P).”

As a result of contact with BCSTA, I was commissioned by School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) to undertake this review. On June 22, 2011, I met with the following individuals who provided me with background information as well as clarification around the purpose of the review:

- Board Chair, Sharon Welch
- Board Vice-Chair, Carol McNamee
- Superintendent, Mike Munro
- Secretary-Treasurer, Phil Turin
- Director of Communication, Donna Reimer
- Executive Assistant, Cathy Kelt

The following concerns emerged from this meeting:

- the multitude of committees and associated staff time in place at the present
- committee membership and partnership involvement
- the structure for reporting committee decisions and the perception of maximum discussion and minimum action
- the level of committee involvement in management decisions and operational matters
- issues of trust between and among trustees, management and partner representatives

These concerns were to be addressed as part of my review as was the request to provide suggestions on how the overall operations of the Board committees could be improved. I also met separately with retiring Superintendent Mr. Mike Munro. He provided me with some historical background about the district and its ongoing operational concerns. The new superintendent was to be announced shortly and arrangements would be made for me to talk with him prior to beginning the review.

In order to gather information effectively, we agreed to conduct personal interviews with trustees, members of district staff, and partner group representatives. Over the summer, as requested by the Secretary-Treasurer, I developed a time line for the review and a template of questions to be asked of each participant. The Secretary-Treasurer's office selected the individuals to be interviewed and the Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer, scheduled individual hourly interviews which I conducted between September 12 and September 15.

Interviews

Interviews included:

- 9 trustees
- Superintendent
- Secretary-Treasurer
- NDTA
- CUPE
- DPAC
- 2 NSAA
- 8 District Administrators (Senior Staff, excluded staff, DASG)

Current Committee Structure

In School District 68, regular Board Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

By policy and in practice, (*Appendix 1*) the district operates with a three-committee system. The three standing committees are the Education Committee, Business Committee, and Human Resources Committee. There are three trustees plus one alternate trustee appointed to each standing committee. Each standing committee has one representative from each of the NDTA, CUPE, NSAA, DASG, DPAC, and the Joint First Nations Advisory Committee.

The current structure also includes thirteen subcommittees. Six subcommittees have three appointed trustees and one alternate trustee, two subcommittees have two appointed trustees and one alternate trustee, and five subcommittees have one appointed trustee and one alternate.

Each committee and subcommittee is chaired by an appointed trustee (*Appendix 2*). On any given committee, the ability to vote is restricted to the appointed trustees while the partner representatives are invited to participate fully in the discussions. Except for the Facilities Planning Committee and Management Personnel Committee the majority of committee and subcommittee meetings are generally held in public, with district administrators providing coordination and serving as resource staff to the committees. The standing committees report committee business and recommendations to the Board.

The general terms of reference for each standing committee include a monthly meeting schedule (2nd, 3rd Wednesday), list of staff and partner attendees, and statement of purpose. It also includes a list of subcommittees, its eligible attendees, and to which standing committee(s) each shall report. Subcommittee meeting dates are determined as needed. In addition, the Board has trustee representation on nine other community, regional, and provincial agencies. Each trustee is assigned to between two and seven committees depending upon personal commitments and workload. On average, each trustee serves on five committees, subcommittees, or agency representation.

The Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, Assistant Superintendents, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer, and Director of Communications attend most standing committee meetings and a majority of the subcommittee meetings. Other district and school administrators attend meetings by request on an as needed basis.

Findings

The following is a summary of the information given to me during the interviews of trustees, senior staff, administrative staff, and representatives from teachers, CUPE, DPAC, and Principals and Vice-Principals. While there were prepared questions, it proved more productive and convenient for individuals to give their perceptions of how the committee governance structure impacted them and how they perceived it to impact the district as a whole. Each person was asked for suggestions to improve the current structures. When appropriate, and if necessary, I asked specific questions in order to improve my understanding and to gain comparative data. As with any summary, it is not possible to capture all thoughts and comments given to me. I have attempted to consolidate the information into a number of themes.

Committees

The overwhelming perception of those interviewed was that there were too many committees taking up an inordinate amount of time. Generally, they did not believe the committees to be effective either in reaching decisions or in making recommendations to the Board. Many believed that the time spent considering, contemplating, and debating the issues at the committee level could be accomplished more proficiently.

It is a common occurrence that trustees, other than those formally appointed, attended committee meetings. While these trustees did not have a vote on the final outcome, they were reportedly actively involved in the debate and discussions. These trustees stated that they voluntarily attended many committee meetings out of personal interest, in order to become more fully aware of the issues, and/or to have an opportunity to provide input. Frustration ensued when the same discussion and debate was repeated at the Board meeting. Frustration turned to exasperation when the Board referred the matter back to the committee for further study and the whole process repeated itself.

Interviewees reported that some subcommittees did not meet regularly or that they often met on topics that were deemed 'superficial'.

The trustees expressed their strong belief in providing an opportunity for partner groups to have a voice in the governance of the district. This involvement has been an integral and valued part of the district processes for some time, and in return, the partner groups have appreciated the opportunity to be consulted and have their opinions and suggestions considered. However, while some participants felt reluctant to express their views fully, others felt their representation was more tokenism than valued. Some felt conflicted by their fiduciary duties to the Board and thus constrained in their ability to comment, while others told me that the presence and involvement of other trustees curtailed their opportunity for full and meaningful involvement.

A significant amount of time is spent by senior staff and district administration in servicing the Board of Education and the various committees. By policy, the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer attend all Standing Committee meetings. The Director of Communications also regularly attends these meetings. The Assistant Superintendents attend the Education Standing Committee and are routinely "on call" for the other Standing Committee meetings. I received information on the number of Board and Standing Committee meetings that took place annually. The following table summarizes this data from 2005/06 to present:

Year	Board Closed/Special	Board Regular/Special	Education	Business	Human Resources Open	Human Resources Closed	Total
2005-06	32	18	10	16	5	5	86
2006-07	25	16	10	18	7	7	83
2007-08	25	16	10	18	7	7	83
2008-09	40	18	8	15	7	8	96
2009-10	24	21	8	15	8	9	85
2010-11	35	22	9	16	4	7	93
2011-12	5	2	-	-	-	-	7

Excluding meetings held this year, senior staff members were required to attend an average of 88 meetings a year over the past six school years. Each meeting conservatively lasts, on average, 2 hours. This means that each member of the senior staff spend approximately 176 hours/year (4.4 weeks) attending Board meetings and Standing Committee meetings. These meetings are scheduled for late afternoon and evenings so a portion of this time occurs in addition to the regular work day. Additional time is required to prepare for the meeting, undertake projects, research information, complete tasks, and procedural follow up from the meetings. While this amount of time varies, I was told it is approximately equal to the time spent at the meetings. This means that each senior district official spends in excess of two months of time devoted to servicing the Board and Standing Committees.

Both the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer also attend four or five subcommittees meetings. There is at least one district administrator on every subcommittee and each administrator is assigned to three or four different subcommittees. While the amount of time spent by each on subcommittee work has not been estimated, it is patently obvious that there is a significant amount of administrative time spent preparing for meetings, attending meetings and servicing committees.

Trustees are also directly involved in all these meetings and most are involved in multiple committees or subcommittees. When asked how much time they spent at Board or committee meetings, they estimated between 15 – 20 hours per month. This varied according the time of year and was greater during the annual budget process. Clearly it is necessary to have meetings and it is necessary to have senior district administrators attend in order to provide their expertise and advice to these meetings. However, the number of meetings and time required seems to be excessive.

Motions

The Board members are very active and do a substantial amount of work in their meetings. This work is reflected in the number of motions to authorize and direct administrative action, manage personnel issues, write correspondence, request reports, make referrals to committees, etc. Between November 2010 and June 2011, excluding routine procedural motions, 274 motions were recorded during the regular Board meetings. Over the same period 69 motions were recorded during the special or closed meetings. It is evident that the trustees take their job seriously and spend considerable time discussing and debating issues in order to assure the final motion reflects the Board's intent. However, the number of motions, amendments, etc., is excessive and observers indicate this is a major contributor to lengthy meeting times. Trustees are encouraged to find a reasonable balance between procedural correctness and overall meeting efficiency. The recording and tracking of motions requires a significant amount of clerical support time which could be better used to support pressing managerial functions and initiatives.

A cursory analysis of the status of these motions reveals that action is either pending or in progress on approximately 44 motions. Of these, 26 motions pertain to proposed policy changes. Many of the "in progress" items are longer term projects, necessarily requiring a significant amount of work by staff before being completed.

Relationships

Every person interviewed made reference to the existing working relationship among trustees and between trustees and senior staff. In the main, trustees and senior staff were seen to conduct the Board business in a respectful and professional manner. However, trustees, staff and partner group representatives report instances of impolite, rude, or demeaning verbal exchanges between trustees during public meetings. Some trustees reported a reluctance to trust the motives of fellow trustees. Others implied that they had questioned the accuracy or thoroughness of the information provided by their senior administrators. In fact, they believe that information was occasionally skewed to support the outcomes desired by senior staff. They believed that this could easily be a result of inadequate study or the result of inherent administrative bias and not often purposeful. For this reason, some trustees believed staff recommendations had to be carefully scrutinized. Furthermore, some of the trustees felt that, in the past, senior administration did not always treat all trustees the same and that the amount and quality of information they received was sometimes dependent on their relationship with specific senior administrators.

Certain senior staff reported that they felt mistrusted and therefore tended to be somewhat guarded and cautious when dealing with trustees. In general, administrative staff do not feel their work and efforts are valued or understood by the corporate Board. They feel as if they are treated as another employee group as opposed to a valued and contributing member of the Board's team. Partner group representatives perceived a "tense" sometimes adversarial working relationship between administrative staff and the trustees. Trustees and administration are, at times, suspicious of one another's motives and this interferes with open honest communication.

The relationship between the district and its unions was reported to be very good and improving. There was universal praise for the work of the Human Resources Department and its current Acting Director. Those interviewed felt they had been treated with dignity and respect. There was open, honest, and frank communication and a mutual trust between the Acting Human Resources Director and union representatives. The representatives from school administrators report confidence in the advice received from this department and admire the patient and consistent fairness demonstrated to all.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board and senior administration have identified the need to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities. Most trustees interviewed believe the role of the corporate Board is to govern through establishing policy and to allow their senior administration to put policy into action through management practices. They report that over time and for various reasons the Board's role has strayed too much into the management area. New and revised policies/procedures on the roles and responsibilities for the Board of Education, Board Chair, Trustees, Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer have recently been completed and implemented.

Long term plan

Those interviewed repeatedly expressed a need and desire for a long term plan to guide decision-making across the district. In particular, many of those interviewed referred to the need to refocus decision-making using an educational lens of what is best to help students succeed socially, emotionally, and academically. The Education Standing Committee enjoys prominence in that it focuses upon the positive accomplishments of students, teachers, and schools. People liked attending these meetings. They valued discussion around current educational issues and the upcoming changes that reflect the provincial personalized learning agenda. Many expressed the need and ambition to work collaboratively to improve overall student achievement results in the district.

Policy

Those interviewed indicated that the District Policies and Procedures need to be revisited and updated. As previously mentioned, the Policy subcommittee has an onerous task of dealing with a backlog of 26 proposed policy changes. Experienced trustees and senior administrators believe there are many more policies and procedures that need to be amended, updated or eliminated in order to guide current practice.

Committees and Role of Trustees and Senior Administrators

The following commentary by the late Mr. Jack Fleming, Deputy Minister of Education, Superintendent of Schools, and Educational consultant provides an overview of the purpose of Board committees and the respective roles of trustees and senior administrators.¹

Ideally the purpose of Board committees (Standing or otherwise) is to ensure the Board business is given due consideration in a thorough and comprehensive manner. It provides an opportunity for consultation on various issues, communicating both ways between interested parties or the public, advising the Board whenever consensus or varying positions are held on any issue, ensuring that recommendations are well researched, well-prepared and ready for whole Board discussion and decision. These are time consuming processes and therefore the kinds of issues that can be effectively dealt with by committees are those that are raised far in advance of the time-line for Board decision-making and that are substantial enough that they require the full consideration that reference to a committee provides. Other issues should be managed through a protocol, practice, or procedure that is well understood spelling out how issues should be raised, to whom, how they will be handled, how decisions will be made and how the decisions will be communicated to those affected by them.

The role of the trustees on the committee is to provide the Committee with requests from the Board for the consideration of issues, to consult broadly with committee or community members, to hear issues, to understand the range of views that are expressed and to take this information and recommendation

¹ SD 79 (Cowichan Valley) Final Report from the Review of Policy 1100: Standing Committees: Membership and Mandate. February 2006.

to the Board for its consideration. The participation of trustees in decisions of the committee can be problematic in that trustee decision making properly takes place at the Board table not in committee. If a quorum of trustees is present, for whatever purpose, during the committee process, it can promote the opinion that a de-facto decision has already been made.

The role of senior administrators in the decision-making is limited. Administrative staff can make administrative decisions in areas that have been formally delegated to them by the Board. The Board will want to use the expertise and experience of staff when they are considering a decision on any issue. Staff can offer valuable advice to the Board based upon their experience, various laws, practices in the district, precedents, or policy. Senior administrators must remain as neutral as possible on issues because they are obligated to support and implement Board decisions, whether they have recommended them or agreed with them or not. Senior administrators must be seen as open to communications and advice from all parties in the district. One of their important responsibilities is to ensure that all points of view are considered in Board deliberations on any issue. Almost any system of committees will work if all parties are comfortable with the arrangement and the decision-making power of the Board is not impaired.

Recommendations and Comments

In SD 68 it is apparent that the comfort level with the current governance structure and practices is lacking.

There are many governance models referenced in the literature. Each model has inherent advantages and disadvantages. There is no one "best" model and each governing body must find a method of governing which best meets their unique needs and level of comfort.

Governance Models

On one end of the continuum there is the **Management Team Model**. This model is characterized by high degrees of involvement by the Board members in the operational and administrative activities of the organization. In professionally managed organizations this takes the form of highly directive supervision of the CEO and staff at all levels of the organization. Structurally, there may be many committees and subcommittees. Decision making extends to fine details about programs, services, and administrative practices. In this model, board members are usually selected for their knowledge and experience in a specific field, such as business or accounting, etc. Individually or by committee, Board members take on governance, management, and operational tasks. The principles of this model correspond with ideas of team management and democratic structures in the workplace. This model is most effective where there is no paid staff and for all-volunteer organizations. It has proven to be less well suited to organizations that already have professional management and full-time employees. The predominant shortcoming of this model is that all too frequently, it degenerates into a micro-management model where Board members are reluctant to delegate authority, believing that their role is to make operational decisions, leaving the implementation to the paid staff. The result is invariably a lack of consistency in decisions, dissatisfied Board members, resentful staff and lack of attention or cohesiveness to planning and accountability.

On the other end of the continuum is the **Policy Board Model** (Carver Model). Under this model the job of the Board is to establish guiding principles and policies for the organization, delegate responsibility and authority to those responsible for enacting the principles and policies, monitor compliance with guiding principles and policies and ensure that staff and Board alike are accountable for their performance. Boards operating under this model are characterized by a high level of trust and confidence in the CEO. There are relatively few standing committees resulting in more meetings of the Board as a whole. Board development is given a high priority to ensure that new members are able to function effectively. Board members are recruited for their demonstrated commitment to the values and mission of the organization. This model is deceptively easy to understand but difficult to implement in practice.

A key factor in determining how a Board operates lies in the degree of trust and confidence they have in the CEO and senior administrative staff. The lower the trust and confidence, the more Board members involve themselves in the operational aspects of management. The greater the trust and confidence in the CEO and senior administrative staff, the more Board members focus on establishing enabling guiding policies and principles which maximize the expertise of the CEO to lead and manage the organization.

The vast majority of trustees interviewed in SD 68 expressed a desire to move toward operating under the Policy Board model end of the continuum and to become less involved in the managerial aspects of the organization. This will not be an easy transition as there appears to be a strong historical culture in which trustees have involved themselves in "playing with the trains". The transition to micromanagement was a slippery slope and once started it can be difficult to know where to stop. It is now more difficult for trustees to take a step back, trust the senior staff, and evaluate them based upon outcomes. Likewise it is difficult for senior staff to accept this liberty to lead, initiate actions and to be more accountable for their decisions while being confident in the Board's support. Often the initial temptation is to write prescriptive policy which clearly delineates what is "governance" and what is "management". In practice, the line between the two is blurred and unclear. It is personnel dependent, situational dependent and in a constant state of flux, making it virtually impossible to define.

A crucial means of moving forward is to have a **leadership team** that involves both policymakers (trustees), and policy implementers (CEO and senior staff). Framed by principled enabling policy, this team works towards achieving common goals in a collaborative, mutually supportive and professional manner. There must be on-going, open, frank, respectful dialogue between the trustees and the superintendent. Over time this relationship grows and evolves into mutual trust.

In 2003, Dr. Lee Southern, Executive Director of the BCSTA, supported by Dr. Elmer Froese, former superintendent, and Mr. Bob Ingram former secretary treasurer, conducted an organizational review in SD 68 (*Appendix 3*). While the specific focus may have been different, some of the findings at that time were the same as those found in this review. These included a lack of trust, too many committees (22), micromanagement by trustees, too much staff time needed to service committees and the need for employees to feel valued and respected. It is most probable that the Board and administration of the day paid attention to the recommendations and attempted to implement them. However, eight years later, many of the same concerns have resurfaced.

To paraphrase Albert Einstein, it is irrational to continue doing the same thing and expect different outcomes.

Board Governance Model

Recommendation 1

... that the Board adopt a more Policy Model approach to governance in which trustees focus more upon creating enabling policy and less on operational management.

Comment

SD 68 is in a good position to take positive steps toward operating more as a Policy Model oriented Board. There is a newly appointed Superintendent/CEO and the Board has recently approved the hiring of an Associate Superintendent of Human Resources and a Manager of Labour Relations to address recommendations in the BCPSEA Human Resources Report. These positions are expected to be filled in the immediate future.

There is respected expertise among the other senior administrators. Everyone interviewed expressed a common desire to do things better, differently, and more cooperatively. The new Superintendent has made it clear that his prime impetus will be to improve the social, emotional and educational development of each student and all decisions will be scrutinized with this overarching focus. The Board has an ethical, moral, and practical responsibility to help the new superintendent they have chosen to be successful. These factors can converge and become the starting point for a new organizational structure with effective, efficient governance and sound focused consistent management. The Board must implement some significant changes in order to develop a new culture. The students in SD 68 deserve no less. In the initial stages it will require a leap of faith.

The Board and senior management are encouraged to undertake on-going Board development to ensure the new trustees and senior staff understand the principles of the Policy Model construct and their respective roles within it.

Board Superintendent/CEO Relationship

The development of a trusting relationship between the Board and the Superintendent is paramount for the effective operation of the school district.

Recommendation 2

... that the Board and Superintendent commit to the development of a mutually supportive professional working relationship and endeavour by discussion and practice to delineate and operationalize their respective roles in policy development and policy implementation.

Comment

The Board and superintendent should consider establishing a regular time to meet with the intent of openly and candidly discussing how things are going in the district. This should include what is working well, what is not working well and why, and what is being done or can be done to improve the situation. It should include sharing "heads up" issues which may impact on the trustees or the superintendent. This will minimize the opportunity for unpleasant surprises and will serve to have everyone in the same communication loop. The

BCSTA has a Performance Planning Review program which may provide a structure for these meetings if necessary.

The Board has recently developed a new 'roles and responsibilities' policy. I respectfully suggest that the Board and superintendent review this policy together. Jointly they can determine if this policy is sufficiently enabling to allow the superintendent the latitude required to implement new initiatives or changes in keeping with the desire to govern under a more policy model orientation.

Committee Structure

Some trustees are suspicious of other trustees' motives. A quorum of trustees attends most Standing Committee meetings. In the past, senior staff did not feel their advice was always believed or valued. Because most trustees are present at each committee meeting, the need for formal communication from that same committee back to the Board is redundant. Trustee(s) who were not present often believe they receive a superficial briefing which increases their frustration and anxiety. They believe that the trustees who attended the committee meetings have either already made the decision or have prepared their arguments for the debates. This can manifest itself in unpleasant comments, poor behaviour, and/or delays in reaching a decision. Similar patterns occur at the more high profile subcommittees only compounded as the communication process from subcommittee to Standing Committee to Board becomes more complex. Partner groups report that this venue does not always offer them the best opportunity to express their views. The process is sometimes cynically viewed as a method of stalling or delaying decisions.

The time required of both trustees and senior staff to perpetuate this committee structure is more than onerous. The impact of senior staff spending this amount of time in servicing committees cascades negatively throughout the district. It lessens their ability to lead, to coordinate the work and efforts of their departments, to ensure on-going communication with and between departments, to motivate and direct employees, and to make certain that appropriate levels of accountability are maintained. Lacking the big picture, employees within departments become more insular and over time lose sight of how their department contributes to overall objectives of the district. Departments become silos of expertise which operate independently and compete among themselves for available resources. Cooperation between departments decreases and one department blames the other when things go wrong. Employees become disillusioned, cynical, and dissatisfied. The end result is that students do not receive the high quality of service they deserve and achievement levels drop.

The current structure and operation of Standing Committees and subcommittees does not offer the most efficient nor effective process to deal with many of the current issues. The following recommendations are made with the intent of a trial implementation period of 4-6 months. This will allow time to address the immediate concerns of time, micromanagement, trust, efficiency, and effectiveness. It will also provide an impetus to expedite decisions and initiate action. After a trial period the Board should reconsider their governance structures in light of the experiences gained from these interim measures. In the future they should consider the potential for using ad-hoc committees or task forces to deal with emerging issues.

Following these recommendations may require a small leap of faith.

Recommendation 3

... that the Board consider temporarily (4-6 months) adopting two Committees of the Whole to replace the Education, Business and Human Resources Standing Committees, and the Audit, Policy, Communications, Facilities Planning, and Management Personnel subcommittees.

The Education Committee of the Whole would deal with matters pertaining to the educational programs. The Business Committee of the Whole would deal with support services functions as before but also include the Audit and Facilities Planning subcommittees. One month the Committee of the Whole would meet to discuss educational matters and the next month the Committee of the Whole would meet to discuss business matters. During the budget process the Business Committee of the Whole would be required to meet on a more regular basis. The matters dealt with by the Human Resources Standing Committee and the Management Personnel Committee would become agenda items in the closed and/or regular Board Meetings. Regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings would continue as planned.

Policy issues would be dealt with at the call of the Superintendent/CEO and the appropriate representation to work on policy issues from Board, staff members and others would be determined by the nature of the issue. In lieu of what has been stated earlier in this report regarding outstanding policy issues, some consideration should be given to utilizing outside assistance to eliminate the backlog.

Comment

This recommendation will eliminate one scheduled Standing Committee meeting per month and potentially four or five subcommittee meetings. In practice, most trustees already attend the Business and Education Standing Committees and the Audit, Facilities Planning, and Management Personnel Subcommittees so the impact on their work load should be nominal.

Done judiciously, this overall change will ensure that all trustees have the same information at the same time on key issues within the district, decrease the amount of staff time required to attend meetings, minimize repetitive debates, afford full and transparent practices and reduce the time needed for a final decision.

At first glance it may appear the work load of the Committee of the Whole will be onerous and at first that may be so. It will be necessary for the Committee of the Whole to streamline the conduct of its business to ensure it is completed in an efficient and effective manner. It will be necessary to scrutinize the items before placing them on the agenda and then building a purposeful timed agenda of these significant items, and sticking to it. The meeting chair can facilitate this by ensuring participants are aware of and adhere to the processes outline in **Procedure No. 1001)(P)** (Appendix 1), providing and enforcing stringent procedural rules for the meeting such as maintaining and following a speaker list, having people speak once to items, using Robert's Rules of Order judiciously, and discouraging rambling or extraneous discourse. Many of those interviewed recommended a more structured and focussed meeting format.

During the interviews, a suggestion was put forward that the Board consider exploring the use of technology during meetings to follow agendas and track motions. This could also be used to assist in more publically monitoring the time spent on each agenda item.

The temporary nature of changing practice would allow the Board the opportunity to assess the impact of this change upon them and upon the system while providing a concrete experiential basis for a more permanent organizational re-structuring in the future.

Recommendation 4

... that where feasible and practical, the Board allow their administrative staff to represent the district on each of the Community LINK Advisory Committee, Anti-Vandalism Committee, Multicultural and Race Relations Committee, and Advisory Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

Comment

These valued and important committees either deal with operational/management issues or are in the process of consultation with community members and partner groups with the intent of developing recommendations for the Board. The knowledge and expertise of administrative staff can represent the district effectively.

Using the philosophy of a policy oriented Board, trustee involvement should not be necessary for the committees to fulfill their mandates. However, any change in practice here should take into account the impact this may have on the current state of affairs, perceptions, and relationships among the partner group representatives within the committees. The superintendent can provide the Board with regular status reports on the progress of each of these committees and a full report with recommendations can be provided to the Board at the appropriate time.

The Teacher-Trustee Liaison Committee, Board-NDTA Joint Pro D Committee, and the Board-CUPE Liaison Committees are contractual commitments and thus Board representation should be maintained accordingly.

Recommendation 5

... that the Board consult with the Aboriginal Communities in order to ensure the current Aboriginal -SD 68 Joint Advisory Committee is meeting the needs of both the Aboriginal communities and the Board.

Comment

The current ***Aboriginal Education Procedure No. 1430 (Appendix 4)*** states that meetings between the Board and the Aboriginal Communities should occur a minimum of four times per year. The district has specific educational objectives focused upon improving the academic achievement and graduation rates of aboriginal students. The input and cooperation from the Aboriginal communities is a vital in order to accomplish this. If not already in progress, the district should ensure its' committee structures and processes continue to be respectful of the cultures, protocols, and traditions of the aboriginal communities and provide maximum opportunities for their meaningful involvement.

Strategic Directions

One of the Superintendent's objectives from our initial meeting was to develop short term directions and a long term strategic plan which first and foremost centres on the teaching and learning of students. There are 44 motions from the Board which are either in progress or not started. The status of each motion needs to be identified, reviewed, and prioritized as to its importance. The work necessary needs to be planned, scheduled, and delegated to staff.

Recommendation 6

... that the short term plan to be developed by the Superintendent be used to review the current status of outstanding Board motions, establish a priority of importance for each and develop a work schedule with timelines for their completion.

Comment

In addition, and depending upon the course of action taken, the Board may wish to temporarily amend **Procedure No. 1001(C)(P) Board Meeting-Board Standing Committee** or adopt some interim policy measures to clarify this change and to guide practice. This should include a review and/or revision of **Procedure No. 1427 Facilities Planning Committee (Appendix 5)** to ensure it conforms to current or proposed practices.

Conclusion

I sincerely hope these observations, comments, and recommendations will be of assistance to the district as it takes this opportunity to review its governance structures and practices. The recommendations cited here are based upon the suggestions provided to me during the interviews, upon my knowledge of governance, personal experience, and my background as a superintendent. It is clear that the recommendations require the district leadership, both trustees and senior administrators, to make a substantial shift in philosophy and practice from what has been standard operating procedure for some time. It is one thing to talk about change and it is quite another to implement that change in a manner that institutionalizes it firmly into the culture.

Change is difficult. As with any substantive new initiative there will undoubtedly be critics, doubters, and nay-sayers. Initially you must expect some misunderstandings, confusion, and even disappointment. There will be an "implementation dip" during which time individuals will be tempted to give it up and return to previous practices. I urge the Board to be resolute and stay the philosophical course. Research indicates that the Boards of most high performing public or private organizations use the Policy Model philosophy to guide their operations. Research also indicates that most low performing organizations are the result of poor leadership, inefficient use of expertise, lack of clear measurable goals, and micromanagement by superiors.

With the recent Board approval on September 28, 2011 of the hiring of a Board Development Consultant to assist with ongoing issues including Board governance, long term planning, district oversight and CEO assessment, I hope that the information and recommendations in this report will be

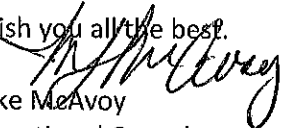
of assistance either immediately or in the near future and be a positive contribution to the on-going Board Development process. I applaud the Board's willingness to take on this important development scheduled to begin in December 2011 after the election of a new Board of Education.

I believe the district to be rich in staff capacity. There is widespread desire for something better. There are extremely high if not unreasonably high expectations of the new superintendent. There is no silver bullet here and no one person, no matter how talented, can do this alone. It will require hard work, cooperation, and teamwork. There is a window of opportunity to collectively pull together to implement a new, improved, and desired culture in SD 68. A culture that is respectful and appreciative of all employees, fiscally responsible and creative, listens to the needs of all partners and makes wise and sensible decisions in order to best meet the needs of all students in SD 68.

Finally, I wish to thank all the participants to this review for their candid, thoughtful and insightful comments. I particularly thank the Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer for scheduling the interviews and the Board office staff for their warm and kind hospitality.

I am confident that by working together under the leadership of the Superintendent/CEO and with the support of the Board, the district will find the right balance of governance structures and practices that will be provide the best possible educational services to all students.

I wish you all the best.


Mike McAvoy
Educational Consultant
MJM Consulting Ltd.

Appendix 1. Board Procedure No. 1001(C)P

SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 (NANAIMO-LADYSMITH)



PROCEDURE NO. 1001(C)P

BOARD MEETINGS – BOARD STANDING COMMITTEE

The Board shall operate on a three-committee system. Standing Committees shall consider items of Board business or potential Board business, and make recommendations to the Board.

When a report arises from the Joint Trustee/Teacher Liaison Committee (TTLC) or the Joint CUPE/Trustee Liaison Committee and has recommendations directed to the Board for consideration, a Special Open or Special Closed meeting of the appropriate Standing Committee will be called. All Trustees attend and vote at Special Standing Committee Meetings.

A recommendation from the Joint Teacher/Trustee Liaison Committee (TTLC) related to Detached Duty will be placed on a Closed Board Agenda.

1. Education Committee

Shall deal with items related to educational programs and services.

Sub Committees that report through the Education Committee are:

- Multicultural & Race Relations Committee
- Aboriginal – School District 68 Joint Advisory Committee
- Policy Committee
- Community LINK
- BCSTA Provincial Council
- Professional Development Joint Committee
- Trustee/Teacher Liaison Committee
- Board/CUPE Liaison Committee

2. Business Committee

Shall deal with items related to support service functions.

Sub Committees that report through the Business Committee are:

- Facilities Planning Committee
- Policy Committee
- Community LINK
- Social Planning Advisory Committee – City of Nanaimo

SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 (NANAIMO-LADYSMITH)



PROCEDURE NO. 1001(C)P

- Trustee/Teacher Liaison Committee
- Board/CUPE Liaison Committee
- Anti-Vandalism Committee

3. Human Resources Committee

Shall deal with items related to human resources management

Sub Committees that report through the Human Resources Committee are:

- Trustee/Teacher Liaison Committee
- Board/CUPE Liaison Committee
- Management Personnel Committee
- Policy Committee
- Community LINK
- BCPSEA Representative Council

A. Group Representation

The NDTA, CUPE - Local 606, NSAA, DASG, District Parent Advisory Committee (DPAC), and Joint First Nations Advisory Committee, shall be invited to name one (1) representative to open meetings of the Education, Business and Human Resources Committees as an Advisory Resource. Such representatives may sit as Committee members with "Voice but no Vote". Such representatives may attend Closed Committee Meetings when specifically invited to do so.

B. Order of Business for Standing Committees

- a. Call to Order
- b. Approval of Minutes
- c. Presentations
- d. Correspondence
- e. Sub Committee Reports
- f. Unfinished Business
- g. New Business
- h. Question Period
- i. Adjournment



C. Moving a Motion

Motions at Regular Standing Committee Meetings and at Board Sub-Committee Meetings do not require a seconder. Motions at a Special Standing Committee Meeting require a seconder.

D. Additions to the Agenda of a Regular/Special Standing Committee Meeting

Additions to the Agenda of a Regular/Special Standing Committee meeting may only be accepted by unanimous consent of the Committee, and only if the item is deemed emergent. If the item is not urgent, the topic will be placed on the Agenda of the Agenda Setting Committee.

E. Presentations to Standing Committees

While the Standing Committees are primarily business meetings the committees welcome public participation at the committee meetings. To facilitate public participation a limited amount of time will be made available on the agenda of standing committee meetings to allow individuals or delegations to make presentations to the committee. Ten (10) minutes will be made available on the appropriate agenda

F. Access to the Committee – Presentations/Delegations

- a. Individuals or groups making a presentation to a committee must arrange in advance of the meeting to be included on the agenda. Individuals or groups wishing to make a presentation to a standing committee must submit a request in writing to the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer by 4:00 p.m. of the Monday of the week preceding the applicable standing committee meeting.
- b. The identity of an individual presenter, the identity of the spokesperson for a group presentation and the topic of the presentation to the standing committee must be included with all written requests to make a presentation to the applicable standing committee.
- c. Individuals or groups making a presentation to a standing committee may do

SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 (NANAIMO-LADYSMITH)



PROCEDURE NO. 1001(C)P

so in writing although a written brief is not required.

- d. The Office of the Secretary-Treasurer will confirm either by telephone or in writing that the individual or delegation has been included on the agenda of a particular standing committee meeting, five days preceding that standing committee meeting.
- e. A presentation to a standing committee by an individual or a delegation will be limited to TEN (10) MINUTES duration, with a brief session of questions of clarification or questions by the committee members at the conclusion of the presentation.
- f. Delegation Presentations:

To ensure the best possible reception of a presentation by a standing committee, delegations are requested to:

- Appoint a spokesperson
- Arrive in adequate time for the meeting
- Maintain a quiet, orderly manner
- Avoid repeating verbatim the brief, especially if it is already before the committee in writing
- Permit the spokesperson to respond to questions from trustees.

Once the presentation is completed and the standing committee has had an opportunity for questions, it is in order for the delegation to remain or leave the meeting.

- g. After the presentation and questions of clarification have been completed the item may be referred to the current agenda under "New Business" upon a majority vote of the committee.
- h. Decisions on presentations to the standing committee will not normally be made at the meeting at which a presentation is heard, as the standing committee may require additional information or time for study and discussion. As an item under "New Business" the committee may either:

SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 (NANAIMO-LADYSMITH)



PROCEDURE NO. 1001(C)P

- Refer the item to a future standing committee meeting with a report
 - Refer the item to staff for investigation and a report
 - Refer the item to a Regular Board Meeting or Special Board Meeting
 - Consider the matter as an emergent item and deliberate the matter
- i. It is the prerogative of a standing committee to decide the course of action to be taken on items presented. The standing committee reserves the right to delay consideration of a presentation from one meeting to the next or subsequent meetings.
- j. Individuals or spokesperson of delegations will be informed by the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer of any decisions/action taken by the standing committee on their presentation to the standing committee.
- k. The Office of the Secretary-Treasurer will advise all individuals or groups wishing to make a presentation to a standing committee that a copy of this procedure is available upon request.

G. Rules Governing the Question Period at Standing Committee Meetings

- a. A question period of no more than ten (10) minutes duration shall be set on the agenda of each standing committee meeting. The standing committee may, by a majority vote, extend the Question Period beyond the allotted duration.
- b. The question period is intended to enable the public to obtain clarifying information regarding a current agenda item.
- c. The question period is not to be used as a political forum, or for furthering presentations by delegations, or to deal with matters that should properly be dealt with through other channels.
- d. Questions or inquiries which deal with or reflect upon the personal or professional attributes of Trustees or District Personnel will not be recognized.
- e. Persons directing questions to the standing committee shall do so in writing on the form provided, including their name and address. Each individual shall be limited to one question and follow up questions on the response to that question.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 (NANAIMO-LADYSMITH)



PROCEDURE NO. 1001(C)P

- f. The standing committee chairperson shall rule on any questions which is placed, as to whether the answer will be either verbal or written.
- g. No one shall ask the same question at any one meeting when the standing committee chairperson rules that the question has been answered.
- h. The standing committee chairperson shall rule on when a question has been given sufficient time and ask that the next question be a placed.
- i. Should a question be asked on topic where the standing committee will not have, and cannot be expected to have, information necessary to respond appropriately, a reply will be given at the next regular applicable standing committee meeting, or a written response will be provided as soon as possible.
- j. Any answer to a question may be given by an officer of the Board, only after that officer has received leave of the chairman to answer the questions and if the officer of the Board is able to respond.

A Standing Committee may schedule Closed Committee Meetings to consider topics upon which recommendations may be made to Closed Board Meetings.

Amalgamated: 1993.11.10
Amended: 1997.10.09
Amended: 1999.05.26
Amended: 2000.11.22
Amended: 2002.05.22
Housekeeping: 2006.01.17
Amended: 2007.03.28
Amended: 2010.05.26

Appendix 2. Board Members and Standing Committee Assignments



BOARD MEMBERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

December 2010 – November 2011 *(Revised May 16/2011)*

Board of School Trustees

Chair	Sharon Welch
Vice-Chair	Carol McNamee
Trustee	Donna Allen
Trustee	Nelson Allen
Trustee	Andrea Bonkowski
Trustee	Jamie Brennan
Trustee	Ron Dale
Trustee	David Murchie
Trustee	Dot Neary

Education Committee

Chair	Jamie Brennan
Member	Ron Dale
Member	Sharon Welch
<i>Alternate</i>	<i>Andrea Bonkowski</i>

Human Resources Committee

Chair	Dot Neary
Member	Nelson Allen
Member	Andrea Bonkowski
<i>Alternate</i>	<i>Ron Dale</i>

Business Committee

Chair	David Murchie
Member	Donna Allen
Member	Carol McNamee
<i>Alternate</i>	<i>Dot Neary</i>

SUB-COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
December 2010 – November 2011

Audit Committee

Trustees: Dot Neary
Jamie Brennan
David Murchie
Alternate: Nelson Allen

Facilities Planning Committee

Trustees: Nelson Allen
Jamie Brennan
Carol McNamee
Alternate: David Murchie

Management Personnel Committee

Trustees: Ron Dale
Nelson Allen
Dot Neary
Alternate:

Aboriginal – School District 68 Joint Advisory Committee

Trustees: Ron Dale
Jamie Brennan
David Murchie
Alternate: Carol McNamee

Policy Committee

Trustees: Sharon Welch
David Murchie
Dot Neary
Alternate: Nelson Allen

CommunityLINK Advisory Committee

Trustee: Donna Allen
Alternate: Dot Neary

Board-NDTA Joint Pro D Committee

Trustee: Donna Allen
Alternate:

Teacher-Trustee Liaison Committee

Trustees: Carol McNamee
Jamie Brennan
Alternate:

Board-CUPE Liaison Committee

Trustees: Carol McNamee
Ron Dale
Donna Allen

Alternate:

Anti-Vandalism Committee

Trustees: Sharon Welch
Jamie Brennan

Alternate: Donna Allen

Communications Advisory Committee

Trustee: Dot Neary

Alternate: Ron Dale

Multicultural and Race Relations Committee

Trustee: Donna Allen

Alternate:

Advisory Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Trustee: Donna Allen

Alternate: Carol McNamee

OTHER AGENCIES December 2010 – November 2011

BCPSEA Representative Council

Trustee: Nelson Allen

Alternate: Jamie Brennan

Vancouver Island Labour Relations Board

Trustee: Nelson Allen

Alternate: Jamie Brennan

BCSTA Provincial Councillor

Trustee: Andrea Bonkowski

Alternate: Donna Allen

District Parents' Advisory Council - DPAC

Trustee: Sharon Welch

Alternate: Dot Neary

Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation

Sharon Welch, (Chair, Ex-Officio)

Vancouver Island School Trustee Association – VISTA

Trustee: Ron Dale
Alternate:

Literacy Nanaimo

Trustee: Dot Neary
Alternate: Ron Dale

Chamber of Commerce -

Ladysmith – Trustee Dale and Trustee Neary
Gabriola – Trustee McNamee
Nanaimo – Trustee Welch

Social Planning Advisory Committee – City of Nanaimo

Trustee: Sharon Welch
Alternate: David Murchie

Appendix 3 Organizational Review of SD 68 – March 29 2003.

**Organizational Review
of
School District No. 68 – Nanaimo Ladysmith**

Conducted for

**The Board of School Trustees
and
The Chief Executive Officer**

The BC School Trustees Association

**Executive Director
Dr. Lee Southern**

Supported by

**Consultants:
Dr. Elmer Froese
Mr. Bob Ingram**

March 29, 2003

A. OVERVIEW

School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) is at a crucial confluence of events. Recent years have seen numerous changes in senior district administration, a number of emotionally charged public controversies, and changes in elected representation at both the provincial and local level.

The Ministry of Education has implemented major policy changes including strident accountability measures and significant funding constraints. The resultant fiscal, public and professional pressures focused upon the Board and its officials are daunting.

A constellation of publics including parents, students and community groups express high expectations and seek improved achievement of students. Similarly "stakeholders" and organized employee groups demand involvement and influence.

The Board has sought and received four major external reviews, evaluations or reports in the past decade. In addition the Board and its senior officials have considered numerous planning documents and implemented five reorganizations (Nov. 2002, Nov. 2001, Aug. 2000, March 2000, Nov. 1997 (revised Nov. 98, Sept. 99) in six years.

Few school districts have undergone so much intense scrutiny, acrimonious debate and deliberation in so short a time.

The Board of School Trustees has requested BCSTA to advise and assist the Board and its senior officials in establishing the conditions for stable district leadership so that the district can move forward in a manner which gives optimum benefit to students and professional confidence to all staff.

B. THE REVIEW PROCESS

Two consultants, provided by BCSTA, examined previous review documents and reports, scrutinized documentation provided by the district, and interviewed nineteen persons, representative of this district, its senior staff and education partners.

During the interviews the consultants sought input regarding the following:

1. Support infrastructure required
2. What is needed to optimize working relationships
3. How to promote healing and organizational health
4. Suggestions which are realistic considering the prevailing constraints

Several common themes emerged as issues which require attention and constructive resolution by the Board if the district is to move forward with optimism and a sense of a new beginning.

The recurrent themes and issues were analyzed in the context of previous reviews and “tested” against current data and congruence of views. Without any question certain issues emerged again and again. Anecdotal references to common concerns held by persons and groups with varying views and perspectives surfaced a clear agenda.

A number of “confidential” letters, memos and statements were submitted or provided. While these were drafted with a degree of passion a number of common themes persisted. Clearly the school district has reached a point where even those who disagree on most things agree on the need for certain changes or reforms. These common issues are where the Board and its officials need to concentrate if stability and effective and efficient public education is to be delivered to the students of School District No. 68.

C. THE FINDINGS

The following recurrent issues are represented using the terms and descriptions of the persons interviewed:

1. Leadership

- There is a critical need for educational leadership support and consistent direction.
- Public and Board expectations require district leadership and integration at the assistant superintendent level to redress lack of cohesion and co-ordination, fragmented organization and inconsistent processes.
- Senior education leadership must co-ordinate activities in areas such as Accountability Contract, School Planning Councils, school related issues, parent contact, human resources and planning.
- Finance areas require administrative direction for consistent and timely budget reporting, cost accounting, and financial data collection/dissemination to enhance confidence in financial and budget reporting.

Observation: There was no confidence in a “oneness” or that consistent direction has existed at the senior level (Board or CEO). An organization must draw together and coordinate. “Not our experience here”, they said.

2. Human Resources

- Dysfunctional – “finger in dyke” approach – no overall plan or philosophy.
- Does not appear to value people.
- No consistent process/due process/redress procedure.
- Legalistic rather than problem solving approach – crisis management – little planning.
- General lack of confidence in fairness throughout the organization.

RECOMMENDATION #1**1. Depersonalizing Issues**

It is recommended that both the Board Chair, in regard to all trustees, and the Chief Executive Officer, in regard to all persons in positions of special responsibility, must set high standards, model them, and with the support of their colleagues enforce an embargo upon public criticism, blaming and inflammatory statements.

The preceding recommendation aims at the core of what have become dysfunctional norms in S.D. #68. It has become acceptable to publicly assail others. The resulting climate of blame and innuendo based on hearsay, media publication, and reporting of informal statements attributed to persons elected or appointed to positions of public trust, have eroded the reputation of the Board and its officials.

RECOMMENDATION #2**2. Stability**

It is recommended that the Board and Chief Executive Officer should openly declare the period of tenure of the current Superintendent is intended to provide stability and to build trust and a positive base for succession planning taking maximum advantage of all constructive and previous contributions.

The CEO and his leadership team must in the next six to twenty-four months coordinate initiatives, reduce uncertainty and re-establish S.D. #68 as a desirable and satisfying place to work, teach and administer. Predictability and a desire of people to "work with" the district leadership team are absolutely essential.

RECOMMENDATION #3

3. District Organization

It is strongly recommended, supported by those heard during the review, that the Board approve a new district organization, headed by the Chief Executive Officer which:

- a) Includes two senior education officials at the Assistant Superintendents level one with programmatic, and the other with personnel responsibilities.**
- b) Includes the Secretary-Treasurer as the Chief Financial and Business Executive supported by a new position.**
- c) Includes a Comptroller (new position) who coordinates fiscal and accounting practice and ensures compliance with sound integrated and coordinated financial management at both district and school levels.**
- d) Redresses the imbalance between personnel administration (selection, placement, educational supervision) and Labor Relations by creating a line reporting structure of the Director of Personnel (Currently termed Associate to Superintendent-HR) to one Assistant Superintendent, and further that a staff reporting relationship be created between the staffing Education officers and this Assistant Superintendent.**

The absence of supportive supervision of instruction, and strategic educational direction in personnel development and placement has led to an undue reliance upon technical due process. Informed strategic and formative senior leadership linked with programmatic and instructional priorities is crucial. Without the latter the system predictably falls into processes driven by contractual, litigious and technical details and precedents. The process of "investigations" was cited as an example.

The pre-eminence of educational leadership does not diminish the importance of "HR" and labor relations. The increased prominence of contractual, statutory and regulatory requisites reinforces the need for a seasoned professional to head the implementation process and to deal with emergent matters. Sensitive process management is very important.

A desirable goal over time would be to see expenditures for items such as legal service, grievance resolution, and investigation to be reallocated to staff and professional development activity.

RECOMMENDATION #4**4. Governance**

It is recommended that the Board strengthen its governance role by taking the following measures:

- a) That the number of committees be reduced (at least by half) and be replaced by clearer policy formulation and Board meeting process which gives direction to staff and monitors implementation by information and progress reports**
- b) That remaining committees be reconstituted by having (only) two trustees assigned to each committee; one to chair and one to assist and serve as alternate with committee reports coming back to the Board with recommendations which after due debate, deliberation and approval give direction to staff**
- c) That a Policy Committee develop draft policy, revise policy and receive referrals from other committees (if committee recommendations have policy implications) so that administrative and management issues and matters can proceed with the Board using policy (rather than involvement in implementation detail) as its governance tool**
- d) That committee agendas be developed and circulated in advance to the Board and any who may attend to make representation (as provided for) and be informed.**

The intent of the preceding four recommendations for changing committee process is to return decision-making to the Board table, free staff and trustees for their primary functions and strengthen the policy determination role of the Board.

The drift into unwieldy committee structures is not uncommon. The consequences are totally predictable. Too many people engaged in deliberation leads to involvement in quasi-decisions and micro-management. Staff time is consumed far beyond the requirements of planned agendas. The presence of a quorum of trustees in committee creates "implicit prior approval", or shifts decision-making debate away from its proper place – the corporate Board meeting.

Safeguards will need to be taken in redesigning committee process to ensure that stakeholders and partners maintain opportunities for input, representation and to be informed. To the extent that non-elected participants drove the agenda or felt they were decision-makers may elicit a feeling of disenfranchisement. The design and implementation of effective process will be crucial. The Board needs to listen to people and elicit input but the elected Board makes governance decisions.

RECOMMENDATION #5**5. Communications**

It is recommended that the Board and its senior officials develop and adhere to a communications strategy which ensures that communications to all staff, education partners and the public at large proceed expeditiously and effectively. The Board Chair and the CEO must lead messages from the Board table and Board office and the Director of Communications must be supported by adherence to recommendation No. 1 (Depersonalizing Issues). The Director of Communications should be advised of and preferably "broker" inquiries by the media.

In their 1993 report KPMG, the consultants stated "should the Board reduce its demands on management and if the District stakeholders adopt more of a team approach the need for the (communications) position may be reduced". Events since then have exacerbated communications challenges. The key issue is whether formal communiqués from the Board and CEO can inform the media and displace what has existed. The media needs to be informed and treated with respect.

An open and effective communications strategy is central to an effective organization.

The extent to which the Board and its senior staff can displace informal and flawed information about the district's endeavors will do much to build trust and confidence.

CONCLUSION

This report focuses upon five major recommendations which if acted upon could harness the good contributions of many sincere and well-intentioned people. Much valuable and creative work has been done. Controversy, divisiveness and lack of coordination and team leadership have confounded creative initiatives and the best efforts of many -- including those who have left the district.

The Board has appointed a Superintendent/CEO who has accepted an unenviable role with the encouragement of many. He is committed to the district and to establishing all that is required for the district to serve its students professionally and effectively.

The Board has appointed a Secretary-Treasurer who is a proficient financial and administrative professional. This is a key position critical to the financial and business integrity of the school district.

These two officials wish to serve the Board, the district and its students in a non-political and professional manner. To do so they must have a core leadership team so that the Board, which has expressed the wish to get out of micromanagement, can focus upon governance and they can lead and coordinate execution of the Board's formally expressed mandate.

The district does not currently have a functional organization. The last reorganization devolved responsibility to schools without adequate preparation, planning or training for school based personnel. The district staff became almost totally reactive and lost much of the remaining system loyalty. This judgement was expressed by virtually everyone heard during the review. There was a desperate plea for unifying leadership.

The recommended positions need to be added to allow the CEO to lead a functional district leadership team. To not allocate and reallocate the needed resources will be costly -- in terms of continued disorganization. Time is of the essence here.

By addressing the process and governance recommendations the Board will begin to restore the basis for effective district leadership and the much needed trust level and stability. In a period of six to twenty-four months these measures could return School District #68 to its once much respected status.

Respectfully submitted, with appreciation to those who freely and sincerely contributed to this review.

BCSTA Consultants: E. E. Froese
R. D. Ingram

Appendix 4. Board Procedure No. 1430 - Aboriginal Education



ABORIGINAL EDUCATION - Page 1

PREAMBLE

The Board of School Trustees, School District #68 and the Aboriginal communities recognize the need to make education more relevant to Aboriginal students. In addition, the Aboriginal Communities and the Board recognize the need for success through improvement in the achievement, retention and graduation rates for Aboriginal students. Furthermore, they recognize the need to acknowledge, address and promote awareness of culture and cultural diversities in meeting the needs of Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal students include students of Metis, Inuit, or First Nations heritage, including status, non-status, on reserve, or off reserve.

To meet the commitment of a relevant and successful education for all Aboriginal students in School District #68, the Board will:

- Recognize a representative from the Aboriginal Communities as an Education Partner on all standing committees of the Board.
- Fund Aboriginal Education at a level that meets or exceeds the Aboriginal Education service provided during the 2001/2002 school year should the funding for Aboriginal Education be detargetted by the provincial government.
- Work with Education partners to develop and establish employment equity for Aboriginal teachers, principals and vice-principals, support staff and other district personnel.
- Meet with the elected officials and representatives of the Aboriginal Communities a minimum of four times a year.
- Integrate the histories, culture and language of the Snw Ney Muxw, Snaw Naw As, Chemainus whose territories are served by School District #68.
- Promote the diverse histories and cultures represented by our Aboriginal student population.
- Narrow the gap in performance between Aboriginal students and the general school population until parity is reached in all areas of learning.

Adopted: 1982.03.24

Amended: 1990.09.26

Amended: 2002.11.27

SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 (NANAIMO-LADYSMITH)



PROCEDURE NO. 1430P

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

1. A representative from the Aboriginal Communities will be recognized as an education partner on all standing committees of the Board of School Trustees.
 - 1.1 The Aboriginal Communities will identify a member (and an alternate) who will sit as an education partner on all standing committees of the Board.
 - 1.2 These names will be forwarded to the District Principal, Aboriginal Education by August 31st of each school year.

2. Aboriginal Education will be funded at a level that meets or exceeds the Aboriginal Education service provided during the 2001-2002 school year, should the funding for Aboriginal Education no longer be targeted by the provincial government.
 - 2.1 In the event that provincial funding for Aboriginal Education is no longer targeted, Aboriginal Communities of the District will work in partnership to make a recommendation to the Board to maintain the consistent levels of service for Aboriginal students.

3. School District 68 will work Education partners to develop and establish employment equity for Aboriginal teachers, principals and vice-principals, support staff.
 - 3.1 The Aboriginal Education Personnel Committee will continue to work with partner groups to create opportunities for employment equity.
 - 3.2 The Aboriginal Education Personnel Committee and Human Resources Department will collaborate to identify individuals who are qualified to work within the District.

4. The Board shall meet with the elected officials and representatives of the Aboriginal Communities a minimum of four times a year.
 - 4.1 The Education representative for each community will meet with the District Principal, Aboriginal Education and the Trustee representative by September 30th of each school year to establish meeting dates and identify hosting communities for the Aboriginal/School District 68 Joint Advisory Committee.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 (NANAIMO-LADYSMITH)



PROCEDURE NO. 1430P

- 4.2 Prior to each Aboriginal/School District 68 Joint Advisory Committee meeting, the Education representatives will meet with the District Principal, Aboriginal Education and the Trustee representative to set the agenda.
5. School District 68 shall work with Education partners and work towards integrating the histories, culture and language of the Snu Ney Muxw, Nanoose (Snaw Naw As), and Chemainus First Nations whose territories are served by the District.
 - 5.1 Snu Ney Muxw, Nanoose (Snaw Naw As) and Chemainus First Nations will continue to develop materials and retain personnel to present their history, culture, and language in District schools.
 - 5.2 This material will be forwarded to the District Principal, Aboriginal Education for review and presentation to District schools.
6. School District 68 shall promote the diverse histories and cultures represented by our Aboriginal student population.
 - 6.1 The Aboriginal Communities and District staff will work in partnership to develop materials that can be included as part of the District's curriculum.
 - 6.2 Aboriginal Communities will work with District Aboriginal Education to provide professional development opportunities for District staff. This will assist in the promotion of the diverse histories and cultures represented by the District's Aboriginal student population.
7. School District 68 shall work towards narrowing the gap in performance between Aboriginal students and the general school population until parity is reached in all areas of learning.
 - 7.1 In order to improve the academic performance of Aboriginal students, the District Principal, Aboriginal Education will work towards the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Improvement Agreement in school plans.
 - 7.2 The academic performance of Aboriginal students will be monitored on an annual basis, through the District Performance Plan and the Aboriginal Education Improvement Agreement.

Adopted: 2004-04-28

Appendix 5. Board Procedure No. 1427P - Facilities Planning Committee



FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE - Page 1

SECTION I: MEMBERSHIP

Members

- 4 Trustees (voting)
- 3 Staff (non voting)
 - Superintendent (ex officio)
 - Director of Facilities
 - Secretary-Treasurer

Resource Staff

- Other staff as required

SECTION II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Facility Planning Committee will meet as required in accordance with Board Committee procedures to undertake the following responsibilities:

- Development of long-range facility plans for the School District which will support the aim of excellence in the educational programs and the optimum efficient use of resources.
- Development of the Five Year Capital Plan in accordance with the capital budget submission requirements of the Ministry of Education.
- Planning for short and long-term use of school space.
- Liaison with Municipalities and other agencies about matters of mutual concern and jurisdictional overlap, including the joint use of facilities.
- Disposal of excess facilities.
- Lease of Agreements and related contracts.
- Awards of Tenders related to Architects, Project Managers and Construction Contractors
- The determination of school catchment areas.
- Other tasks as assigned by the Board.



FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE - Page 2

SECTION III: REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

The Facility Planning Committee will normally report to the Board of School Trustees through the Business Committee unless the nature of circumstances of items reported requires a report directly from the Board.

SECTION IV: MEETING DATES

Meetings will be held monthly, except July and August. Additional meetings will be held as required.

SECTION V: OPERATING PROCEDURES

Agendas, minutes and support documentation will be distributed through the Office of the Director of Facilities.

Adopted: 1999.09.26